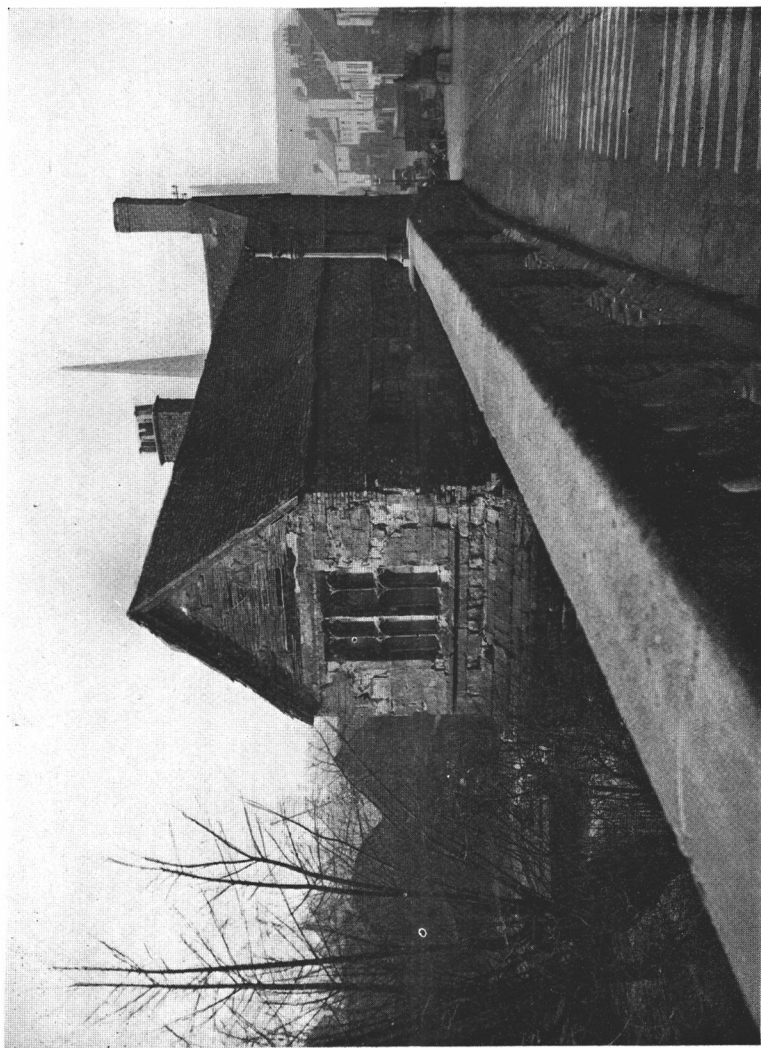


The Bridge and Chapel of S. Mary at Derby.

By P. H. CURREY.

THE rescue from desecration and possible destruction of the Chapel of S. Mary on the Bridge at Derby is without doubt the most notable work done by our Society and a fitting climax to its fifty years of active service. The citizens of Derby, together with those everywhere who, in a mechanical age, have eyes to see what is beautiful, and imagination to value the history of their native land, must be for ever grateful to the family who has made possible the complete repair of the chapel and house which will allow them to be used for their original purpose.

Very few bridge chapels now remain; damage by floods and the demands of traffic, in addition to the fact that a materialistic age found no use for them, have caused their disappearance. Rotherham and Wakefield in Yorkshire, St. Ives in Huntingdonshire, Derby and the little fragment at the foot of the bridge at Cromford in our own county, seem to be nearly all that are left. The tiny building on the bridge at Bradford-on-Avon may have taken the place of a chapel but its present construction is, I believe, of post-Reformation date. It would seem, however, that in the middle ages they were fairly numerous, and it is known that there was in Derbyshire at least a third one standing on Swarkeston bridge. At a time when men felt no hard and fast distinction between the spiritual and the material the building of bridges was regarded as a work of piety. A 15th century ballad quoted in Parker & Turner's *Domestic Architecture of the Middle Ages*, which was



The Bridge Chapel before restoration.

written to celebrate the opening of a bridge at Culham erected by the abbot of Abingdon, recites the building of bridges as an act of charity second only to reverence for Holy Church. The chapel was the natural adjunct of the bridge, where wayfarers could rest and mass could be offered for their prosperity. In our own county several of the most ancient of our churches seem to have been intentionally planted at the crossing of the rivers.

It is disappointing that so little can be traced of the history of the bridge and its chapel at Derby. When the English people began to settle down to a regular life, they ignored the Roman camp at Little Chester with its bridge or ford over the river, and pitched their settlement on the higher ground in the angle formed by the meeting of the Markeaton brook and the Derwent. Probably in ordinary weather the Derwent could be forded in several places, for before the water was dammed up into pools for the mills and canals it would flow at a lower level than at present in its natural form of a shallow and rapid mountain stream. Its liability to frequent heavy floods coming down from the Peak hills would, however, in all likelihood lead to the building of a bridge at an early date, but of this we have no record. Dr. Cox tells us that a bridge was built or repaired in the time of King John.¹ The Chartulary of Darley Abbey, temp. Edward I, refers to the Bridge at Derby² All that we can say for certain from the evidence of the existing remains is that there was a substantial stone bridge in the 14th, possibly in the 13th century, with a small chapel in the south side, corbelled out from the cut-water of the pier nearest the town.

It seems that quite early in the 14th century the bridge was of such an age as to be in need of repair. In a paper by the Rev. Charles Kerry on *Hermits, Fords and Bridge Chapels*, printed in Vol. xiv, of our *Journal* we are told

¹ *Churches of Derb.*, iv, p. 102.

² D.A.J., xxvi, 112-5.

that there are among the Patent Rolls records of several pontages, or grants to the burgesses of the right to collect tolls for the purpose of repairing the bridge and that the earliest of these was given in 19, Edward II, 1326. I would suggest that this paper should be read by all who are interested in the subject for its notice of so-called 'Hermits' attached to bridges, who appear usually to have been under the appointment and control of the bishop and to have been responsible for their maintenance and repair.

Late in the 14th or during the 15th century the chapel was evidently rebuilt on a much larger scale, the western portion of the new building probably providing a lodging for the priest or the hermit.

In the volume on *The Collegiate Church or Free Chapel of All Saints, Derby*, by Dr. J. C. Cox and W. H. St. John Hope there is printed an inventory drawn up in 1488, of "all juels and ornaments beyng att the mary of brigge in the custody of John Shenton Armett and hys wyffe—Sir John Dale then there p̄-ste." This inventory, being made by the Wardens of All Saints, suggests that the chapel was then attached to the collegiate church and shows that there was at that time both a priest and a hermit attached to it. The hermit was obviously a secular and the wording leads one to suppose that he lived at the chapel and acted as sacristan. The numerous and costly gifts which are recorded show that the Bridge Chapel was at that time a shrine much venerated by the people of Derby. A gift to the chapel is recorded in the will of Johanne Holme widow, who bequeathed her "Silver Ring and gilte to the Chappell of our Lady upon the brigge."¹

An interesting reference to the founding of the chapel, which helps us in fixing the approximate date of the present building, occurs in an article by John Sleigh, printed in our *Journal*, Vol. iv, p. 46. There he quotes an

¹ *D.A.J.*, xxvii, p. 82.

abstract to his title to estates at Matlock and Tansley by Sir John Statham of Wigwell, July 8, 1723, in which, among other reasons put forward for fair consideration, he states that he gave to All Saints in Derby 20 gs. "As my Ancest. Sir Thomas Statham built and endowed the Chappel on St. Mary's Bridge." Sir John further claims that he had built a spire on Tideswell Church, given an organ there, preserved the school there and endowed it with land worth £7, per ann. and augmented the vicarage.

Finding that a Thomas Statham, knight, was living at Tideswell in the time of Edward IV.¹ I at first concluded that he would be the ancestor referred to as the builder of the bridge chapel, but I am assured by the Rev. S. P. H. Statham, the present representative of the family, that the reference is to Thomas Statham of Morley, who was living 1380-1416.

Dr. Cox tells us² that on the dissolution of the college the chapel was transferred to the town; also that the rents were used for the repair of the churches which were given to the town by Queen Mary. Queen Elizabeth treated the property as confiscated to the crown and granted it to William Buckley. It formed part of a disputed property about which a commission sat in 1592. At this commission "Richard Stringer deposed the Chappell of the Brigge and the house orchard and garden thereto adjoining to have been let by the Chamberlens with consent of Bailiffe and Burgesse who received the rents." Dr. Cox adds that in another part of the papers it is described as "The Chapple of the Bridge with all edifisyn gardens etc. in the occupation of Ellis Bradshaw to the Colledge or Free Chapple belounginge." The Commissioners decided against the claim of William Buckley and that the property belonged to the bailiffe and burgesses of the town.

¹ *D.A.J.*, xxx, 18.

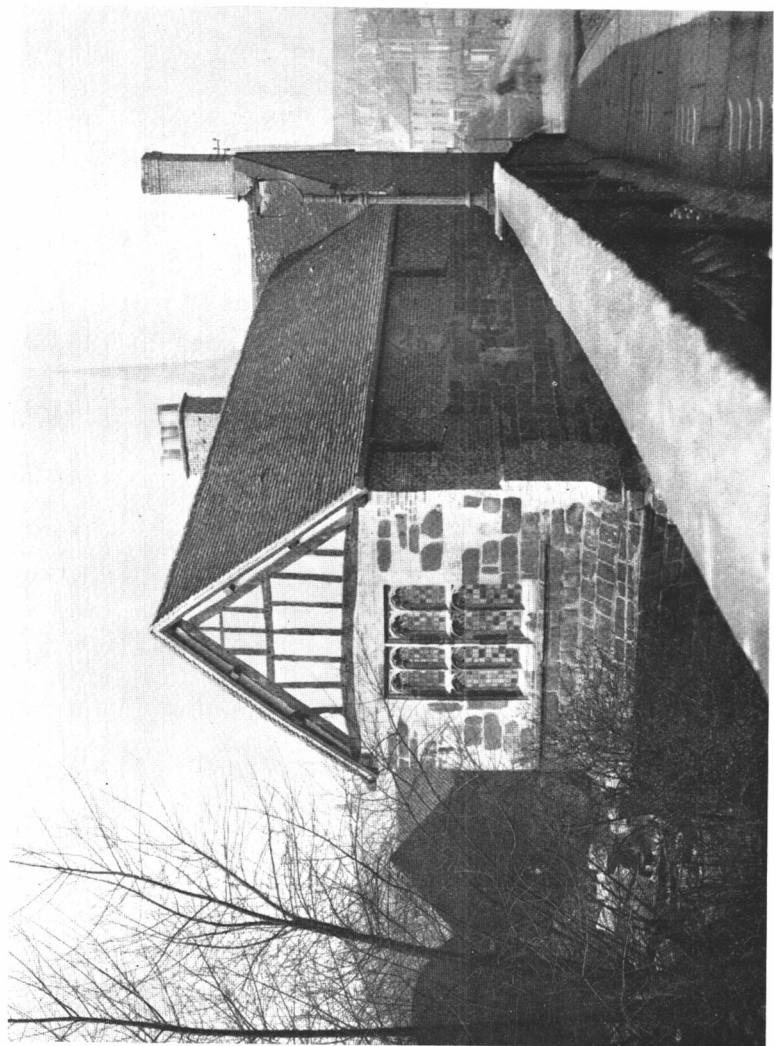
² *Churches*, iv, p. 105.



BRIDGE CHAPEL, DERBY.

Photo: T. E. Routh.

East end; showing straight joint below set-back, which indicates 15th century extensions.
Spring of arch of original bridge is shown in extreme bottom right-hand corner.



The Bridge Chapel after restoration.

Simpson, in his *History of Derby*, p. 307, prints the following as from an old tattered paper in All Saints' Church. "Item as concerning the tithe of certain lands in the saide towne of Darbie called the Church lands there, and the Chappell on the bridge there, the said Arbitrators haveinge heorde the evidence and proofs on both p'ts fullye and at large, doe arbitrate decree and adjudge that the said William Buckley by virtue of any letters patents or grants thereof to him or to any other p'son or p'sons heretofore made, hath not any good or sufficient title unto the same or to any p'te or p'cell thereof, but that the said Baillies and Burgesses ought quietlie and peaceable to have and enjoy the same to them and their successors, as they have held and enjoyed the same by the space of six or sevenscore yeares last past as by good and sufficient proofes and evidences hath been manifested and proved before the said Arbitrators. And therefore the said Arbitrators do arbitrate, adjudge, etc."

The six or seven score years during which the Bailiffs were said to have possessed the property take us back to long before the dissolution of the College; Dr. Cox assumes that the period is a mistake and states that the town had nothing to do with the Chapel until after the dissolution.¹ Is it possible that the garden and orchard were, with the bridge and chapel, regarded as the property of the town even when Sir Thomas Statham endowed it? The manner in which the burgesses of Derby dealt with their trust seems hardly to have merited the gratitude expressed by Sir John Statham in the 18th century.

I have been unable to ascertain when the property passed into private hands. The Derby Borough Rental of 1611² shows that it still belonged to the town at that date by an entry "Itm of the chappell of St. Marie Bridge by yere . . ." The chapel itself seems at that time to have

¹ *Churches*, iv, p. 105.

² *D.A.J.*, xxxvi, p. 94.

been still in substantial condition for Simpson, quoting Speed's description in 1610 says, "but a bridge of more beauty built all of free stone is passed over Derwent in the north east of the town whereon standeth a faire stone chappell and both of them bearing the name of Saint Maries."¹ It seems, however, to have been falling into decay, for the same author quoting a description of Derby in 1673 says "on the said bridge called St. Marie's, is seated a once faire stone chappell which beareth the same name."² Hutton tells us³ that when, after the Restoration, the Presbyterians were extruded from the churches the Bishop licensed "St. Mary's chapel at the foot of the bridge" for their use, "but this did not continue. They housed in the reign of James the Second, in the wide yard, on the East side of Iron-gate, which communicated with the market place, where they continued till the erection of the present meeting house in Friargate."

After this it was soon devoted to profane uses, for Woolley, writing in 1712 says "Upon the end of St. Mary's Bridge (well built with stone over the Derwent with nine arches) is the remainder of a once fair Chapel dedicated to St. Mary but now converted into poor dwelling houses."⁴ Hutton, writing in 1791, describing the Chapel, which he obviously confuses with the lost and somewhat mysterious S. Mary's Church, says:—"It is perfectly in the Saxon style, and was probably one of the six churches mentioned in Domesday. It stands upon the verge of the river, forms part of the bridge, with which it is interwoven, and was in my time converted into little dwellings; these circumstances have, perhaps, prevented its total decay. It has not been used as a church for ages, except perhaps

¹ Simpson, *Hist. of Derby.*, 1826, p. 91. Speed's description is really taken from Camden's *Britannia*, first published in 1586. Ed.

² *Ibid.*, p. 112.

³ Hutton, *Hist. of Derby*, 1791, p. 168.

⁴ Quoted in Simpson, *Hist. of Derby*, p. 175.

during the small space mentioned above, in the reign of Charles the Second, by the Dissenters."

Hutton's description of the bridge itself, written just before its demolition, is worth reading in full. I cannot refrain from quoting one characteristic passage. "All the Authors that ever wrote upon Derby are lavish with encomiums upon the beauty and elegance of St. Mary's Bridge, which is a proof they never saw it. Contradiction is an irksome task; but truth demands it. Its praise arises from its extraordinary elevation, which is one of its greatest defects; it is an arch upon arches; a mountain erected upon a river. Human infirmity and loaded carriages, drag up heavily; but all move over it dangerously, being so extremely narrow as to admit but one carriage; so that we may safely remark, it cannot be travelled two ways at once. The gravel is incessantly washed away, owing to the steep ascent, and the arches left naked. Perhaps a bridge over so cold a river, so much used, and so ill adapted for use, cannot be found.'

The appearance of the old bridge is shown in a painting of about the end of the 17th century which bears evidence of detailed accuracy. This painting, the property of Sir George Sitwell, is preserved at Renishaw Hall and was reproduced in *D.A.J.* Vol. xxvii. It shows the bridge to have run more or less on the level across the water, but no doubt the ascent to that level was, as old Hutton found it, trying to human infirmity. The road at the bottom of Bridge Gate was, even within my own recollection, lower than at present, as can be seen by noticing the floor level of the houses.

The new bridge was finished and the old one begun to be pulled down in 1789. To the fact that the chapel was at that time occupied as dwelling houses we doubtless owe its preservation. It seems impossible to find the name of the designer of the new bridge; Hutton gives a drawing of it but says nothing of its creator; whoever he may have

been he should be held in respect by the people of Derby. The old bridge must have been picturesque and altogether charming but its successor is also of singular beauty and much too little appreciated. It remained for the 19th century to compass the almost impossible achievement of building ugly bridges. Simpson's *History of Derby*, published in 1826, says that the chapel then formed part of the habitation of Mr. Thomas Eaton. It had evidently then ceased to be occupied as cottages.

The charming little wood-cut which accompanies Simpson's description shows the building just as we have known it, even to the dilapidated condition of the plaster on the east gable, but it shows a kind of loft door in the north wall the former opening of which can still be traced in the jointing of the brickwork. It also shows that there was at that time a row of thatched cottages on the south side of the Chapel, facing the river.

During the 19th century the chapel was used as a carpenters' shop and to fit it for that purpose almost the whole of the south wall was rebuilt in brick, with large windows and a door with a flight of steps down to the yard, and the interior brick walls were also demolished. The yard itself, probably the orchard and garden referred to by the commission in 1592, was used as a boiler and engineering works by Mr. John Walley who owned and occupied the adjacent house. Dr. Cox tells us that the woodwork for the present S. Michael's Church was prepared in the chapel, but not long afterwards it was once again brought into use for religious purposes through the efforts of the Rev. W. Beresford, assistant priest at S. Alkmund's Church. It was fitted for services with furniture of an ecclesiastical type, some of which was still lying in the building when our Society acquired it, and was licensed by the Bishop of Lichfield on Sept. 17, 1873.¹ For some years it was served by the clergy of S. Alkmund's

¹ Cox, *Churches*, iv, p. 106.

and an enthusiastic band of laymen as a Sunday school and mission church, until the present church room in Bridge Gate was built, when the old chapel was again abandoned and has since stood derelict and rapidly becoming ruinous.

For many years past the condition of the building has been a source of distress and anxiety to the Derbyshire Archaeological Society and several efforts have been made to secure the carrying out of at least such repairs as were needed to keep out the weather; these, however, proved unavailing. On the death of the owner the property was put upon the market and our Society succeeded in securing it. This happy ending was made possible by the enthusiasm of Major F. R. Griggs, of Wigwell Grange who advanced the purchase money and thus made an immediate settlement possible. It is somewhat of a coincidence that we thus have for a second time a connection between the owner of Wigwell and the bridge chapel.

As all our members know a fund was started to repay the loan and to repair the fabric. Many generous gifts were received but the raising of the whole sum would have been a matter of great difficulty had not Mr. Eric Seale Haslam and his sisters, Mrs. Ham and Miss Edith Haslam, come forward with an offer to carry out the whole of the work as a memorial to their father, Sir Alfred Seale Haslam.

It may be of interest to future historians to have a few details of Sir Alfred Haslam's life. He was born in Derby in 1844; he was apprenticed at the Midland Railway Co's Locomotive Works. He purchased Union Foundry, Chester Green in 1868, and continually extended it until the time of the Great War. He was a pioneer in the refrigeration industry. Mayor of Derby 1890-91; knighted by H.M. Queen Victoria in 1891 on her visit to Derby to lay the foundation stone of the Royal Infirmary; Member of Parliament for Newcastle, Staffs., 1900-06. He lived

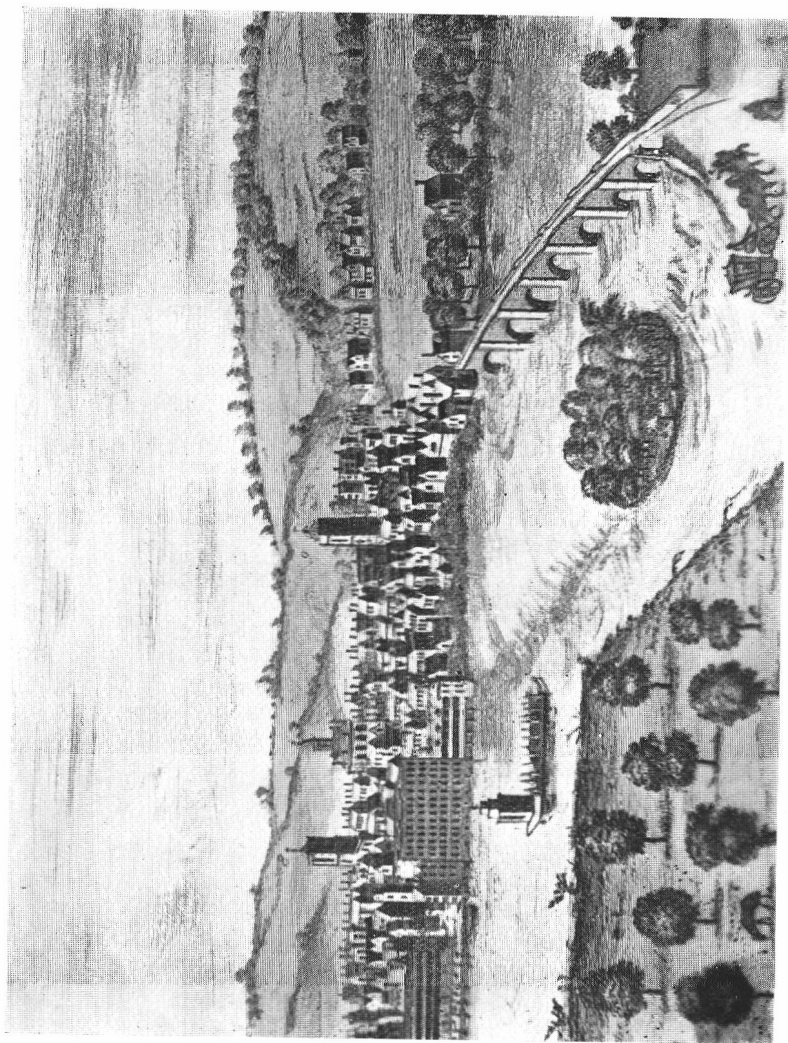
at Breadsall Priory, near Derby from 1900 until his death in 1927, and is buried in Morley Churchyard.

Such have been the vicissitudes through which the old building has passed. Though surviving as little more than a battered ruin a surprising amount of evidence as to its original condition has come to light during the work of repair. Such drawings as exist do not give us much help as they all show it in much the same state as that in which we have all known it. Speed's map of Derby, 1610, shows a bridge of six arches; Woolley says it had nine. The Renishaw painting, very careful in detail, does not, unfortunately, show the whole length of the bridge, but it shows the Chapel with houses abutting on the south side; also the weir and the Town Mill with two wheels, and a horseman fording the river at the Holmes.

S. and N. Buck's view of Derby, 1728, shows the chapel from much the same point as the Renishaw painting, but was the added interest of showing the whole length of the bridge, and is reproduced to illustrate this paper. This is the most authentic view of the old bridge and shows seven arches which with the one underneath the chapel makes a total of eight.

In the Meynell MSS., preserved at Meynell Langley, is a little sketch of the chapel, made early in the last century. This shows a second door near the eastern end of the south wall. It also shows nine ribs under the oversailing masonry at the east end, a somewhat extraordinary flight of imagination, for it is quite impossible to believe that such ribs ever existed.

Turning from recorded history to the evidence of the building itself we find clear signs that the present Chapel was not the first building but that a smaller square chapel had preceded it. The straight joint running diagonally through the oversailing masonry under the east wall indicated clearly the existence of a previous small building corbelled out from the pier of the bridge.



A portion of S. & N. Buck's view of Derby published 1728 showing St. Mary's Chapel and Bridge. Seven arches are shown, and one under the chapel makes eight, while Woolley says there were nine.

When the boarded floor, of the joiners' shop period, was taken up this was fully confirmed, part of the oversailing work on the west side of the pier being brought to light. The builders had evidently been a little afraid of the tendency of this oversailing work to fall outwards and in the rough filling in of the stone platform two of the large stones had been coupled together by what is technically called a joggle, one, lying east and west being roughly cut into a kind of hook to hold on to one of those which ran north and south. This platform was in fact most substantially built, with very large stones solidly bedded. The platform measured about 19 ft. 6 ins. from east to west and 12 ft. north to south. If, as was likely, the walls of the first chapel were thicker than the present work its internal measurements cannot have been greater than 15 or 16 ft. by 8 ft.

The pier and cut-water of the bridge and the oversailing masonry of the platform are sufficiently in evidence to enable a fairly accurate drawing to be made of them. What the chapel itself was like we can only draw in our imagination. Excepting possibly a little bit of the lower courses of the north wall, such of the ancient work as the chequered history of the building has allowed to remain appears to belong to the 15th century, the work of Sir Thomas Statham if we may trust the claim of Sir John Statham that it was built by his ancestor. The nature of the work with its thin ashlar walls, the window glazing in the centre of the thickness of the walls, and other features appear to me to belong to a slightly later period than that of Thomas Statham of Morley, but I have heard contrary opinions and would not be dogmatic on the point.

The present building measures about 45 ft. by 14 ft. 4 ins. inside, with walls about 17 ins. thick. In order to carry the increased width at the eastern end the pier of the bridge was extended, almost concealing the old cut-water. The southern end of which can still be seen

under the exterior steps which gave access to the building when used as a workshop. At the western end an undercroft was built, starting from considerably below the present level of the river. The intervening part is carried on an arch. This is of a rather unusually depressed form but there are fairly clear indications that it followed the line of the rib of the last arch at the town end of the old bridge.

In actual floor area this Chapel is only slightly smaller than the well known 14th century chapel on the bridge at Wakefield, which measures about 41 ft. by 16 ft. 10 in. It is, however, possible that the chapel proper did not occupy the whole length of the building but that the western portion formed the lodging of the priest or the "armett," divided by a framed wood and plaster partition. A stone sleeper wall which might have carried this partition exists below the floor, but this after all may only date from the cottage period and we are left guessing. The Wakefield Chapel has a well lighted little room below its eastern portion, which may have served as a priest's chamber, approached by a newel stair at the north east angle of the building. This stair runs up to the roof and is finished with a small turret.

Examination of our own chapel brought to light the existence of a similar newel stair, but in the south-west angle. This stair was rather unusually roomy and well built with dressed ashlar masonry and was carried down from the floor of the chapel to considerably below the present ground level, to an external doorway which would give access to the garden and the banks of the river. Above the floor of the chapel all traces of it have disappeared; probably it would be carried up to reach an upper floor or a gallery and to a turret on the roof as at Wakefield.

The Bridge Chapel at Rotherham, said to have been built in 1484, is slightly smaller than those at Wakefield

and Derby, being about 32 ft. by 16 ft. Here there is a newel stair in the south-east angle (the Chapel points north) which formerly led to a small gallery or priest's chamber.

The little chapel on the bridge at St. Ives is on a much smaller scale. There is a chamber below as at Wakefield. Unlike the chapel at Derby which runs parallel with the bridge, the other three project boldly out into the rivers and are supported by arches and corbels in a manner which shows the delightful way in which the medieval mason loved to play with his work.

Returning to our own building, we notice that the walls on the south and west sides were, at floor level, carried on a course of chamfered stones, oversailing the foundations by about 2 ins.; the north wall of course stood on the bridge itself. The east wall on the other hand was set back about 2 ft. 3 ins. as if the builders distrusted the stability of the oversailing masonry below.

Above floor level the east wall with its square headed window, the masonry portion of the north wall and a few of the lower courses of the south wall are all that remain standing of the second chapel. The west wall was evidently taken down when the present house was built and was re-constructed in 9 ins. brickwork, but in the basement kitchen of the house part of the foundation wall remains, with the oversailing course referred to above. The south wall was rebuilt in the 19th century with bricks of very poor quality and large windows to light the workshop. From the window cills upwards it has been now entirely re-constructed in stone with simple flat headed windows. The stone for this work was obtained from the neighbouring Exeter Bridge which was being demolished at the time the repair of the chapel was in hand in 1930.

The east window is, like so much in medieval work, rather a puzzle. Why did the masons work two cusps in the heads of the lower lights and four in those of the

upper ones? Why are the lights in the southern half narrower than those in the northern? Above all, why did they fix the window out of the centre of the wall? Conjectures come to mind on these things but it is safer not to record them.

The stonework of this window was, before the recent repairs were made, in a very weather-worn and battered condition and in parts very friable. No new stone has been used in its repair but the mullions and tracery have been restored to something like their original form with tiles and mortar, built up with patient care after all decayed stuff had been removed.

Near the east end of the north wall, and high above the floor, is a stone cill which suggests the previous existence of a small two light window, in the position of the loft door shown in Orlando Jewitt's drawing.¹ In the outside face of the north wall one of the stones showed a chamfered edge, suggesting the head stone of a very small opening. On removing the plaster inside indications of a corresponding opening were found. The bricks and stones with which it was blocked were carefully removed and revealed the existence of a squint, carefully worked in the original masonry, evidently planned so that persons passing over the bridge could obtain a glimpse of the hanging pyx and the light burning before the Blessed Sacrament. A blocked up opening in the wall of the chapel at St. Ives suggests a similar purpose, and the three very narrow doorways which open into that at Wakefield seem to have been so contrived that travellers could look into the chapel without entering. On removing some matchboarding which had been fixed against the east wall two shallow chases, about 5 ins. wide, were disclosed extending from floor level to a height of about 1 ft. 9 ins., as if made to receive the upright supports of the Altar slab but the building has been so much cut about that one hesitates to

¹ Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 307.



Bridge Chapel: Interior showing roof-timbers after restoration.

be too emphatic on such a point. The chases are placed about 4 ft. 5 ins. apart and are set out centrally under the window and not in the centre of the building.

Though the chapel, as we see it, is severely plain, proofs are not wanting that before its desecration it justified its description as a "faire chappell." When the western end of the brick wall on the south side was being taken down several stones were found with sunk tracery panels which we may conjecture to have formed part of a rather highly decorated parapet. Also some window heads and mullions of a similar type to the present E. window which may be remains of a window or windows in the S. wall. It is probably safe to assume that the building had originally a roof of low pitch covered with lead and a stone parapet round it. If we try to picture the appearance of the building we may compare the ornamented parapets on the towers of Crich and Denby churches, and remembering the stair turret rising at the south-west angle I think we may form a fair idea of its form and beauty.

Framed up as the back of one of the trusses of the present roof is a beam with sunken tracery carved upon it. The flowing lines of the tracery suggest late 14th century work and its length seems barely sufficient to span the present building but it can scarcely be anything else than one of the tie beams of the roof of the second chapel. Two of the smaller rafters were found in the roof which had been cut to a camber as if intended to span the ridge of the former flat pitched roof. If this were their purpose it was a very troublesome and unusual form of construction.

The present roof of the chapel puzzles me much as regards its date. One must imagine that after the dissolution of the college and the confiscation of such endowment as it and the chapel possessed the building was allowed to go rapidly to decay.

As noticed above, Speed, writing in 1610, speaks of a faire stone Chappell, while in 1673 it is described as a once faire chappell. Was a new roof, of steep pitch and covered with tiles, as we see it, put on when the Presbyterians occupied it, or later when it was converted into the small dwellings of Hutton's time? The rough but substantial construction would accord with this period of its history but the timber framed gable to the east wall suggests earlier times.

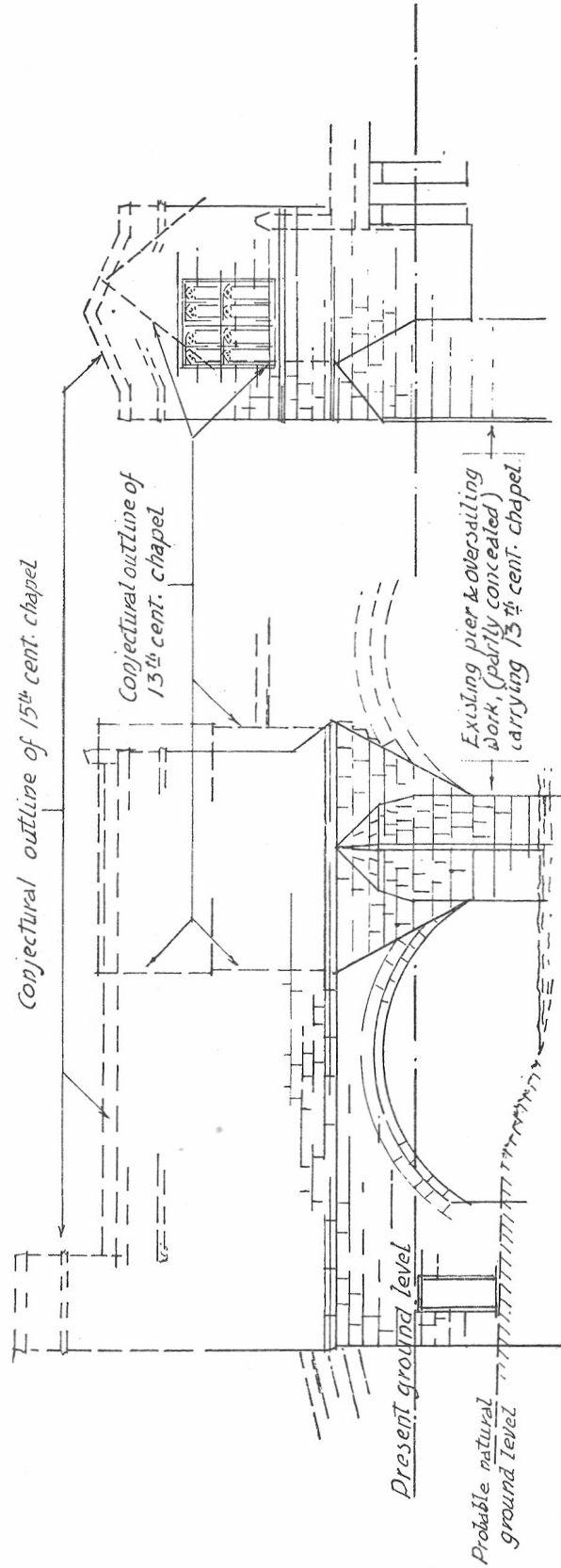
When the chapel was bought by our Society the roof was concealed internally by a flat plaster ceiling and the eastern gable was covered with lath and plaster on the outside; the whole was in a deplorably dilapidated condition. In carrying out its repair every bit of old oak that could be saved was, after having all decay scraped away and being treated with a preservative solution, replaced, but a large proportion of the present construction is new, or rather made of old oak which we were fortunately able to obtain from elsewhere. About one half only of the old tiles were fit to be replaced but through the generosity of one of our members, Mr. S. T. Nash, of Cubley, we received as a free gift about 3000 ancient tiles of similar size and make to complete the work.

The removal of the floor of the chapel revealed traces of the cottage period of its existence. It had evidently been divided into three tenements. In the central one, which had a very roughly paved floor, was an angle fireplace, the chimney from which existed until it was blown over only a few years ago.

In addition to the squint, to which previous reference has been made, another small opening was found in the north wall near the west end of the chapel. This appears either to have been chopped through the wall after its erection or, if original, to have been roughly enlarged. A cavity suggests that it was closed by a shutter sliding back in the thickness of the wall and acting on this

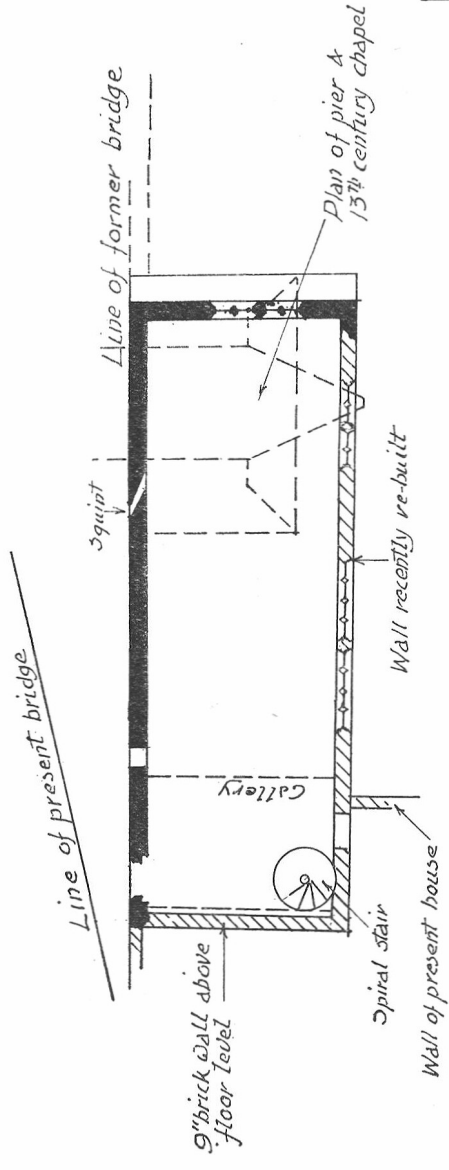
THE CHAPEL OF S. MARY
ON THE BRIDGE
DERBY

P. H. C. 4612



— EAST VIEW —

— SOUTH VIEW —



— PLAN —

0 5 10 20 30 40 50
— SCALE OF FEET —

presumption it has now been fitted with an oak shutter. Was it through this hatch that the Hermit collected the pontages, or that gifts were received for the maintenance of the priest and the altar, or possibly on the other hand were doles given out to poor travellers? At present it gives us an opportunity for interesting speculation.

An arched joint in the masonry of the north wall suggests the possibility of a former doorway slightly to the east of the present door but it is difficult to dogmatise upon its origin. The existing doorway suggests a later date than that of the rebuilding of the chapel. This has now been fitted with a new oak door, the gift of the builder who has carried out the repairs.

The level of the roadway of the old bridge appeared to be marked by a rough chase in the north wall which may still be traced by the courses of tiles which were used to fill it during the recent repairs. At its eastern end a large chase, roughly formed in the rubble masonry of the pier of the old bridge and carried down to below the present ground level arouses speculation. Was it formed for the insertion of a huge post to carry a gate by which the passage of the bridge could be closed?

Within the building the only ancient feature, besides the roof timbers previously referred to, is the gallery, to which it is difficult to put a date. Is the floor of the Priest's chamber, was it added as a gallery when the Presbyterians used the place, or was it possibly put in as an upper floor when the building was converted into dwelling houses? I think we may assume that there was a floor at this level in the original building and that the spiral stair was carried up to it as at Rotherham. The gallery is carried by a stout oak beam and is finished with the usual "plaster" floor laid on reeds on oak joists. It is guarded on the front by a low rail supported on turned balusters of deal. It was approached, when the building was taken over, by a step ladder enclosed by deal match boarding,

stained and varnished, which has now been replaced by a stair constructed largely out of the pieces of oak from the roof which, though sound, were too short to be again used as rafters. Over the gallery a dormer has now been constructed in the roof to give better light. The window frame used in this dormer was found built into the wall near the same point, which had evidently been blocked up when the present house was built.

Part of the space under the gallery had been enclosed to form a store room for the house. The enclosing brick wall has now been removed, but the door leading from the staircase of the house into the Chapel has been retained. The door here is worth notice, being on the house side framed in 2 panels in the joiners' manner, but backed by rather rough boards on the chapel side. Whether the panels were made for appearance only and planted on to an older door, or whether it is an early attempt at joiners' work by men who were accustomed to the rougher methods of the carpenter it is difficult to say; doors formed in this fashion are not uncommon about here.

The house itself with its sharply pitched gables, its mellow toned brick walls and tiled roofs forms, with the chapel and the bridge, a most charming group amid rather desolate and sordid surroundings. It appears to have been considerably remodelled round about the beginning of the 19th century, when sash windows were inserted, cutting through the lines of the brick string courses and finished with rusticated stone heads. Internally the hob grates and the cast iron balusters of the stairs, more curious than beautiful, belong probably to the same period.

The reparation work has been carried out under the direction of Messrs. P. H. Currey and C. C. Thompson, architects, of Derby, of which firm the present writer being a member, is prevented from commenting on the way the work has been done.

The builder, Mr. Arthur Parker, to whom the execution



Interior of the Bridge Chapel before restoration.

of the repairs has been entrusted, was an active helper with the boys at the chapel in the days when S. Alkmund's Church had its mission there. For his loving care and for the careful work of his foremen on a rather tedious job we can never be too grateful.

We now await the time when the ground may be decently enclosed, the little bit of garden laid out, and the buildings once more restored to their ancient use.

ADDITIONAL NOTES ON THE BRIDGE CHAPEL.

By the Editor (F. Williamson).

In spite of Dr. Cox's statement that there was a bridge rebuilt or repaired on this site in the reign of John (1199-1216), there is absolutely no evidence to support this.

During the reign of John the only information is contained in a charter granted to the burgesses in 1204, which allowed them to levy toll at five bridges outside the borough, which are all named. It would be singular therefore if a bridge at Derby were omitted had it existed.

The phrase "passing over the Derwent" seems to imply fords and ferries rather than a bridge. While the Charter of Henry III, dated 15 May, 1229, uses a similar phrase, "all men crossing the Derwent," again no mention of a bridge.

The relevant part of John's charter is as follows:—

1204—Charter of John—Granted to the burgesses of Derby, "toll and theam, and infangenthef and tolonea from Duvebruge (Doveridge) as far as the bridge of Cordy (Swarkestone) and from the bridge of Cordy as far as the bridge of Bradeford (Bradford, Youlgrave), from the bridge of Bradeford as far as the bridge of Estweit (Eastwood, Notts.), and of all things passing over the Derwent in as full manner as in the borough of Derby."