

# REFERENCES TO ANCIENT SUSSEX CHURCHES IN 'THE ECCLESIOLOGIST'

## MAINLY AS REGARDS RESTORATION AND REPAIR

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(Continued from *S.A.C.* LXXXVII. 207)

### EASTBOURNE (*St. Mary*)

Eastbourne alone, of the many Sussex sea-side resorts, retains a medieval church of all but the first rank. Its great value, in the forefront of Transitional Norman buildings, the excellent preservation of admirable detail, the retention, on an imposing scale, of ancient fittings and furniture, and its many monuments, combine to render it indeed one of our noblest legacies. It is gratifying, therefore, to record its restoration as among the most satisfactory that the historian has to deal with, being largely necessary repairs and faithful renewal of original details. Only the east front has been remodelled, but even here its most remarkable feature, a medieval vestry below the great east window, has been faithfully preserved,<sup>1</sup> as well as the east window of the north chapel.

These restorations and repairs took place for the most part between 1844 and 1873, during the long vicariate of Canon Thomas Pitman (1828-90; d. 1890), in whose incumbency, though the interior of the church was completely transformed after the manner of the age, the fabric itself was tenderly treated. It contrasts, for instance, most favourably with St. Nicholas at Brighton, the rebuilding of which was undertaken at much the

<sup>1</sup> Eastbourne is in the Rape of Pevensey; and therefore has not yet appeared in *V.C.H.*; it has had, however, the best historians of any Sussex town; and the reader is referred to the copious and painstaking works of the Rev. Walter Budgen, G. F. C. Chambers, and W. Wright, besides minor works. See also the excellent *Diocesan Guide*, with plan, by Walter H. Godfrey and E. F. Harvey.

same time, and which requires a small reference library properly to understand what was carried out. At St. Mary's, Eastbourne, the structure is so admirably preserved that its architectural history and development can be readily traced. The comparison is the more remarkable in that both restorations were carried out, or at least inaugurated, by the same architect, R. C. Carpenter.<sup>1</sup>

*The Ecclesiologist* (vol. XIII, N.S. IX, pp. 440-1, Dec. 1852) contains a good description of the church, recognizing a very remarkable feature, not always grasped by the visitor, viz. the curious assimilation of the two westernmost bays of the church, of late fourteenth- or early fifteenth-century date, to the earlier twelfth-century work eastwards:

The fifth bay of the nave and the tower attached to it are Third-pointed Perpendicular. And it is curious to note the strong line of demarcation which separates this comparatively new work from the old. The junction is carried down the westernmost columns, leaving half their capitals with foliage resembling that of their fellows, the other half with quite different sculpture; and half their shafts of a stone distinct in colour from that of the other half with which it is bonded.

The writer then goes on to describe the work, giving much interesting detail:

The restoration has been almost confined to the interior of the church, the fabric being substantially sound and in good repair. The stone quoins, monials, and tracery of the windows, the piers and arches have been scraped clean; the walls have been replastered; the timbers of the roof brought back to their natural colour. The pews have been abolished; and solid oak benches substituted in their place throughout the nave and its aisles. Of these unfortunately the appropriated ones have doors. The galleries await early destruction; they are condemned, and only temporarily reprieved in deference to the natural scruples of the aged widow of a former vicar whose work they were. A new stone pulpit is placed in the north-east corner of the nave; the carving of it is shallow and meagre. A low reading platform is railed in on the opposite side. High in the wall above the latter is a fenestella<sup>2</sup> containing credence shelf and piscina,

<sup>1</sup> *S.A.C.* LXXXIV. 134-42.

<sup>2</sup> This word, now superseded by *piscina*, was a favourite with the Camdenians. They meant the entire aperture in which the actual drain was placed. See Parker's *Glossary*, 5th edn., 1850, p. 204.

appendages we conclude of an altar in the rood-loft now removed. The turret stair which led to this loft has of late years formed the approach to the north gallery: it is to be regretted that in replastering the nave the upper doorway, piercing its wall into the roof-loft, was blocked up and its very outline obliterated. The chancel is devoid of screen, and lower by one step than the nave; it is however enclosed by elaborately arcaded parclooses of Middle-Pointed work, which have been relieved of paint, and made good where defective. Benches arranged longitudinally and unappropriated occupy the area; which we should gladly see tenanted by an instructed and orderly choir. A new situation in the chancel aisle has been provided for the organ, at present in the tower gallery<sup>1</sup>. . . some handsome Third-Pointed sedilia on the south side have been cleared, but are unhappily superseded by a pair of altar chairs. The reredos of the same date is embellished with well intended, but not very pleasing attempts in polychrome. . . south of the altar a doorway in the reredos leads down steps into a disused sacristy of the Perpendicular period. . . The works have been conducted under the superintendence of Mr. Carpenter, and have evidently effected an immense improvement: much however remains to be done. Among the most pressing wants are those of a new altar (the present being a mean table), a new altar window, and proper arrangement of the choir.

The present condition of St. Mary's is the best comment on this quite accurate report; the very considerable extent to which the masonry, both externally and internally, has been preserved is sufficient testimony. In one sense, however, the destruction of the galleries, particularly of the north one, is to be regretted; its approach by means of an ancient rood-loft turret added an interesting chapter to the church's history, now wiped out. The sacristy is disused no longer, though its approach is such that lay inspection, not unreasonably, is not always particularly welcome. The altar (great east) window would have delighted the writer, could he have lived to see it; of five lights, with Geometrical traceries, multifoiled circles, and neat trefoils, it is eminently characteristic of Carpenter's school and time; the east window of the south chancel aisle, also with

<sup>1</sup> It is instructive to note a twentieth-century return to the western gallery, for which of course there is ample precedent, both medieval and post-Reformation. Such galleries are now put up to accommodate both organ and (sometimes) singers; recent Sussex examples are those at Brede, Rustington, and Kingston Buci; distinctly, in the two first instances, to the detriment of the architectural history of the fabric.



F A I R L I G H T

FAIRLIGHT CHURCH, c. 1780

(from a drawing by the Rev. R. H. H. H.)

modern traceries, is a simplified copy of it. Its fellow to the north is (or was) ancient, and one of the most delightful things in the church; of a frequent Sussex Curvilinear pattern.<sup>1</sup>

FAIRLIGHT (*St. Andrew*)

Early numbers of *The Ecclesiologist* (vol. iv, N.S. I, pp. 169–70, July 1845; and vol. v, N.S. II, pp. 33–4, Jan. 1846; and vol. vi, N.S. III, pp. 189–90, Nov. 1846) give elaborate accounts and also harshly condemnatory criticism of a new church built in 1845. It succeeded a church pulled down, apparently, the year before; it is worthy of note that not a word of regret is expressed for its disappearance, an attitude, unhappily, not confined to that age. Some slight reference, therefore, to a building that has but recently celebrated its centenary may be useful as a contribution to our greater knowledge of the Gothic Revival.<sup>2</sup>

Contrary to the usual run of such appointments at the time, and for some decades subsequently, where Sussex churches were concerned, an unknown architect, Mr. J. Little, provided the plans. At the same time he furnished the design for another church in London (St. John's Wood) in a paraphrase of Perpendicular. Both were exhibited, together with many other designs by more famous architects, in the Architectural Room at the Royal Academy. Eclectically minded, and with a due regard to the essential character of the smaller churches of Sussex, Mr. Little adopted for the style chosen one correctly described in Kelly's *Directory* as 'later Early English' (but with variations therefrom).

*The Ecclesiologist's* critic adopts the harsh tone which

<sup>1</sup> The east windows of both chancel aisles suffered damage from one of the many air-raids which the town endured, and are still (May 1949) boarded up in consequence. That to the north had six medallions of Early Renaissance painted glass, of alleged Flemish provenance; for that to the south new glass has been designed. The beautiful glass of the great east window, happily uninjured, is a memorial of Canon Streatfeild, vicar from 1911 to 1929, bishop of Lewes for a short period; the west window (tower area) has good mid-Victorian glass. The two should be compared, preferably by evening light in spring or summer.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. John E. Ray describes both churches in *V.C.H.* ix. 177–8, which gives also an illustration of the old church, taken from a drawing in the Sharpe Collection, c. 1800. See also *The Builder*, 17 May 1845.

these enthusiastic and intolerant amateurs often used when not 'damning with faint praise'. He is kind enough to remark: 'there are four good points in this building: first, a moderate chancel (i.e. one of sufficient length), second, a porch in the proper position (i.e. the south, but the critics failed to grasp the fact that the position of a medieval porch was always determined by the convenience of its approach to the majority of parishioners), third, a roof of lead (actually of slate), fourth, a tolerable west window of three lancets, with three plain circles in the head. Everything else is as bad as it can be. The windows in the nave are couplets; the buttresses thin, meagre and obtruding themselves into the corbel-table; the tower, in its contour, a copy of that at St. Andrew's, Hove<sup>1</sup> . . . embattled with an octagonal embattled turret at the north-east,' and so on. The last extract describes the interior, and provides us with a new word, interesting to us of this generation who have seen the birth of many—'the chancel arch is supported on corbels bearing *respondlets*; the seats are open, but of incorrect design, with extremely poor poppy-heads', and so forth.

#### GRAFFHAM (*St. Giles*)

References to this church in *The Ecclesiologist* are brief. The first (vol. xviii, N.S. xv, p. 50, Feb. 1857) merely refers to an inspection by the committee of a design for a 'new church' by G. E. Street; the second (vol. xx, N.S. xvii, p. 295, Aug. 1859) states: 'Mr. Street has designed a very good lychgate for this church. It follows the old simple timber type, and has a tiled roof, with a moulded stone crest, and a metal cross on the gable. The gates are well moulded.'

Street wielded his 'zealous churchman's pick and plane' as vigorously in Sussex as did any restoring architect, here or elsewhere,<sup>2</sup> and the St. Giles' which

<sup>1</sup> Rebuilt by Basevi in 1836 on the foundations of the old.

<sup>2</sup> The new church ascribed to Street may have been, of course, another building; but that architect undoubtedly undertook the restoration of Graffham; it figures in the list of his works given in his son's biography (*Memoir of George Edmund Street*, 1888, pp. 22, 303) and is there correctly stated to have been 'practically rebuilt'.

emerged from his hands in 1874 is a very different building from the medieval structure. Funds appear not to have been lacking, the restoration having been undertaken as a memorial of Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Winchester (1805-73),<sup>1</sup> and Street went to work as drastically as many an architect of lesser reputation would have done.

Old St. Giles' is well shown in a drawing in the Sharpe Collection (1804) depicting admirably its many typically Sussex features. The nave and south aisle under the same sloping roof so frequently adopted by medieval carpenters hereabouts had the picturesque dormer which the common sense of the eighteenth-century builders no less frequently added; it had a tower with timber spire, of which the broaches were more receding than those of the present one. The dormer disappeared; but Street spared the tower and spire, which, however, becoming unsafe, were taken down in 1885; the tower was rebuilt in 1887, with spire added in 1889; the later builders omitted, as is so common, to provide a stair turret, access to the tower being only the customary step-ladder, in this instance of iron, flimsy and unsatisfactory. Street, however, must be given the credit of preserving the ancient fourteenth-century doorway, a pleasing design with good mouldings, now (1948) unfortunately much decayed; it has been reinserted.

Street also preserved some highly interesting details, furnishing no less remarkable innovations of his own. The chancel arch is modern; the old east window which, judging from Sharpe's drawing seems to have been a fourteenth-century design of two lights, gave way to a novel composition of five lancets under triple rear-arches. He also spared the interesting Transitional Norman arcades, so characteristic of the *genius loci*, with their capitals showing closely packed scalloped ornament, simple *griffes* (foot-ornaments) at bases, and arches of hard chalk at the angles, with rubble between. Happily, too, the venerable tub font, possibly Saxon,

<sup>1</sup> Street attended the bishop's funeral at Graftham; *op. cit.*, p. 221. His family were long resident in west Sussex.



EAST GRINSTEAD

EAST GRINSTEAD CHURCH, 1781



of which bowl, base, and plinth are all ancient, has come down to us.

Street's worst offence was the remodelling of the chancel and addition of a south chapel, with the erection of a sham Transitional Norman arcade, copied from those of the nave, and detestable as all such imitations are. This meant the obliteration of the south side of the chancel, which had some details of a curious nature. One remarkable feature has been happily preserved: a doorway leading to a modern vestry retains an old lock, a very quaint piece of ironwork, replaced in a modern door.

#### EAST GRINSTEAD (*St. Swithun*)

This large church and familiar landmark, so nobly set on a hill that all faults of detail are softened by distance, has never received the attention it deserves; travellers, though at first attracted by its handsome proportions, suffer themselves to be too easily disillusioned when learning the name of its architect, James Wyatt (1746–1813). To the student, however, of the Gothic Revival, probably no church of the eighteenth century presents a more attractive study, or one more worthy of attention. For St. Swithun's may rank as something more than a church of the revival; together with the slightly earlier fabric of another Sussex church, Laughton, it offers satisfactory proof that the old Gothic art of England never died, but that in some form, however 'debased and corrupt' we may choose to classify it, it lingered on, Barry's St. Peter's at Brighton providing the final link in the great chain of medieval beginnings until, so to speak, the morning light dawned in a new architectural sky. It may not be too fanciful to bring in a comparison with those northern lands in midsummer where, ere the sunset has faded, another glow appears on the horizon.<sup>1</sup>

East Grinstead was beloved of the Camdenians and

<sup>1</sup> The belated Gothic remodelling of Laughton took place c. 1760 (*V.C.H.* II, 379). Wyatt's rebuilding of East Grinstead seems to have been commenced in 1789, but the tower was not completed until 1813; St. Peter's Brighton was commenced in 1824.



LOOKING WEST



LOOKING EAST  
EAST GRINSTEAD CHURCH: AFTER FALL OF TOWER  
*(from drawings in the Burrell collection)*

their followers from the foundation here of the St. Margaret's Sisterhood, the memorial of the famous liturgiologist, the Rev. John Mason Neale (1818-66), and of the two references in *The Ecclesiologist*, one is to that remarkable conventual establishment.<sup>1</sup>

Wyatt's restoration of the church, subsequent to its partial destruction by the fall of its tower in 1785, seems to have been carried out with greater deference to the original design than is customarily supposed. The north side appears to have suffered most; there but a solitary pier and arch were left and certain windows, but on the south four or five bays were left almost intact, and windows.

A drawing taken immediately after the fall of the tower appears to show the same curious octagonal piers, with concave sides, capitals, and bases as now. The arches, however, seem to be less depressed than at present; and all these, including the chancel arch, appear to be Wyatt's work. A happy inspiration, fortunately heedless of the criticism of any succeeding generation of purists, led the architect to add a clerestory of five foliated circular windows on each side, with the result that St. Swithun's is an admirably lighted church. In these windows there is a certain sense of incongruity; round clerestory windows are not a marked feature, anywhere, of English Gothic, though it is true that Wyatt might have claimed Sussex precedents, e.g. at Arundel, Beddingham, Cuckfield, Framfield, and elsewhere. The chief defect of his work, however, still manifest, is the miserably inadequate chancel, a small rectangular projection only a few feet square. This was

<sup>1</sup> It gives, however, no detailed description of it; Dr. Neale was associated with the editorship of this publication and perhaps avoided giving publicity to an institution in which he was interested personally. A late number of *The Ecclesiologist* gives his obituary notice (vol. xxvii, N.S. xxiv, pp. 265-6, Oct. 1866). Dr. Neale (1818-66) was present at the foundation stone laying of St. Margaret's Convent (20 July 1865) but did not live to see its completion. It was designed by G. E. Street, who gave his services. See Street's *Memoir*, op. cit., p. 20; Eleanor A. Toyle, *John Mason Neale, D.D., a Memoir*, 1907, pp. 311, &c. An excellent handbook, *East Grinstead and its Parish Church* (5th edn., 1946), has been written by the present vicar, the Rev. Golding-Bird. See also Wallace H. Hills, *The History of East Grinstead*, 1906, pp. 63-86; and *S.A.C.* xx. 132-72, 'Notes on East Grinstead', by J. C. Stenning.

doubtless based on a curtailed arrangement of the older church, which appears to have been shorn of its chancel, the easternmost bay of the nave, fenced in with three-sided altar rails, serving as such. It is necessary to mention this makeshift to make us realize the meaning of the criticism in *The Ecclesiologist* which follows (vol. IX, N.S. VI, p. 144, Oct. 1848):

We have in another place<sup>1</sup> mentioned this church as a curious example of some correct feeling and execution some thirty years ago. It has lately undergone a change which at this stage of ecclesiology we should have thought impossible. There was a very fair pulpit in the proper position, with an open reading-pew and lettern<sup>2</sup> just inside the sacrarium. These have been swept away; and an old pulpit, reading-desk, and clerk's-pew, set up at the west end of the nave. This portentous erection measures twenty feet from east to west. The reading-desk is a plain watch-box, eight feet high. The font is shut out from the congregation; and almost all the sittings in front of the pulpit turned round to the west. It is but due to the Archdeacon of Lewes to say, that he in vain interfered to prevent this disgraceful alteration. This is a warning to all parish priests, in restoring their churches, to destroy the miserable work that they may remove.

It is hardly necessary to say that the advice proffered in the last sentence was faithfully carried out; and the colossal three-decker mentioned, perhaps one especially designed by Wyatt on a scale befitting a large church, has vanished.<sup>3</sup> And the ardent reformers who penned this strongly worded protest to *The Ecclesiologist* would, were they to revisit the church nowadays, appreciate the twentieth-century remodelled ritual arrangements. Handsome screens, designed by Sir Arthur Blomfield, extend right across the church from north to south, those dividing the aisles, with return or parclose screens, forming chapels. The removal of the organ from the east end of the north aisle and its incorporation in a new instrument (1936-7) has preserved Wyatt's west gallery, effectually shutting out all light from possible sources to the west of it.<sup>4</sup> The builders of our earlier post-Reformation galleries, as at Worth, were more considerate in

<sup>1</sup> I am unable to trace this reference.

<sup>2</sup> The Camdenians preferred this older form of spelling.

<sup>3</sup> Some fragments of it are preserved in the south aisle.

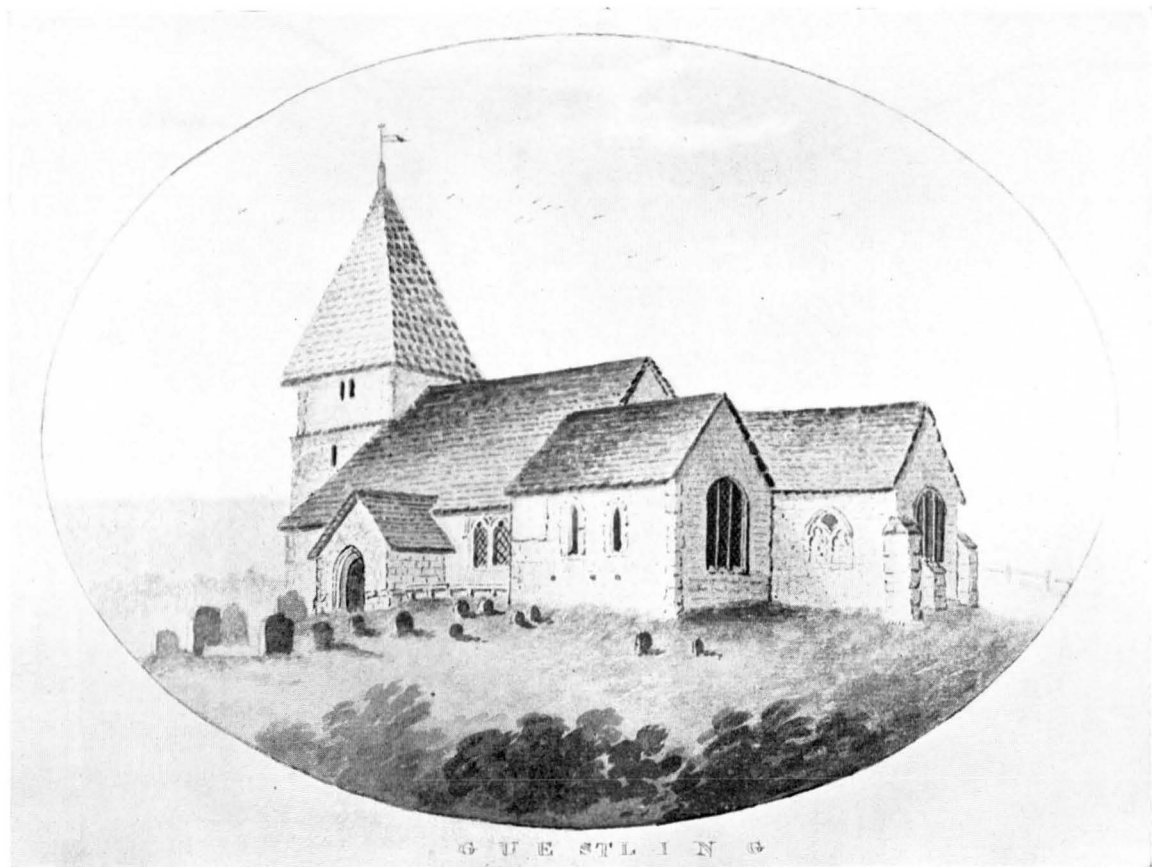
<sup>4</sup> See also p. 159, n. 1.

this respect. The church is one that few ecclesiologists will visit without satisfaction; not the least attraction of the building being the Museum, housed in the tower, containing among other curios the eighteenth-century reredos.

GUESTLING (*St. Lawrence* or *St. Andrew*)

In view of the restoration, of the type which antiquaries rightly describe as 'heavy', in 1886, and serious injury by fire in 1890, a charmingly naïve description of the church in *The Ecclesiologist* (vol. VI, N.S. III, pp. 182-3, Nov. 1846) may be transcribed literally:

This little church is very interesting, as a rustic history of the mighty revolution by which Romanesque became Pointed. It consists of a western tower, nave with aisles, south porch, and chancel with two chantries, all with distinct roofs, except the north aisle of the nave, which has a lean-to. The first feature which strikes the visitor is the tower, and his first impression probably is that it is Saxon, when he sees the small double belfry-light divided by the equal circular shaft. It is, however, undoubtedly of Norman age. Three sides of the tower are nearly alike: above, a double belfry-window; below two windows in different stories irregularly disposed. The west and north sides are also diversified by a broad shallow staircase excrescence (we cannot call it a turret) having three single lights on as many stories to the west. Formerly this tower was only accessible from the church, but in barbaric days a western door has been cut through the west wall. The whole is so covered with rough-cast that the external masonry must be matter of conjecture. A young ecclesiologist would at once pronounce such a tower to be Saxon, although the windows have not the external splay. But let him enter into the church, and look at the north arcade of the nave. Here he finds three arches, of irregular dimensions, of only one order, with narrow chamfers, resting on square piers with a small quasi-abacus on their lateral faces, and, looking eastward, a chancel arch of the same description meets his eye. The whole work is as rude as possible. Therefore, these arches too might be esteemed Saxon. So they might be were they not unfortunately pointed. This is literally the only difference between them and the tower. The west window of the north aisle, which is Romanesque, is the narrowest we think we ever noticed. The arch leading from the north aisle to the north chantry is of rich Romanesque of three orders, and encircled to the west by a zigzag string. It would be curious to settle the comparative chronology of this rich specimen of Romanesque, and those most rude Pointed arches just described. The two side windows in the north chantry are lancets, encircled with a pear-shaped moulding.



GUESTLING

GUESTLING CHURCH, c. 1780

A similar window at the west end of the chantry, to the north of the abutment of the nave-aisle, is walled up. The east window was formerly a triplet; the extreme nook-shafts still remain. There are double sedilia, of First-Pointed, a head being carved over the one to the east, the chancel projecting beyond the chantries. It is divided from the north chantry by an arcade of two Romanesque arches, of two orders, resting on a square pier and corbels, and corbels for responds. An arcade of two Middle-Pointed arches, of two orders, resting on an octagonal pier and two semicircular responds, separates it from the south chantry. The side windows of this chantry are two lancets with enormous splays. The south arcade of the nave consists of two Middle-Pointed arches, of two orders, on an octagonal pillar and semicircular responds, with a blank space to the west. The aisle side-windows are two-light Third-Pointed. The roof is genuine and good, consisting of ties; one in the south chantry has a characteristic Middle-Pointed king-post. In the actual vestry (the eastern portion of the north aisle) is preserved the rich chest figured in the 'Glossary of Architecture'. There is the wreck of one poppy headed seat in the nave. The pulpit and desk are placed centrally. The tower has been spoiled by a heavy modern slated capping.

It will be noted that the writer (and such error persists to the present day) seems not to have grasped the fact that the nave arcades were cut through earlier walls, conceivably of Saxon date; and that probably a core of pre-Conquest masonry remains above the arcades, while coeval quoins are still to be seen in the west wall. It is likely, however, that this latter piece of evidence was concealed by the rough-cast referred to; and it should be added that traces are still visible inside the tower of the marks of timber framing, doubtless those of a wooden turret, removed when the tower, an undoubted Norman structure, was built up against an older west front.<sup>1</sup>

The restoration of the church, delayed until 1886, was deplorable on many counts, the restorers callously obliterating many of the most important features in its architectural history; as in so many painful instances, a new chancel arch was put up—the worst offences of

<sup>1</sup> An interesting parallel exists, or existed, at Southwick in Sussex, where a twelfth-century tower was built up against an older west front, probably of the eleventh century. The tower, damaged by a bomb on 20 Feb. 1941, had to be taken down, when the old roof-marks of an earlier structure were revealed. The wall is now (June 1949) in bad condition; its rebuilding is probably necessary.

the restorer were of this character, as Rodmell and Westhampnett bear sad witness. No less reprehensible was the destruction of the ancient north arcade, of which the writer in *The Ecclesiologist* gives so piquant a description; for its three arches two were substituted, no doubt considered a great 'improvement'. The little Norman window was retained; it must have been coeval with the arcade, of which the form and pointed arches indicated the Transitional Norman period. A sham Norman doorway was inserted, a particularly offensive piece of work, in a wall where such had been deliberately avoided by the old builders, who, at Bishopstone, Southwick, and elsewhere, aimed primarily at a defensive structure. It is remarkable, however, that the old Norman masons, an unusual feature in a remote church of that time, built a stone newel, contained in a clumsy thickening of the wall at the north-west angle.

The high value of the Transitional Norman features so well summed up in the paragraph transcribed, viz. the north arch separating the chancel from the north chantry (chapel of St. John the Evangelist), is well known to students of Sussex church architecture.<sup>1</sup> The foliated capitals and mouldings are fine; the curious retention of the chevron ornament is paralleled at Burpham, New Shoreham, and elsewhere; the Canterbury school of mixed masons, English and French, released after the completion of the great works at the cathedral there, may be responsible.

A possibly earlier tragedy in Guestling's history is the disappearance of the chest mentioned;<sup>2</sup> it had pretty Flamboyant traceries, and was undoubtedly of foreign, probably Flemish, provenance. It seems to have been broken up, and it is known that fragments are, or were

<sup>1</sup> An excellent account of the church by Mr. John E. Ray will be found in *V.C.H.* ix. 182-3, with plan by himself and Mr. Walter H. Godfrey. Mr. Ray points out the resemblance between its Transitional Norman ornament and that at St. Mary's, Eastbourne; it is well illustrated also in *V.C.H.* ii. 370, by Mr. Philip M. Johnston.

<sup>2</sup> The illustration of the chest in Parker's *Glossary* (5th edn., 1850) will be found in plate 53. A sketch by Richard Hussey is in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, dated 1832 (*S.N.Q.* iv. 75).



recently, still in private hands;<sup>1</sup> their restoration to the church, even as museum pieces, would be an act of grace; better, they could be incorporated in a new chest.

Within four years of the restoration, in the early hours of Sunday morning, 23 March 1890, a disastrous fire was caused by the overheating of an iron flue of one of the stoves; the ancient roof was ignited, and the entire woodwork of the church perished. The masonry also suffered throughout; and reddened stones, as in so many churches that have endured similar conflagrations, still bear witness thereto. The new arcade had but a short life, and with its neighbour has undergone renewal.<sup>2</sup>

### HORSHAM (*St. Mary*)

Our next extract from *The Ecclesiologist* (vol. XIII, N.S. IX, pp. 375-8, Dec. 1852) is of greater interest to the lawyer and social reformer than the antiquary, in its report of 'The Horsham Pew Case', an action which aroused a good deal of attention at the time. The report, which is not without its humorous side, is certainly of value at the present day in reminding churchwardens of their responsibilities, and possible pecuniary liabilities as well. Those concerned at Horsham must have felt a cold shudder in their spinal regions when bluntly told by Dr. Phillimore, 'the learned judge of the Chichester Consistorial Court', what these responsibilities were. The judge is stated to have 'warned the churchwardens of Horsham that if they continued to foster and abet an offence, which they were bound to prevent and extirpate, and to disregard the solemn obligation to maintain the Ecclesiastical law, which they had contracted on their institution into their office, they might find they had subjected themselves to criminal proceedings, and to punishment'.

The unfortunate churchwardens were three in number.

<sup>1</sup> Information from Mr. Ray.

<sup>2</sup> The *Sussex Daily News*, Mon. 24 March 1890, gives a full description of the fire, which consumed adjacent farm buildings as well; but its reference to 'complete destruction', and statement that 'not a vestige of nave, chancel, or tower remains', are obviously exaggerated.

Two, it would appear, doubtless anxious to adopt a conciliatory policy all round, and to avoid taking sides, had suffered their active duties to devolve upon a third, by timely excuses of illness and prudent resignation.

Briefly the facts were that at Horsham, as elsewhere, 'a practice was prevalent of buying and selling seats in the parish church, so systematically carried on, that a register was kept of the supposed value of the seats; . . . this illegal and discreditable traffic had been countenanced by some vicars, and had been sanctioned and abetted by the churchwardens'. One of the seats (or pews) in question, 'customarily used by the inhabitants of a particular mansion, but not attached either by faculty or by prescription', became vacant through the demise of the head of the house. A parishioner, Mr. Rawlinson and his family, took possession of the pew, with the sanction, it was alleged, both of the incumbent and the third churchwarden. But early one Sunday morning a sister of the former occupiers turned up; and when Mr. Rawlinson arrived refused to admit him; whereupon there was 'a slight disturbance'. Mr. Rawlinson then brought the action in question, resulting in the defendants being 'monished that they should refrain for the future from intruding themselves in the pew, and from disturbing Mr. Rawlinson and his family in the quiet and peaceable possession of the same. And further, they were condemned in the costs of this suit.' By what right, however, either party was excluded in favour of another is not clear to the layman; it may have been a case of 'first come, first served'.<sup>1</sup>

### ICKLESHAM (*All Saints* or *St. Nicholas*)<sup>2</sup>

This remarkable church, with its heavy and unusual

<sup>1</sup> Disputes as to the alleged rights of parishioners to any particular seat or seats in their parish church were not unknown in pre-Reformation days. See W. J. Hardy, 'Remarks on the History of Seat Reservation in Churches', *Archaeologia*, LIII. 95-106; the writer does not mention the Horsham case. I can find no reference to it in our *Collections*; it does not appear, apparently, in the copious histories of Mr. Wm. Albery, and Mr. S. E. Winbolt's *History of the Parish Church* passes it by in silence. Hence *The Ecclesiologist's* report is worth quoting.

<sup>2</sup> The former seems the correct dedication; the latter being that of the south chapel: *S.N.Q.* I. 154.

physiognomy, has been well described in our *Collections* and elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> There are three references to the church in *The Ecclesiologist*, of which the first (vol. VI, N.S., pp. 181-2, Nov. 1846) may here be transcribed:

This very fine church has a very remarkable appearance externally from the high-pitched roof of the nave embracing the aisles; the chancel and its chantries, of greater width than the nave or aisles, having separate roofs. The tower is engaged at the end of the north aisle, east of the chancel arch. Commencing westward, the nave is separated from the aisles by an arcade of three Romanesque arches (of horse-shoe form) of two orders resting on circular pillars, with a blank space towards the west. The side windows are obliterated, excepting on the south [where] there are traces of a single Romanesque light, and of a square-headed two-light Pointed one, which must have supplanted it. There was formerly an entrance to the north which is now destroyed. The chancel-arch, which is of First-Pointed, of two orders, rests on corbels. The tower is very noticeable. Though low it has an appearance of stateliness, like that attributed to Saxon towers. It is of three stories, each of the upper ones of diminished size. The present entrance to the church is through it, advantage having been taken of the largest arch of an internal arcade of three on its west side. On its second story are small circular lights. It is now groined, and it opens to the aisle, chancel and chantry, by three arches; that to the chantry being early Pointed. The north chantry is separated from the chancel by two very early First-Pointed arches, of two orders, resting on square piers with nook-shafts, and semi-circular pilasters [responds] to the second order (supplied by corbels at the other extremity.) The east window of this clerestory [*sic*: the writer is referring apparently to the main chancel] was once Middle-Pointed, apparently of three lights and reticulated. At the south side, a Romanesque piscina has been formed in the respond-wall adjoining the east end. This chancel was lit by three lancets now blocked on the north side, with extremely wide splays, and under them, extending the length of the north wall, is a beautiful early First-Pointed arcade of four arches, and a half arch to the west. Traces of colour remain. The chancel projects a bay beyond the chantries: the east window was Middle-pointed; its splay remains. There is a beautiful two-light Middle-Pointed window, (two ogee trefoiled lights with cinquefoiled circle in head,) on each side of the sacrarium, now blocked up. On the

<sup>1</sup> T. T. Churton, *S.A.C.* xxxii. 105-22; Canon G. M. Livett, *S.A.C.* xlvi. 38-64, with plate of mouldings, an excellent study. See also John E. Ray, in *V.C.H.* ix. 187-9, with plan by Mr. Walter H. Godfrey and Mr. E. F. Harvey; it should be compared with those by Canon Livett; and references to the Rev. J. L. Petit in the text. Capitals at Steyning and Icklesham are the work of the same school; *S.A.C.* lvii. 149-161; Bond, *Gothic Architecture in England*, 412; cf. Livett, *op. cit.*, pp. 48, 60.

south side is a rich Middle-pointed piscina with fenestella.<sup>1</sup> The lower part of the rood-screen remains blocked up by pues. It must have been low. There is a semicircular recess cut in the lower wall to the east of the arch opening into the chancel. The south chantry is separated from the chancel by three Middle-Pointed arches, of two orders, on octagonal pillars. The east window of this chantry has been modernized. On the south side are three windows, placed very high up, now blocked, of two lights, with circles in the head without foliations. (Is this want of foliation a local characteristic?—we rather suspect it.) Beneath them is an arcade of six arches, of which the fifth and sixth to the east are respectively raised a step above the one next; so that these at least were sedilia;—adjoining the sixth is a rich piscina, blocked in later days by a high-tomb. If the remaining arches in this and the northern arcades were seats, they must, we think, have held cushions or stools, or else been devoted perhaps to the acolytes, as they are almost on a level with the ground, and the bases of the pillars prevent our supposing the floor raised. The chancel and chantries are on the nave level. At the west end of this chantry is a Romanesque door, blocked, and above it a small blocked circular window like those in the tower, now partially concealed by the aisle-roof. Some of the timbers of the roof are of good Middle-Pointed, composed of ties, and with octagonal banded king-posts.

Soon after this notice appeared the restoration of the church was entrusted to Mr. S. S. Teulon; the work occupied his attention for several years, from 1847 to 1852, and must have been carried on with some intermissions; Teulon, we know, was very busy in the neighbourhood at this time and later, both with new churches and reconstruction of old ones. In vol. IX of *The Ecclesiologist* (N.S. VI, p. 268, Feb. 1849) a severe criticism appears of Teulon's restoration, the point at issue being one on which probably antiquaries are still divided:

This beautiful church . . . has lately been restored by Mr. S. S. Teulon, but we only judge of the manner in which it has been done by two lithographs. That of the exterior shows however that the remarkable span roof which formerly embraced both nave and aisles has given place to a dandified clerestory, with windows matching the new aisle windows, trefoil-headed single ones. We had not much opinion of Mr. Teulon's ability, but we were not prepared to see him or any other architect in the present day so wantonly destroying a feature of extreme singularity and picturesque effect in an ancient church. The nave of Icklesham will henceforward be, externally,

<sup>1</sup> See p. 158 n. 2.

a modern affair,—once it was a study in which Mr. Petit would have rejoiced, while inside it was remarkably solemn. The interior view of the chancel exhibits a few longitudinal benches and a sanctuary rail.

'The dandified clerestory' was, in fact, not carried out. In a temperate letter (the Camdenians treated him more considerately later on) Teulon justified himself (vol. XIII, N.S. IX, p. 204, June 1852) by remarking that 'he felt so strongly the force of the argument in *The Ecclesiologist* in favour of the then existing roof, being also anxious not to interfere with the integrity of the building, that he advised with the Vicar on the subject, and after a long conference and many opinions pro and con, it was concluded to adopt a roof embracing both nave and aisles, and the new roof was accordingly executed. When, however, this was completed, and the walls stripped of the broken plaistering, then, as he had conjectured, he found, but only on the north side, the clerestory window.' Unfortunately the architect gives no hint as to its nature.

The reference to the Rev. J. L. Petit is timely. That excellent antiquary and most skilful of rapid draughtsmen had published a slightly earlier work, *Remarks on Church Architecture*, in 2 vols., 1841, in which two invaluable pre-restoration views of Icklesham church are given.<sup>1</sup> One of the interior, looking to the north-west from the chancel, shows the screen referred to; perhaps, as the writer suggests, it was only breast-high, like that at West Tarring. The other, of the exterior from the north-east, is very remarkable. It shows a somewhat large timber structure, presumably a vestry, and that of some age, at the north-east angle of the north chapel or chantry; it seems to have had an annexe of some sort to the east of it, under the same roof, slightly elbowed. I can find no description of this building; it disappeared, no doubt, at the 'restoration', since it is wanting in Nibbs's etching from a similar viewpoint, taken in 1850.

<sup>1</sup> Vol. II, p. 103. Petit is best known to Sussex antiquaries for his monograph on Boxgrove Priory, 1861, in which, however, he hardly does himself justice.

Of the rest of Teulon's work at Icklesham little need be said. His worst offence, perhaps, was the addition of a freakish hexagonal western porch, a precedent for which it would be difficult to find hereabouts; apparently it took the place of one, semicircular on plan, built in 1785. His new east window of five lights, not three, of Geometrical tracery, is inoffensive. He has been charged with the destruction of an ancient tomb in the south (St. Nicholas) chapel, but unfairly; it seems to have been falling to pieces and beyond repair. His treatment of the other chancel windows and retention of many ancient features, e.g. blocked doorways in the north wall and at the west end of the south chapel, are among the points in which Teulon compares favourably with certain of his contemporaries; and when all is said and done, the church still remains one of the most valuable studies in the diocese.

*(To be continued)*