

Little Walsingham Church.

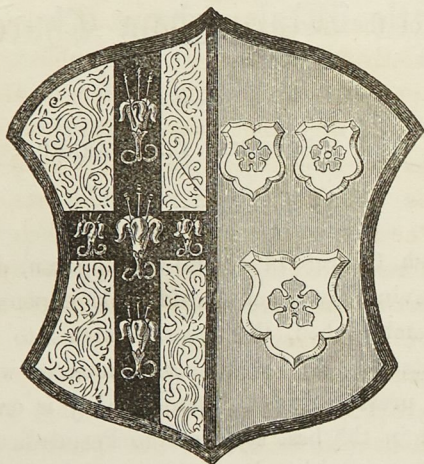
COMMUNICATED BY

THE REV. JAMES LEE WARNER.

THE Parish Church of Little Walsingham, dedicated to St. Mary, having lately, at considerable expense, been restored and embellished, the occasion seems to invite to a more complete record of particulars connected with its past history and present state.¹ The building is on the whole uniform, and in the best style of the Perpendicular period; except the tower, which is earlier, good in itself, but not connected symmetrically with the body of the edifice. It measures from east to west 151 feet, exclusive of the west porch, where the handsome folding doors remain, mullioned, with subordinate tracery. The south porch also retains a good door, and has a groined vaulting, with exterior niches, and a room over it. The tower is surmounted by a lofty leaden spire. The priest's doorway, unduly confined on one side by the proximity of a buttress, gains space on the other by the insertion of a recessed arch in the thickness of the wall of the transept, hereafter to be described; for the original plan of the church was limited to a nave, aisles, and chancel; attached to which, on the north, are traces of a vestry, long since demolished. The east window of five lights is a very fine example of the cruciform arrangement

¹ Some years ago I contributed to the *British Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 139, an illustrated description of this church.

of tracery.² Its early glazing is gone, with the exception of some fragments, principally in the upper portion; but in the centre light is inserted the coat of Prior Vowell impaling the arms of his abbey, for the illustration of which



we are indebted to the Committee of the Archaeological Institute. The sedilia, on the same level, occupy a stone bench beneath the sill of the south window, and the space between the jambs is panelled in three compartments with a battlemented cornice. The piers of the nave are set on diamond-wise, filleted on their angles. These fillets however on either side gradually sweep off into a large hollow and a round, thus giving the appearance of two engaged shafts on each face of the pier; the whole being surmounted by a necking and cap-mouldings. The architrave mouldings on the north side of the nave are different from those on the south; but the clerestory windows are similar, being twelve in number in all, besides one smaller on the north side for the rood-loft, which seems to have been originally of imposing design and execution. The walls which enclose its staircases

² See *British Magazine*, vol. iv., for illustration.

are built of unusual dimensions, and its two doorway arches are placed at different levels, as if to afford access to two separate lofts, one above the other. The font is sufficiently known from Britton's *Architectural Antiquities*, vol. iv. Its details are given minutely by G. R. Lewis in an elaborate folio, No. 1 of the *Early Fonts of England*, a tentative publication, too costly for the nature of the subject. Previously to the late restoration, an easy incline in the pavement ascended six feet from the tower to the east window, but this difference of level is now judiciously dealt with in ten separate rises. The stalls, with their misereres, the original pulpit, and the handsome bench-ends with their finials, have been all restored and utilized by a judicious appropriation. The open roof of the nave combines plainness and solidity. Its character is waggon-headed, whereas the roof of the chancel is canted in five cants, but its timbers, being discoloured, have been covered with boarding, and moulded ribs attached to it at intervals. The spandrils of the roof-timbers in both aisles are filled with tracery of excellent design and varied pattern.

The formation of guilds at Walsingham led, at some period subsequent to the dedication of the church, to the erection of two chantries, formed by the prolongation of the north and south aisles so as to form transeptal additions. Each has its rood-screen; each opens on the chancel by a depressed Tudor arch of considerable span; and the approach to each from the aisles is beneath a rich ornamentation of ceiling, divided into panels by moulded roof-timbers, and again subdivided by ribs with central enrichment.—Vide plate 51, Pugin's *Gothic Architecture*. One of these chantries, by a document lately discovered in the chapter house, Westminster, is proved to have been erected previous to 1519.³ Subsequently the Guild of St. Mary was united with those

³ See an account of the Walsingham Guilds by Mr. Joseph Burt, printed in the Norwich Volume of the Archaeological Institute.

of St. Anne and St. George, and we may thus speculate conjecturally on the occupants of three niches, which evidently once existed in the north chantry.



cheon, which, previous to the late restoration, might have been seen painted in



On a quarry in this chantry we have a merchant's mark, possibly of John Partington, who coined his farthing at Walsingham in the seventeenth century. He was buried near the window and died s. p. 1677. "Quadraginta plus minus natus annos." His father, Thomas Partington, left a monumental escutcheon, which, previous to the late restoration, might have been seen painted in distemper near the rood-loft stairs. The destruction of this curious memorial is much to be regretted. It bore on its dexter side the monogram of the deceased with his closed ledger in chief, impaling the arms of the Mercers' Company of London. His death is thus registered :

"Obitus—Thomas Partington, Gent., Dec. 12, 1657."

Passing to the more important monuments, which are noticed in Blomefield's *Norfolk*, we are naturally at once arrested by that of Sir Henry Sydney, whose recumbent effigy in alabaster, with that of Lady Jane, his wife, has been successfully removed from within the communion rails to a more suitable position in the north transept. The effigy of the lady, in a ruff and pointed stomacher, lies on a raised slab within an arched recess, beneath a soffit in compartments, once highly decorated, its interior exhibiting hatchments, a frieze of Pheons, and other costly appendages, relieved by gilding. In advance, two columns of veined Italian marble, supporting each an obelisk, enclose a lower

slab, projecting from the face of the wall, and bearing the effigy of the knight, with short curly hair and a square-trimmed beard, in a rich suit of the period. He also wears a ruff. His head is bare, and rests upon his gloves and helmet; in addition, slightly elevated by a roll of his mat-trass of rushes, in which every minute detail is carved with exquisite finish.

Our description of the Sydney coats shall be from the large escutcheon in the centre of the pediment, which differs in some particulars from that given by Blomefield.

1. Or, a Pheon, azure SYDNEY
2. Arg., 2 barrulets, and in chief 3 escutcheons, sable . . . ? CLOWFELD
3. Arg., 3 chevrons, gules, and label of 3 points, azure . . . BARRINGTON
4. Arg., on a bend, gules, 3 lozenges of the first . . . MERCYE
5. Per pale, or and gules; an escarbuncle counterchanged of the first, and sable MANDEVILLE
6. Azure, a chevron between 3 mullets, or CHETWYND
7. Arg., 3 lions rampant, gules BELHOUSE
8. Barry of ten, arg. and gules, a lion rampant, or, crowned of the second BRANDON

The above, with some variations, are repeated on a smaller escutcheon within the recess, impaling

- 1st and 4th, arg., a lion rampant, gardant, gules JERMY
 2nd and 3rd, gules, a bend between 3 martlets, or;

and this smaller escutcheon is the one described by Blomefield.⁴

The inscriptions are fast fading, and will soon become illegible.

HERE LYES IN HOPE AND EXPECTATION
 OF THE IOYFVLL AND DISYRED DAY OF
 RESVRRECTION, WHEN THE SAVIOVR OF
 THE WORLD SHALL APPEARE IN POWER AND

⁴ The above readings may admit of some correction by reference to the monument in Westminster Abbey of Frances Countess of Sussex, (vide Ped.) foundress of Sydney Sussex Coll., where the same arms, quarterly of eight, are thus marshalled:—1. Sydney. 2. Brandon. 3. Clunford. 4. Barrington. 5. Mercy. 6. Magnaville. 7. Chetwynd. 8. Baard.—Neale's *Westminster Abbey*, vol. ii., p. 178.

IVDGMET TO AWAKE ALL THOSE WHO
 HAVE SLEPT IN HIM TO BE PARTAKERS
 OF THE EVERLASTINGE HAPPINES OF
 THE ETERNALL KINGDOME, SR HENRY
 SYDNEY, KNIGHT, DISCENDED FROM THE
 STEMME OF VISCOVNT LISLE, BARON
 OF PENSHEVRST IN KENT, LORDE
 CHAMBERLEYN TO THE QUEENE MATIE
 AND GOVERNOVRE OF VLVSHING.

HIS YOVTH WAS SEASONED WITH THE PEARE OF
 GOD, DVTY TOWARDS HIS PARENTS, AND LOVE TO
 LEARNEINGE, HIS FOLLOWINGE AGE YEELDED
 PRIVYTES OF HOSPITALITY TOWARDS ALL THE
 MEN, OF CHARITIE TOWARDS THE POORE, OF
 FAYTHFULNES TOWARDS HIS PRIENDES, AND OF
 PEACEABLENES AMONGST HIS NEIGHBOVRS, HE
 AND HIS END WAS CONCLVDED WITH PIETY,
 WITH PATIENCE, AND WITH A COMFORTABLE
 FAREWELL AT THE TEARME OF 59 YEARE, THE
 2 OF NOVEMBER, ANNO DOMINI, 1612.

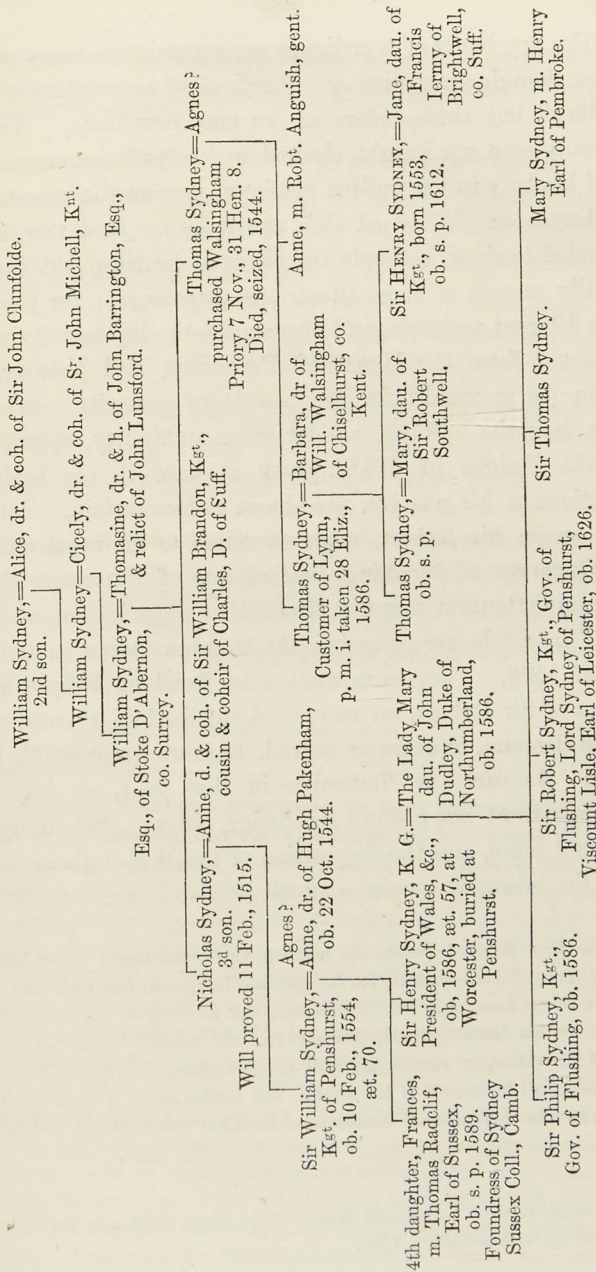
HERE IOYND AS WELL IN Y^E SAME HOPE OF A IOYFVLL RESVRECTION
 AS IN ALL PIETY AND CONIVGALL LOVE TO THE SAYD SR HENRY
 SYDNEY, RESTS THE BODY OF DAME JANE HIS WIFE, DAUGHTER OF
 FRANCIS IERMY OF BRIGHTWELL IN SVFF^K, ESQ., WHO AFTER HER
 PEREGRINATION OF 73 YEARES (INIOYING 28 THEROF IN THE
 HAPPY SOCIETY OF HER SAYD HVS BAND, AND CONTINING HIS NAME
 AND MEMORY FOR 28 MORE (IN A MOST CHAST AND RETIRED WID-
 DOWHOOD) VPON THE 8TH OF AUGUST, 1638, DEPARTED THIS LIFE.
 NO LADY LIVED MORE CHRISTIANLY NOR DIED MORE HAPPILY.

MANY DAUGHTERS HAVE DONE VERTVOVSLY
 BUT THOU EXCELLEST THEM ALL.—PRO. 31, 20.

The connection of this Sir Henry with the time-honoured
 "STEMME" of Lisle may be thus briefly illustrated:—

Pedigree,

Shewing the connexion of the Sydneys of Walsingham with the "stem of Penshurst."



I have carried this pedigree (by the kind assistance of the Rev. G. H. Dashwood) two descents higher than was otherwise necessary, for the purpose of suggesting whether Clunfolde might not be in error for Clowfeld. If so, we might assign satisfactorily the coat on the Sydney monument, which is unappropriated in Blomfield.

The dry bones of a pedigree are repulsive to many readers, even though suggestive of "Pembroke" or redolent of "Arcadia;" but these before us we may reanimate. We have already seen our knight clothed in his puffed court armour, and his lady in her quilted petticoat, reposing in monumental alabaster on the raised slab above him. And now we are enabled to shew, not only the outward bearing, but the very family secrets of these illustrious personages; for the hand of a diligent archæologist⁵ has caught the lights and shadows reflected from the House of Penshurst, and photographed them (so to speak) for the benefit of posterity. We have seen how the epitaph, amidst some ambiguity, appropriates to the Knight of Walsingham a share in the high distinctions of his relative, the Queen's chamberlain. This was his cousin Sir Robert, whose services to his royal mistress, as Governor of Flushing, are matters of European history. But our attention may be directed to some letters, which at brief intervals were crossing the German Ocean in the winter of 1596. They were written by Rowland Whyte, a paid agent of Sir Robert, an accredited spy for him at court; who could descend, as occasion served, to more questionable practices. As early as November in that year, an important coming event was casting its shadow before. Sir Henry was without heirs, and the disposition of the Walsingham manors was the interesting point at issue.

"Mr. Hen. Sidney" (writes the unscrupulous practitioner) "is so busy and carefull, about this assurance, for the purchase he makes, that night and day he lives with his Lawyers. Whiting tels me, that he fynds by his master, that he continews his former purpose towards you and yours; but as yet hath not settled his estate, or signed any will or conveighance; when he doth, your Lordship shall be assured of his service, and furtherance. That if his Mistris knew, how he was inclined towards you, he might receive blame, and therefore

⁵ I allude to the "Letters and Memorials of State, written by the Sydneys," collected by Arthur Collins, 1746.

refers all Conference to his comming to London, which will be every term, and desires to have no letters sent unto him. Mr. Sidney took your letter very kindly, and will answer it."

Hardly is the ink dry before Whyte is again writing.

"I mett this day with a Cozen of mine, the Customer of Lynne, who in secret told me, that he had, within these few Daies, conference with Mr. Hen. Sydney, and that he findes him so well bent towards you, and your name, that he will leave you all his Lands."

This, as the event proves, Sir Henry did accordingly; but two days afterwards we have another notice.

"Your Cosen, Mr. Henry Sydney, is gone into the country, and desires you to excuse his not answering of your Lettre, for want of time. He promises much, and that he loves you; God send him to perform it in deedes. I know Whiting will continew all good offices."

It is melancholy to see the heads of a noble and illustrious family condescending to soil their hands with such tools as Whyte and Whiting. But the former of these worthies soon had an opportunity of requiting the good intentions, sincerely meant, of Sir Henry. As witness the following:—

"Rowland Whyte, Esq., to Sir Robert Sydney.

"Right Honourable,

"Strand, this 26 Oct., 1597.

"All the care that is taken in your cosen Sydney's affair, is to keep yt from the Starr Chamber, which I feare me will be very hardly donne, because I cannott gett hym to be liberall. I have caused him to sett down some justification of his proceedings in the matter of corn, whereof he is accused; and honest Mr. Hen. Montague hath made a declaration, which carries good probable shewes of well dealing. Yt was convenient, for I never knew man so generally blamed as he is for buying and selling of Corn; but to deal truly with you, he hath offended the Law, by not buying and selling in open market. But his charitable Deades have bene great towards the Poore; he hath sold his Corn in the Markett 12s. & 8s. under the Price of the Markett: He relieved all the last yeare weakly, 400 poore men at his Doore; he bestows upon the Poore in Walsingham xx^l. a year; and this last yeare, sent corn to South Wales, and North Wales, where great want was, and we received comfort by yt. These reasons do we alledge, and I deliver here and there copies, to make his way the more easy. I doe not doubt, my Lord, but that Mr. Sydney will find that you have good friends here, and that I have carefully traveled in this Business. Yesternight Mr. Hen. Mountague, & Mr. Jermyn his Lawyer,

and I, supped with hym: He then declared unto us, the conveighaunce of his Land unto you, and protested before God, yt was not altered. As yet he hath not made his appearaunce, but lives privately in London: your Lordship must neades wryte in his behalf to all your honorable Frends; as my L^d. Treasurer, L^d. Admirall, L^d. Buckhurst, L^d. North, Mr. Secetary, Sir J. Fortesque, &c., for I fear the Attorney General will bryng yt to the Star Chamber, & terribly prosecute him there."

It would be curious to ascertain what share (if any) the "Customer of Lynne" might bear in this proceeding; or what sumptuary law Sir Henry had wittingly or unwittingly violated. The proceedings of the Star Chamber had ever been notorious; nor is a remark of Camden's irrelevant to the present issue, viz., that a few years previously Elizabeth had raised the customs from fourteen to fifty thousand pounds per annum.—Hume, *Hist. of Eng.*, vi. 434.

In passing from the Sydney records to others less important, we may notice the mural monument to the memory of Robert Anguish, the husband of Anne Sydney (vide Pedigree) for the sake of its moral sentiment, no less than its quaint simplicity. Engraved by J. S. Cotman in his *Norfolk Etchings*.

The "DORMITORIVM EDWARDI DE FOTHERBYE," and a sculptured figure of St. Michael, a remnant of some earlier edifice, have both been given by Cotman. Edward Fotherbye was buried March 19, 1632.

Of the brasses enumerated by Blomefield I can only find three—

1. Orate pro anima Will. Wettstow (not Weston) capellani.
2. O. p. a. Christoferi Athowe, Mar. 8, 1542.
3. Hic jacet Jacobus Gresham.⁶

In addition to Blomefield's list a long series may be recorded, especially as several of them are now detached from their indents.

⁶ Gresham is preeminently a Norfolk name, and the absence of any date leaves us in uncertainty as to the subject of this memorial. The Walsingham Greshams were an early branch of the original stock long settled at Holt.

1. A civilian and his wife (inscription lost.) Costume described in the *Journal of the Archaeological Institute*, (see vol. xiv. p. 93.) We are obliged to the Committee of that Journal for the accompanying woodcut.



2. Civilian in furred robe, with gypciere at girdle. His lady with bag and string of beads. Three-quarter faced (inscription lost.)
3. Orate pro anima Galfridi Porter et Beatric: ux, &c. . . xxvi^{mo} die oct., 1482. Effigies full-faced.
4. O. p. a. Margarete Stoke.



Orate pro anima Margarete Stoke
Eius anime propicietur deus Amen

5. O. p. a. Joh. Thorp, capellani. 17 Maii, 1532. With chalice and wafer.
6. O. p. a. Joh. Clerke. 13 Sept., 1415.
7. O. p. a. Stephani Kityll. 30 Oct., 1485.
8. O. p. a. Nicholai Hylps. 13 Nov., 1496.
9. O. p. a. Dñi Thome Grandon, quondam Rector de Styberd, qui, &c., ob^t. 19 Maii, 1532.
10. O. p. a. Rose, nuper ux. Nicolai Calv̄, (or Calver) 1519.
This Nicholas, anno Henric. VIII., 27^{mo}, had the custody of the 3 "guyldes spyttes." (See monograph on the "Walsingham Guilds," *Norwich volume of the Archaeological Institute*, p. 153.)
11. O. p. a. Joh. Hart et Alicie, ux., &c. 13 Feb., 1526.
12. O. p. a. Nich. Strotton & Margarete, ux. 6 Dec., 1528.

13. Pray for the soul of Will. Kemp, & Margaret his wyf,
1539.
14. O. p. a. Rob^{ti}. Torold.
15. O. p. a. Cissilie Terald.
16. Hic jacet Margareta Chylde.

Lastly, we have illustrated an inscribed brass of quaint import and curious arrangement, which has been hitherto unnoticed.

**Sps Alta John child sb luce Johis
m J cccc qingz xvii cogaude pbenne^o**

We leave it to the ingenuity of our readers to evolve an hexameter distich, informing us that the deceased John Child was buried at "high noon," on the festival of St. John Baptist, i.e. June 24, 1517,⁷ and inviting us to hopeful anticipation of his everlasting joy. "Congaude perhenne!" The scanning of these lines is equally enigmatical with their interpretation. The nearest example I can remember, is a brass stated to have commemorated Robert Haule, (see Neale's *Westminster Abbey*, vol. ii., 269) which commences—

M. Domini c. ter LXX, his dabis octo.

Taking this as my authority for substituting letters for syllables, and compelling them to do service, I would risk one false quantity, and venture to scan thus—

S.p.s. alta John Child sub luce Johannis
M. J. cccc quinq x vi i congaude perenne.

⁷ Or, it may be, buried near the altar of St. John, on which a high light was burning; or under the high window of St. John's chantry; for the east window of the transept on the north side of the rood is at least twenty feet from the pavement, and St. John had a guild here.

An ingenious friend, to whom I applied for a solution, has not been singular in his reply:—

Davus sum, non Œdipus!

By means of parish registers, taking up the thread where the above memorials leave it, a list of Walsingham ecclesiastics shall now bring to a close this somewhat lengthy communication.

Will. Wettstow, Caplus.

James Ive, capellanus, 1494.

John Thorp, capellanus, 1532.

Beza, son of Mr. (Samuel) Stallon, Curate, & Mrs. Systely his wife, bapt. 1585.

Mr. Will^m. Knowles, Minister & Preacher. obiit 1615.

Will^m. Simpson, Sac. Theol. Bacchilarius, 1621. Preferred to the church of Heydon.

Harbert Warde succeeded him.

Ann, wife of Mr. Edmond Gawney, Preacher of Gods word. ob^t. 1624.

Thomas Displine, Curatus, 1647.

Jacobus Watts, Cficus, ob^t. 1662.

Witt^{us} Fenn, Cler. Pöchiæ, ob^t. 1667.

Edmundus Turner, Clař, 1670. One of fourteen feoffees for Bond's charities in 1663.

Car. Robothom, "Vicar," succeeded Turner.

Henry Pitts, Clk., Master of Grammar School, ob. 1680.

Thomas Bliford, D^o. ob. 1681.

The Revnd. John Clethroo, Gent., ob. 1717.

Joshua Thompson, Curat. Makes memorandum of a hot and dry season, 1719; afterwards vicar of Houghton.

H. Roberts, Curate, 1727.

Dr. John King, Minister, 1729.

Henry Roberts, Minister, and Master of the free Grammar School, ob. 1755.

Revnd. Morgan Powell, obt. 1774.

Michael Bridges, a widower, late minister of this parish,
aged 89. Obt. 1807.

Rev. James Lee Warner, perpetual curate. Obt. 1834.

And the writer of the above sketch, who officiated for twenty-five years as the successor of a revered parent, and is now succeeded by the Rev. Septimus Lee Warner, inducted in 1859, would now add his name to the list of Walsingham incumbents, and conclude by expressing his conviction, that the careful and reverential study of the past is one of the best employments for the lighter hours of the parochial minister.