

NORMAN FONT FORMERLY IN HARPLEY CHURCH.

Notes on Harpley Church.

COMMUNICATED BY

MRS. HERBERT JONES.

WHILE following the old Roman road which leads from Brancaster to Swaffham,—known as Pedder's Way,—leaving behind the desolate sea coast from which it starts, and passing through some miles of flat and open country, a spot is reached, now a triangle of grass defined by more recent tracks, but where a stream of water indicates that in remote days a halting place for Roman travellers was established. From this spot a rising ground is discernible, diversifying the monotony of the surrounding country by pleasant undulation, picturesque meadow, and shadowy timber. There stands the village of Harpley, crowned and ornamented by a church whose beauties, although attractive

enough at a distance, are best appreciated on a nearer view, comprising as it does a rather unusual number of interesting details,—stories in stones, and choice specimens of window, door, and archway, screen and frieze.

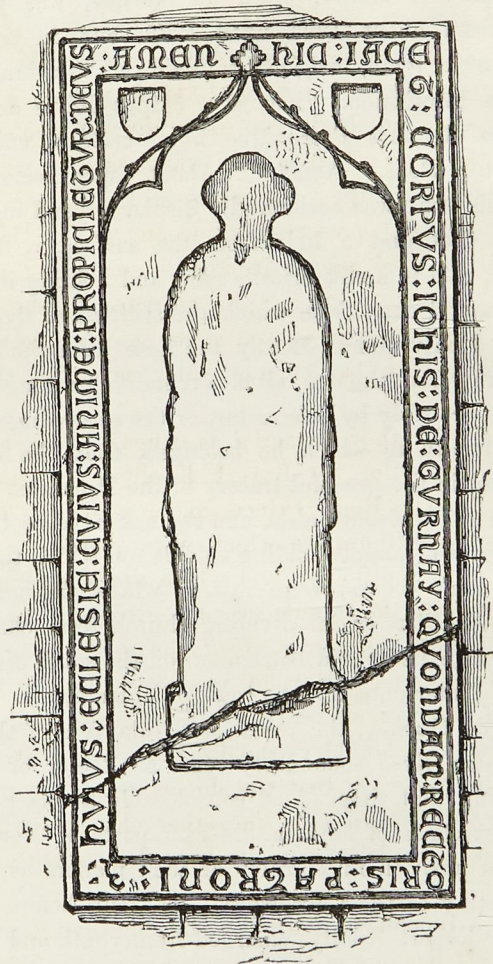
The church appears to have been built at different dates, ranging from the earlier part of the fourteenth century to a period some hundred years later, and is popularly attributed to the same generous hand which raised its neighbour church of Sculthorpe; the arms of Sir Robert Knollys being to this day preserved inside and out of the church, two small coloured shields in wood, bearing his arms and those of his wife, flanking the entrance to the chancel; whilst a long array of carved stone shields, including his own, enriches the battlements which surmount the south aisle.

Some few of these armorial bearings,—those connected with the history of Sir Robert Knollys' life during the campaigns of the Black Prince, under whom he served,—are the same as the arms which were placed by him in the church at Sculthorpe, and which are known as having existed there by the minute account given of them by the writer of the old manuscript, *Visitation of Norfolk Churches*.¹ It is fortunate, since Harpley was overlooked by this traveller and observer of nearly three centuries ago, that its fair display of heraldry should have been so durably recorded in stone; so that the shields remain to tell their own story, whilst those in the other churches whose description is handed down to us have long since crumbled away.

Although Blomefield attributes Harpley Church generally to Sir Robert Knollys in the following words—"The church has a nave, a north and south aisle, and a chancel, and was built by Sir Robert Knollys, a famous general in the reigns of Edward III. and Richard II. in the wars in

¹ By Henry Chitting. 1600 to 1620.

France, whose arms are painted on the screens as you enter the chancel”²—yet much of it is before his time,



or rather before that period of his life when he was connected with Norfolk, and probably some of its earlier features are the work of the Gurneys, who had held the

² Blomefield's *Norfolk*, 8vo. ed., vol. viii. p. 458.

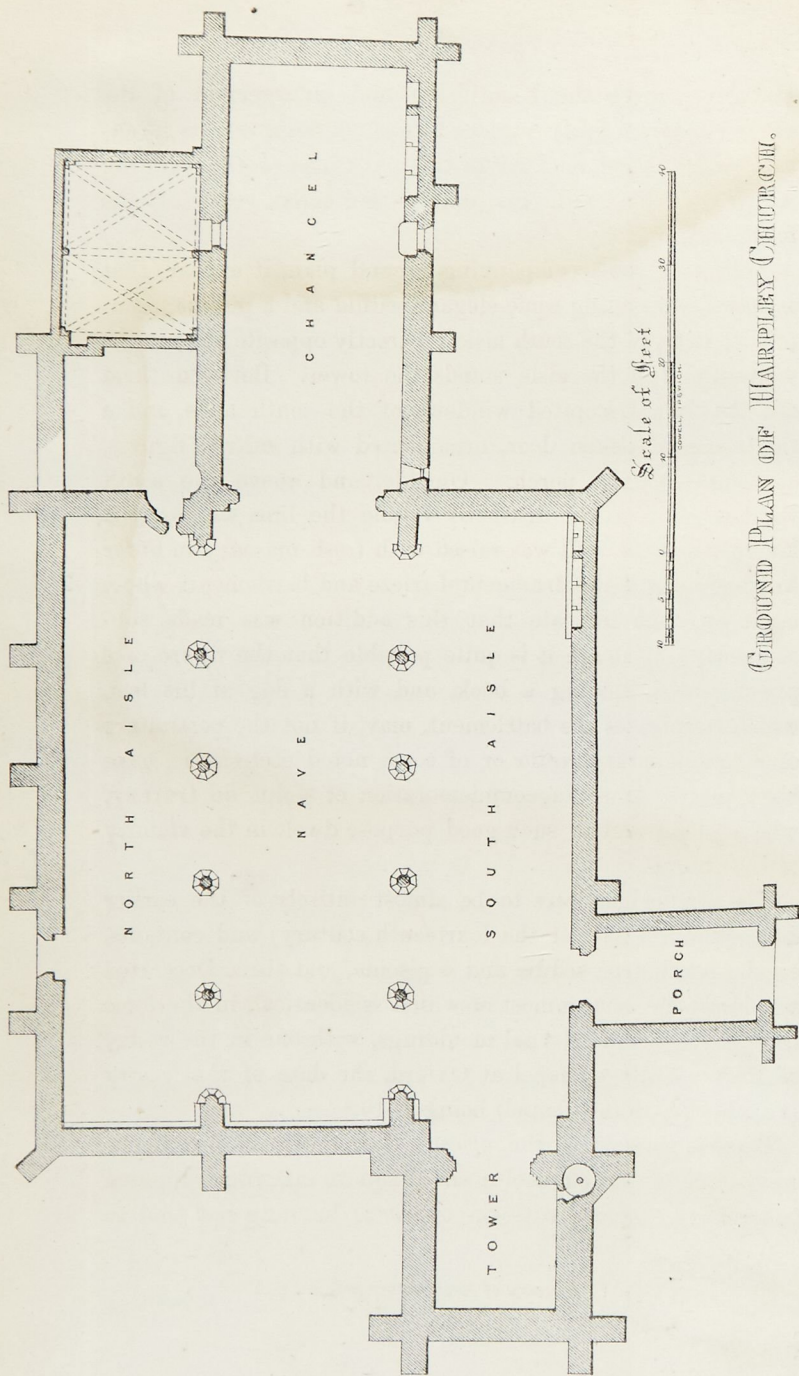
advowson since 1184, and had possessed property in the place from a slightly previous date.

One of this family, John de Gurney, was priest and rector from about 1294 until 1332, and in the chancel is a marble tomb, originally inlaid with a brass, which has this inscription, "Hic jacet corpus Joh'is de Gurnay, quondam Rectoris Patronique hujus ecclesie, cujus anime propicietur Deus. Amen." About forty years ago the lid of this tomb was accidentally displaced,³ and underneath, about a foot and a half from the surface, a figure was revealed, clad in a silk priest's robe, and holding in its hand a sacramental cup; from which the stillness of five hundred years had only stolen silently the flesh from the bones and the gilding from the cup, all else remaining unimpaired.

It was probably by this rector, or the succeeding members of the family to which he belonged, that the chancel—abounding in the graceful tracery of the Decorated period,—some part of the south aisle, and the oak nave roof, adorned with figures of angels holding shields (on which the Gurney coat of arms occurs) were raised; whilst the north aisle, the carved oaken screen dividing church from chancel, and the elaborate frieze and battlement on the south aisle appear to be of a later date and the work of other hands.

John de Gurney, the priest, and inheritor of the family estate there, lived some forty years as Rector of Harpley, and during that time added considerably to his possessions by the purchase of land in different parts of Norfolk, and by the acquisition in Harpley of such manors as were not the property of the Calthorpes. He, long before the time when Sir Robert Knollys emerged from youth and obscurity in Cheshire to gain glory in the wars of France, and afterwards in his old age to lay his honours and riches at the feet of the Church, was living in wealth and prosperity at

³ *Record of the House of Gournay*, page 345. The above incident occurred in September, 1829.



GROUND PLAN OF HAIREPLEY CHURCH.

Harpley, where the beautifying and enlargement of the church may be fairly supposed to have occupied his attention, and to have resulted in those portions of the building which coincide with his date,—the early years of the fourteenth century.

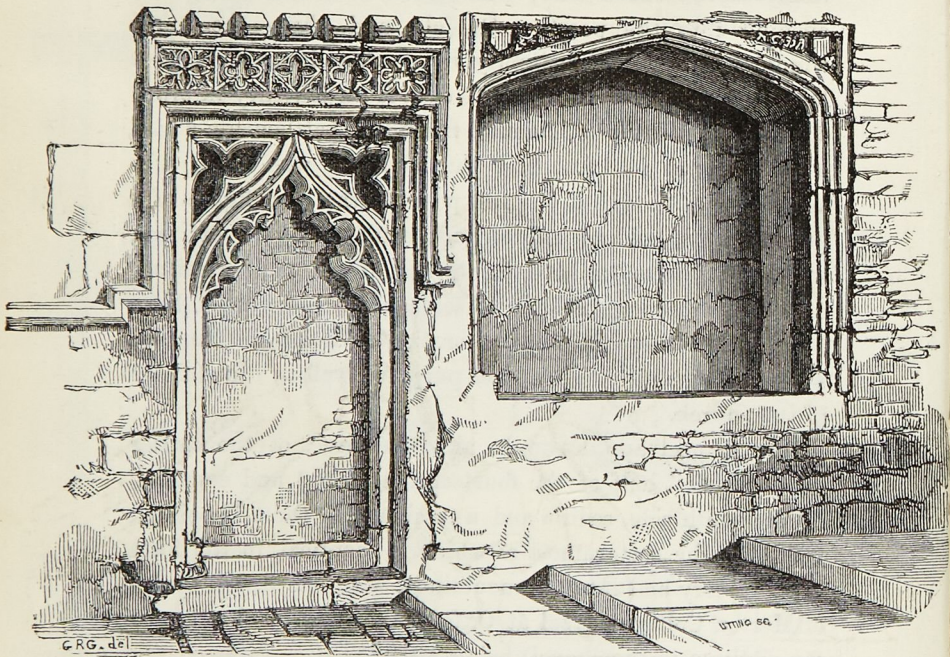
Following the accompanying ground plan, it appears that a chapel, containing some elegant sedilia and a piscina, occupied the end of the south aisle. Directly opposite this, at the western end of the aisle, stands the tower. Between them are the four Decorated windows of the south aisle, and a richly-carved oaken door, ornamented with mitred figures, opening into the porch. Outside, and above the south windows, is however distinctly visible the line where, at a later period, the wall was raised with fresh masonry in order to place upon it the ornamental frieze and battlements whose coats of arms indicate that this addition was made subsequently; although it is quite possible that the figure of a priest, seated, holding a book, and with a dog at his feet, which terminates the battlement, may, if not the portraiture of a contemporary rector or of some noted ecclesiastic, have been placed there in commemoration of John de Gurney, who so long and to such good purpose dwelt in the vicinity of the church.

The chancel appears to be almost entirely of the earlier date, (the first half of the fourteenth century) and contains, on the south side, sedilia and a piscina, and three Decorated windows, the easternmost of which is identical, in the form of its tracery and internal mouldings, with one in the vestry of Merton College chapel at Oxford, the date of that vestry (an addition to the chapel) being 1310.⁴

Besides these, and the priest's door, there is also in the south side of the chancel a small square opening, supposed to have been pierced with the object of handing out food to

⁴ Parker's *Glossary of Architecture*, vol. iii. p. 107.

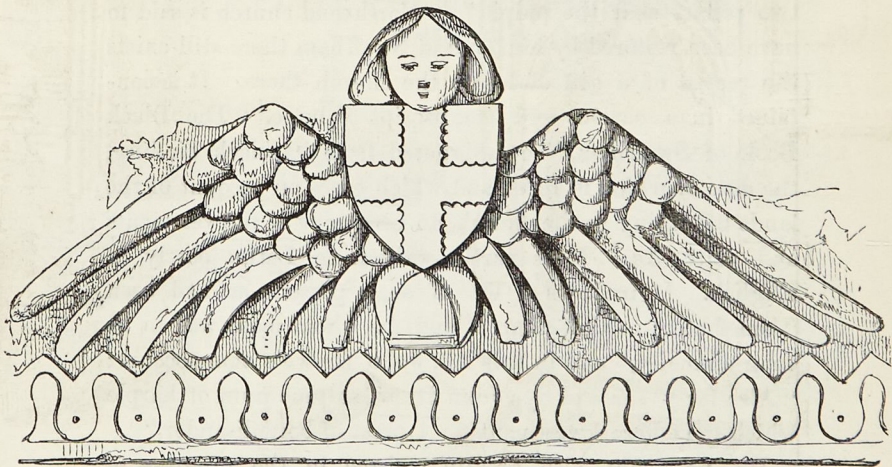
the unfortunate lepers of those days, and through which, perhaps, these hapless outcasts, feebly basking in the rays of the early spring sun, peered at the strange mock interment and resurrection enacted in the Easter sepulchre opposite,—an arched recess in the north wall, which, just above the chancel steps, is placed close to a beautifully enriched doorway leading into the Sacristy. This was a building some 19 ft. by 15 ft. in size, with a groined roof springing from slender pillars. These are unfortunately



broken off, and the roof they supported has disappeared. Although traditionally the sacristy or vestry, and doubtless used as such, the early character of the remaining piers has led to the supposition that this may have been originally

the aisle of a previous chancel. The position of the arches also favours this idea. Next to the sacristy, and still more defaced and ruined, are the remains of a further enclosure, occupying the space up to the end of the north aisle. This, judging from the piscina which still exists about four feet from the east end, was once a chapel, entered from the north aisle; the doorway and the stone staircase leading up to the rood-loft are yet visible, many fragments of the steps remaining.

The nave of the church contains a fine oak roof, bordered with a rich cornice of carved cherubs, holding shields, most of which bore the Gurney coat of arms,—Argent, a cross engrailed gules,—whilst other figures of angels look down from the uppermost ridge of the roof, in delicate light and shadow from the large clerestory windows just beneath.

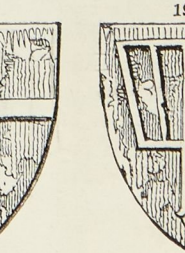
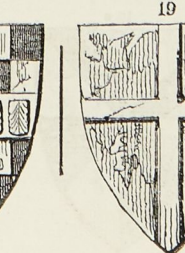
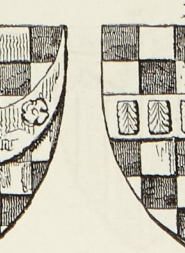
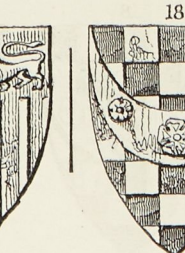
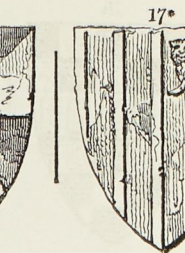
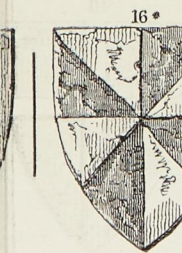
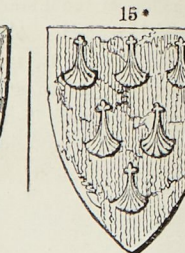
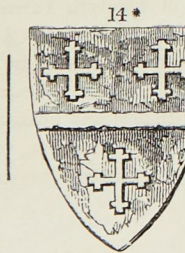
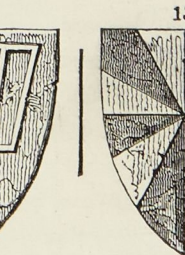
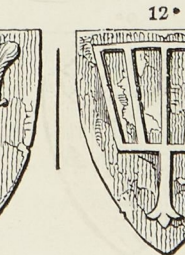
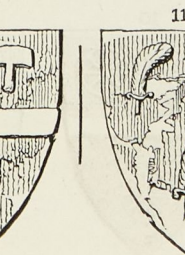
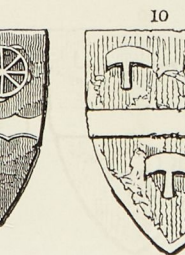
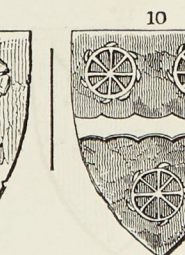
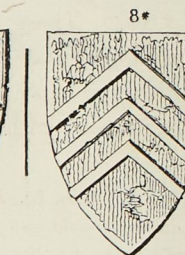
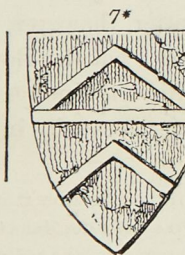
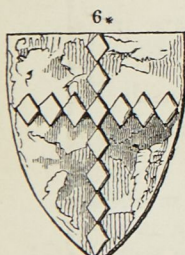
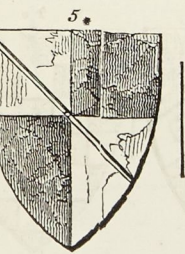
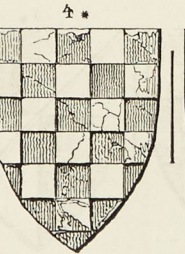
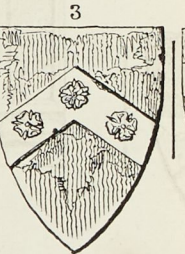
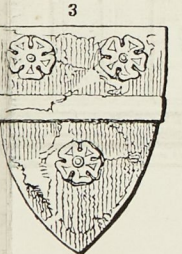
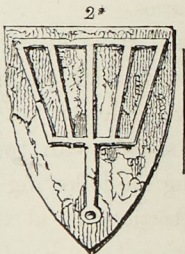
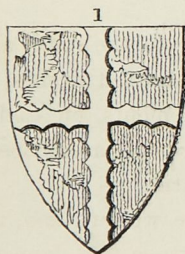
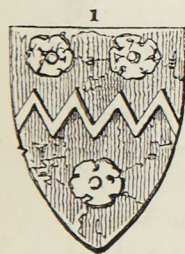
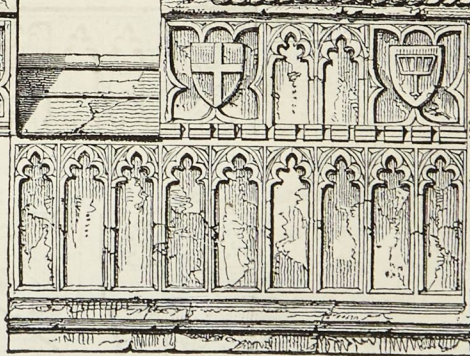
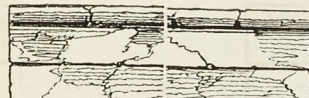


Such are the results, briefly enumerated, of the earlier labour bestowed upon this church; but gradually, as years went on, traces began to appear of other lives and other hands, whose interest and work seem to have gathered

around its walls, and we find the Cheshire knight, Sir Robert Knollys, appearing on the stage, and leaving characteristic touches on the building. With him, too, is associated a priest, John Drewe, (to whose name the same coat of arms has been occasionally attributed as that borne by the Knollys family). He was rector of Harpley from 1389 to 1421, and was clerk or chaplain to Sir Robert Knollys, whom he survived fourteen years, and whose will he proved in 1407. He shared with him the patronage of several Norfolk livings, and received from him the gift of others. He seems to have been a man of some efficiency, of whose sympathies and benefactions we have fragmentary glimpses. He probably lived at Harpley,—his usual designation is “parson of Harpley,”—and although holding Northwold, Houghton, Moundford, and other preferments, he selected Harpley as his burial place, directing that he should be interred “between two pillars near the pulpit.”⁵ Northwold church is said to have been restored by him, and at Swaffham there still exists the record of a gift of his to the church there. It is contained in a curious old manuscript volume, “The Black Book of Swaffham,” so designated from its black binding, the date of which is 1454, and which gives an account of the lands belonging to the church, an inventory of the vestments and plate, &c. It is partly written in Latin, partly in English. It includes a list of such persons as had been “benefactors to that church, and for whom mass was to be sung annually,” and in this list, John Drewe’s name occurs: “Also for y^e soule of Syr John Drew, sutyme psun of harple which geve here 1 vestment for 1 prest of bordalisander.”

He, no doubt, also greatly assisted in the progress of Harpley church. An instance of his solicitude for his parishioners is mentioned by Blomefield: in 1420 he obtained from the bishop of Norwich permission to change the

⁵ Blomefield, under “Northwold.”



FRIEZE ON THE SOUTH AISLE OF HARPLEY CHURCH.
(The numbering refers to the Battlements.)

day of celebrating the consecration of the church from All Souls' Day to the Sunday following that feast, "in order that all the parish might attend the services,"—an example of judicious concession to the circumstances and convenience of the parishioners worthy of notice.

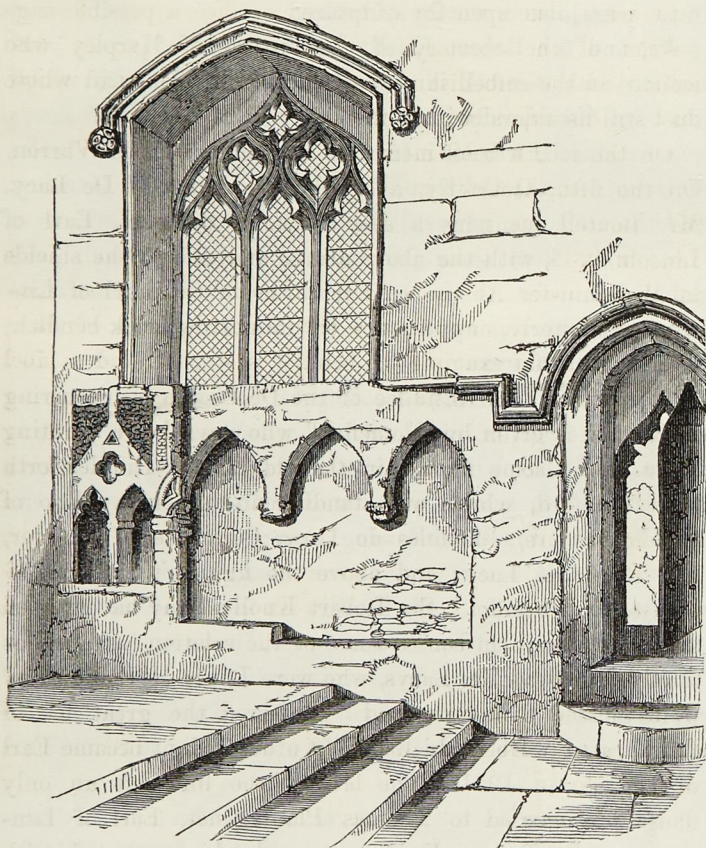
He, and Sir Robert Knollys,—the origin of whose connection with Norfolk is obscure, although his will, which has been discovered within the last year at Lambeth,⁶ shows how substantial was his interest in the county,—the Walpoles at Houghton, the Calthorpes, who had a manor in Harpley, and the Gurneys, who still held their property there, were they, who, from their residence or neighbourhood, contributed doubtless to the welfare of the fabric, and are commemorated by the appearance on the battlements of their several coats of arms.

This ornamental stone heading to the south aisle consists of, first, a series of small trefoil-headed arches, forming a frieze, and above, nineteen battlements, on each of which are carved two shields with two small arches between; the shields containing the following arms:—

On the first battlement, at the western end, the arms of Constance Beverley, Lady Knollys—a fess dancette between three leopards' heads. These latter, however, are indistinctly carved, and appear like roses; but the Beverley arms are associated with those of Sir Robert Knollys inside the church, and were impaled with his repeatedly in Sculthorpe

⁶ Mr. J. Wharton Jones, F.R.S., &c., &c., thus describes it in an article on the Knollys family in the *Herald and Genealogist* for January, 1874: "I have had the opportunity of seeing these documents (the wills of Sir Robert and Sir Thomas Knolles) in the library of Lambeth Palace. Sir Robert Knolles left two wills, (Archbishop Arundel's Registers, vol. i. ff. 245—9) the one in Latin, dated October 21, 1399, and the other in French, dated May 20, 1404. Both were proved at Lambeth in February, 1407. Sir Robert leaves his property chiefly for religious and charitable uses, and provides for prayers for his own soul, the soul of his very dear wife Constance, and all Christian souls. He does not refer to any children."

and other churches, and this shield was doubtless intended to represent them. The second shield on this battlement is that of the Gurneys—a cross engrailed.



On the second battlement, twice repeated, a gridiron, the emblem of St. Laurence the martyr, to whom the church is dedicated.

On the third battlement the following: A fess between three cinquefoils, and the well-known arms of Sir Robert

Knollys—on a chevron three roses. This same coat has also been assigned to the Drew family,⁷ although not that usually borne by the Drews of Norfolk; and if, as is most probable, this shield is in honour of Sir Robert Knollys, it at any rate bears also upon its sculptured surface a possible suggestion of the memory of that rector of Harpley who assisted in the embellishment of the south aisle, and whose dust still moulders beneath it.

On the fourth battlement the arms of the Earls Warren. On the fifth, Quarterly, a bendlet, the arms of De Lacy. Mr. Boutell mentions a seal of John de Laci, Earl of Lincoln 1235, with the above arms; and one of the shields in Westminster Abbey bears the arms of the Earl of Lincoln,—Quarterly, or and gules, with a narrow black bendlet; although in that example the bendlet is sinister, and a label is introduced. An instance of the De Lacy arms occurring in Norfolk is given by Blomefield, who describes a painting on wood of some figures in the old hall at Riddlesworth near Thetford, which was standing in his time. Two of the figures are, Johannes de Lacy, Constable of Chester, and Roger de Lacy; and above the figures their arms,—Quarterly, a bendlet. Sir Robert Knollys may have placed this shield here in consequence of the relation in which he stood towards the De Lacys, who were Lords of Pontefract.⁸ William the Conqueror had “conferred the great fee of Pontefract on Ilbert de Lacy;”⁹ a descendant became Earl of Lincoln in 1221. The last of the line left an only daughter, married to Thomas Plantagenet, Earl of Lancaster. Sir Robert Knollys was closely connected with Pontefract. From there came his “very dear wife Con-

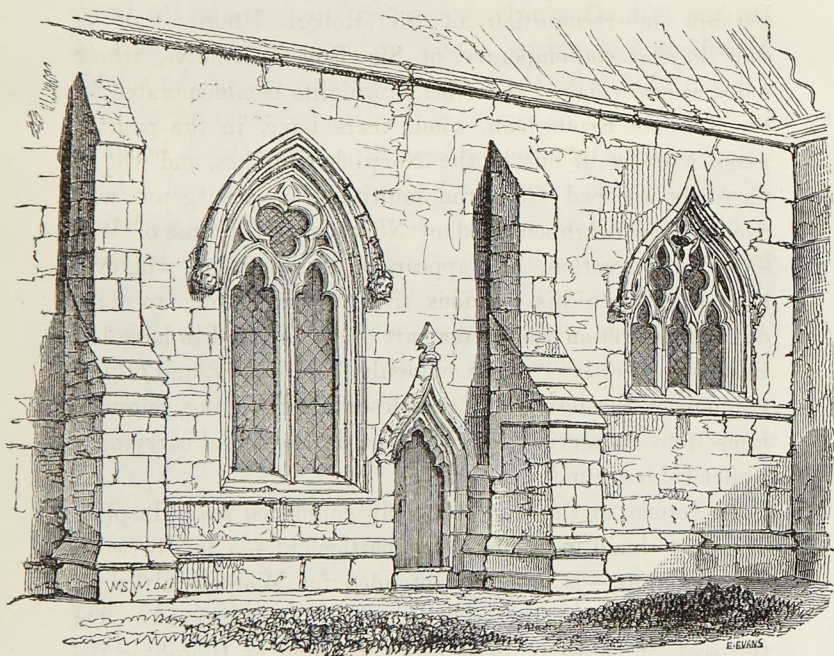
⁷ “*Drew* (1426), On a chevron ar. three roses of the field, seeded and barbed ppr. *Drew*, Gu. on a chevron argent three roses of the first seeded or.”—Burke’s *General Armory*.

⁸ Dugdale’s *Monasticon*, vol. i. p. 854.

⁹ Whittaker’s *Whalley*, chap. i.

stance," and it was there that he established the college and hospital which in Queen Elizabeth's time were still called "Knolles' alms-houses."

On the sixth battlement both shields are alike,—a cross lozengy (or fusilly), Gifford, De la Hache, or, according to Mr. J. G. Nichols, De Ufford. Mr. Nichols, in his remarks upon this shield,¹ observes that "in blazon the lozengy form has frequently coincided with the engrailed, the latter being



in fact the modern treatment of the former." He instances the coat of the De Uffords, which is usually (as described in the Calais Roll of Edward III., and as it remains in

¹ *Herald and Genealogist*, vol. v., containing a paper on the "Armorial Battlements of Harpley Church, Norfolk."

many churches in Norfolk), Sable, a cross engrailed or. But Mr. Nichols gives a quotation, pointing out that "the coat of Robert Ufforde is drawn as Or, a cross fusilly sable, in the thirteenth century rolls, edited by Walford and Perceval." The arms of "Ufford" are also described in Burke's *General Armory* as "Sable, a cross lozengy or." It is therefore not improbable that this shield was intended as a tribute to the Uffords, who were a family of eminence in Norfolk, and possessed large estates in the county: perhaps in recognition of Sir Robert Ufford, Earl of Suffolk, the contemporary of Sir Robert Knollys, whose name appears among the Norfolk knights commemorated by Sir Thomas Erpingham, some years later, in the painted glass window in one of the Norwich churches, and who so narrowly escaped from the multitude of insurgents who overran the neighbourhood of Norwich at the time of Wat Tyler's insurrection. He appears on this occasion, whatever may have been his previous title to distinction, to have deemed discretion the better part of valour, and to have left Costessey secretly, "rising suddenly from supper, and taking his journey through woods and deserts to the King, feigning himself to be servant to Sir Robert de Boys, and carrying a wallet behind him."

To return to those more nearly connected with Harpley. The next shield in order on the battlement,—a fess between two chevrons,—is probably intended for Walpole, although sculptured without the addition of the cross crosslets. On the seal of an early deed recently found at Houghton the arms are thus impressed. The Walpoles were in the immediate neighbourhood; and later, in 1642, they acquired the manors in Harpley which had belonged to the Gurneys.

On the eighth battlement, three chevronels, Clare. The ninth bears shields with three cinquefoils, the arms of the Bardolf family; one of whom, Thomas, Lord Bardolf, died in battle in 1405; another, just one hundred years earlier,

is thus noticed in the ancient poem describing the siege of Carlaverock :—

“ Hue Bardolf de grant maniere,
Riches hom, preus e courtois,
En asure quintfuelles trois,
Portoit de fin or esmere.”²

Another, Robert Bardolf, Knight, in his will dated 1395, “giveth to many churches reparations.”³

The tenth battlement displays the shield which was placed by Sir Robert Knollys in Sculthorpe and other Norfolk churches,—Cromer, Moundford, and North Barsham,—but to which no name has been assigned by the two chroniclers, Blomefield and Chitting, who describe it,—a fess engrailed between three Catherine wheels. It has been attributed to “Casteler” in Glover’s *Ordinary*. The second shield on this battlement is,—a fess between three mallets.⁴

On the eleventh battlement, twice repeated, the “arms of peace” of the Black Prince, as described by himself in his will, and destined by him to be placed, on a sable field, alternately with his escutcheon of war, around his tomb at Canterbury. The two chargers which, according to Edward’s dying wishes, were to precede his body in its progress to the grave, were ordered to be accoutred, one with “nos armez entiers quartellez,” the other with the arms “pur la paix, de nos bages des plumes d’ostruce,” the latter the array used by the Prince in the jousts and tournaments of the peaceful intervals of his life.⁵

On the twelfth battlement the insignia of St. Laurence appear again twice over.

The next presents two shields: gyronny of twelve, Basingbourne; and a bend between six cross crosslets, Howard.

² Emaillé, or enamelled.

³ *Record of the House of Gournay*, page 190.

⁴ Pigott, Browne, or Bloodman.

⁵ *Historical Memorials of Canterbury*, note at page 140.

The coat of the Bassingbournes is repeated further on as gyronny of eight, and the latter modification also once existed in coloured glass in one of the windows inside the church, accompanying the arms of De Noiers and Gournay.⁶ In a manuscript dated March 25th, 1655, but in which the name of the author is not recorded, containing a large number of coats of arms illuminated on vellum,⁷ the Bassingbourne arms are given four times; twice gyronny of twelve pieces, for "Bassingbourne" and "the Baron Bassingbourne, K. John;" and twice gyronny of eight, "Sir John Bassingbourne of Hertfordshire," and "for Bassingbourne of Cambridgeshire." Similar variations in the bearing of this family are commented on by Mr. J. G. Nichols in his paper before quoted, and evidence given of their having been used by its different members.

On the fourteenth battlement, a fesse between three cross crosslets; Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick. This shield was also placed in Sculthorpe church, but there charged with the usual device, a fesse between six cross crosslets. Up to the beginning of the fourteenth century the coat was semée of cross-crosslets. There seems to be in two or three of these carved shields some slight uncertainty or want of definiteness in the design, as, for example, in the shields of Beverley and Ufford, although the actual sculpture is clear, beautiful, and unimpaired in every instance.

On the fifteenth battlement are the six escallop shells of Scales, and next to the arms, "gyronny of eight," before alluded to, is a shield twice repeated,—Paly, on a sinister canton a lion passant. In Glover's *Ordinary*, under the name "De Longcaster," is described a coat,—"Paly of six, argent and gules, on a canton of the last a lion passant

⁶ *Norris MSS. Church Collections*, Harpley; also Blomefield. See woodcut at conclusion of Paper.

⁷ This MS. originally belonged to Mr. Gouter, of Dennington near Woodbridge, and has been in the possession of the Marsham family since 1775.

guardant of the first.”⁸ This resembles the shield placed here; but in the *Siege of Carlaverock*, among the long lists of the banners of those knights who accompanied Edward I. in the Scottish expedition, that of “John de Lancaster” is blazoned as “Barry, on a canton a leopard or.” Sir Harris Nicolas gives a short account of the De Lancasters in his translation of the *Siege of Carlaverock*, and asserts that the name “De Lancaster” originated with one of the family, who was governor of Lancaster Castle in the reign of Henry II. John de Lancaster, who died in 1334, was one of the king’s serjeants in the county of Chester. “Upon his death the barony became extinct and authorities affirm that his nephew, John de Lancaster, was his next heir.”⁹ There are some traces in Norfolk of this family. John de Lancaster was Rector of Titchwell from 1349 to 1360;¹ and at Dunton church is a monument to one of the race, giving a quaint description of their importance, but it is difficult to discern their connection with Harpley at the time of the erection of the frieze. If not De Lancaster, it has been suggested that this coat of arms may be a foreign one. The many years spent by Sir Robert Knollys on the continent, and his numerous companions in arms, make it not impossible that, among a collection of shields so unconnected and varied, but of which the history of his life gives the key, such a coat might have been inserted. Quite as probable is the idea that the shield is an impaled one; two pales impaling another coat,—Paly of six, on a chief a lion passant guardant. Many English families are known as bearing each of these charges, but the alliance in question, and some motive for the presence of the arms

⁸ See the copy of Glover’s *Ordinary* in Barry’s *Encyclopædia Heraldica*, page 161.

⁹ *The Siege of Carlaverock*, with a Translation and Memoirs, by Harris Nicolas, Esq.

¹ Blomefield, vol. x. p. 397.

among this series, must be given before the shield can be identified.

On the eighteenth battlement are carved the shields of Calthorpe and De Burnham.

The De Burnhams, a younger branch of the house of Warren, and who possessed Harpley in the reign of Stephen, left two heiresses, who, in the twelfth century, by their marriages with Matthew de Gournay and Sir William de Calthorpe, divided their inheritance of Harpley between those two families.¹ The Calthorpes have always borne the arms of Warren with the difference of a fesse ermine,² and the De Burnhams the arms of Warren with a crescent. The history of the place, with its successive possessors—Warren, De Burnham, Calthorpe—is thus picturesquely shewn by this one battlement; an instance of the truth and conciseness with which heraldry can tell its tale.

On the nineteenth battlement, a plain cross. Perhaps to commemorate the Knights Hospitallers, whose scarlet sur-tout, worn above their armour, was decorated with a straight silver cross; but, more likely than in remembrance of the priestly soldiers, this shield was meant to be in honour of Sir Ralph Shelton, who had been present at the battles of Cresey and Poitiers, or of some member of that "right worshipful family of Shelton," as Guillim describes it, whose distinction in war and whose position in Norfolk were both doubtless well known to Sir Robert Knollys.

And then, lastly, the emblem of St. Laurence once more, finishing the series.

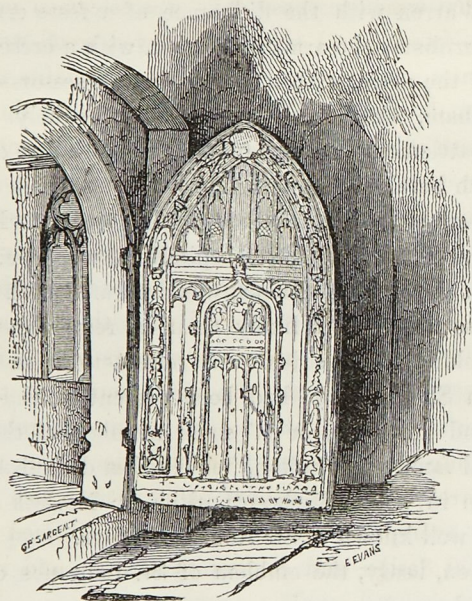
These shields, which bear such strong evidence of having been placed here by Sir Robert Knollys,—the date, the tribute to the Black Prince, the similarity of five of the shields to those put up by him in his own church at Scul-

¹ *Record of the House of Gournay*, p. 308.

² Or, in one instance, that of some painted glass in Lord Calthorpe's possession, a canton ermine.

thorpe, combined with the tradition of his having rebuilt Harpley,—were associated from various causes, and marshalled together in token of loyalty, friendship, public esteem, or religious sentiment.

If, as seems probable, Sir Robert Knollys' connection with Norfolk was after the death of the Black Prince in 1376, he may have chosen the "arms of Peace" to commemorate him, deeming them a fitter emblem of the last few quiet years than the lions and lilies suggestive of warlike equipment



and of the prince's previous life of continual warfare and danger; so, too, the friends of the neighbourhood, and individuals of distinction in Norfolk, are recognized, rather than the comrades who had accompanied him in his foreign campaigns; while the religious element is represented, however dimly and inadequately, by the repeated occurrence on

the frieze of the insignia of martyrdom attached to the church's patron saint.

But not only outside the church, within are traces of the same handiwork. He who had done so much for other churches, entered this also, and added to

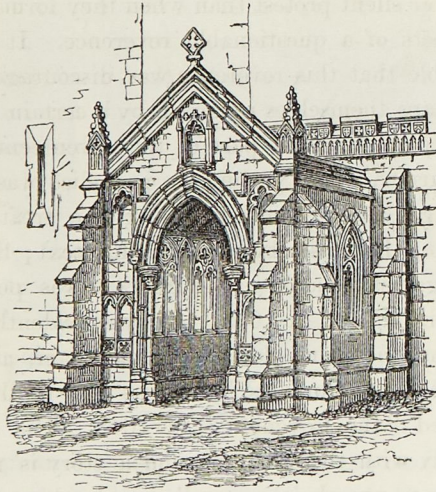
“The high-embowed roof,
The antique pillars, massy proof,
The storied windows, richly dight,”

another ornament to the interior,—the expression of reverence for that which in those days was esteemed most sacred,—an elaborate chancel screen of carved wood-work, to veil the mysteries of the altar. This, which remains undecayed, bears a small wooden shield on either side of the entrance, painted with the arms of Sir Robert Knollys and his wife. The upper part of the screen is constructed of open-work tracery, and the lower part consists of sixteen solid panels, divided by arches. One side of the screen only has been painted, that facing the church, and this side was re-decorated in 1865, in accordance with the indications left of the colouring. The prevalent colours of the upper part are green, red, and gold; the backgrounds of the figures painted on the panels, alternately green and gold. When the panelling was uncovered during the recent restoration of the church, and the yellow paint with which half of it had been overspread removed, enough remained unhurt of the original design and colours to identify and repaint the figures.

Four of these occupy the centre panels forming the doors. These are, on the northernmost half of the door, Saint Laurence, with a book and gridiron; and on the second panel, the Virgin and Child, the Virgin holding an apple, and the Child with two fingers raised in blessing. On the other half of the door, a figure, with a staff in one hand, and in the left hand a scroll with the name “Joachim,” and

St. Anne and the Virgin Mary with a book. On the right hand towards the south are six panels, which contain, beginning with that adjoining "St. Anne," figures of prophets, the name in most cases inscribed on a scroll appearing from behind the head—Jonas, Jeremias, Joel, Osee, Ezechiel, and Malachias. On the left hand, or that part of the screen extending towards the north, beginning with the panel next to the Virgin and Child,—Daniel, Abdias, Michæas, Amos, Isaias, and Zacharias.

But it is impossible, without a coloured illustration, to give a satisfactory impression of the details, or to convey the effect and attitudes of the subjects in these panels; the whole screen indeed requires description by a qualified hand, and is well worthy of a separate notice.



Turning away from it, and from the beautiful chancel behind it,—passing by the quaint poppy-heads adorning the seats, and through the ancient oaken door, whose worm-eaten bishops and angels still darkly glimmer, touched by a bar of

sunshine,—the porch is reached, which is worth noticing before bidding adieu to the church; elegant in structure and proportion, although of later date than the aisle to which it is attached; not, as in the instance of Massingham, surmounted by an upper story, which, in that neighbouring church, was eventually turned to such strange account as the school-room of Sir Robert Walpole, whither he repaired daily from Houghton in his boyhood to receive the first impulse towards the development of an unsuspected mind,—but of more simple elevation, projecting fifteen feet beyond the south aisle, decorated at several points with small carved roses, the gable surmounted by a cross, the walls pierced with an open arcade of delicate masonry, and the entrance arch surrounded with three niches, once filled, no doubt, with images of some forgotten saints, but which, deserted now, seem more useful in their silent protest than when they formed a shelter for the objects of a questionable reverence. It is exceedingly probable that this reverence was discouraged, and the figures perhaps themselves removed, by a certain rector who lived at Harpley during a part of the seventeenth century, Edmond Gurney, whose feeling or prejudice was so strong against images as to lead him to write a treatise on the subject, taking Exodus xxxiv. 14, as his text; the work, a “Homily against Images in Churches,” was published at the University Press, in 1639. He was evidently a person of much quaintness and decision of character, as described by Fuller in his “Worthies,” and was one of those clergy who accepted “the Covenant” in 1643. His sympathies were strongly with the Puritans, and a story is recorded of his refusing to preach in a surplice, and, when rebuked by the Bishop of Norwich and ordered “to wear it always,” humorously donning it during a long journey on horseback. A curious inscription outside the chancel wall at Harpley, commemorating a child, whose Christian name was “Protestant,” is supposed to have been his composition.

But in spite of these traces of a Puritan spirit, the building was apparently as carefully cherished by him as by his more reverent ancestors, to judge by the large proportion of it which is handed down to us uninjured, and in excellent preservation.

The porch forms, whether with or without its adjuncts, a fitting entrance, and the church remains, as far as its outward structure is concerned, a store-house of architectural beauties, and a most interesting record, from its abounding heraldic details, of some of the local and historical incidents connected with the later days of the fourteenth century.

