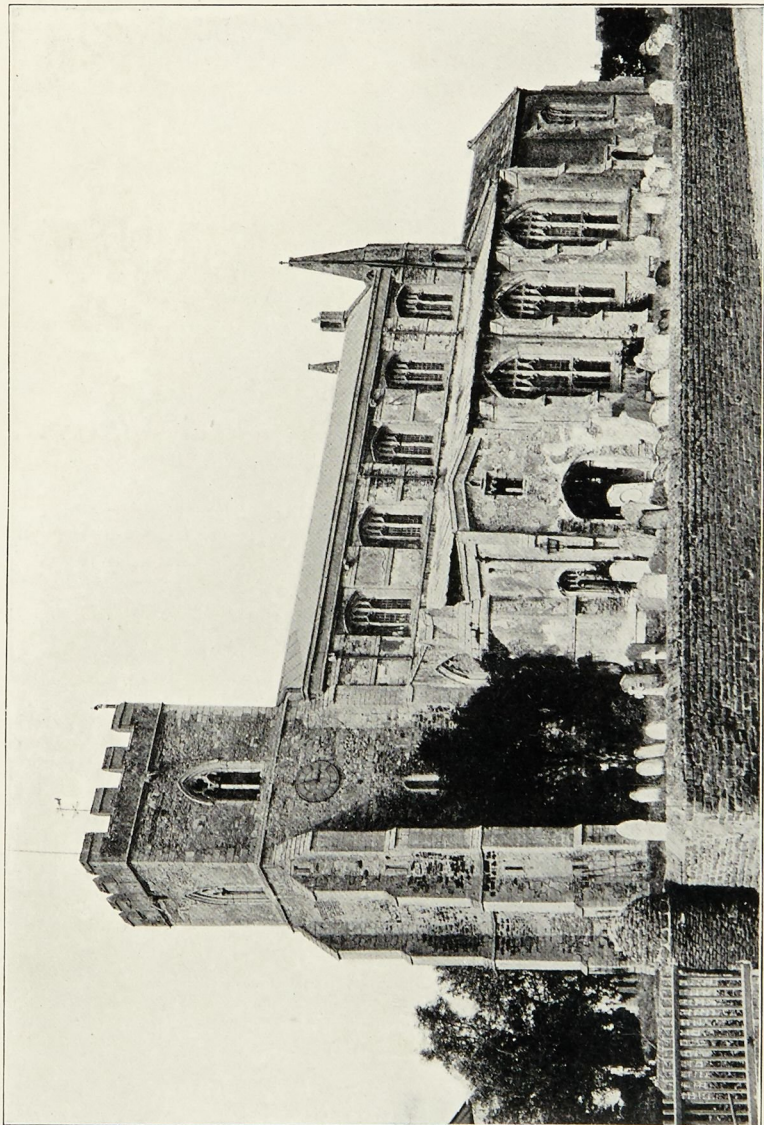


Notes on some Fifteenth-century
Glass in the Church of Wiggenhall
St. Mary Magdalene.

COMMUNICATED BY

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WIGGENHALL St. Mary Magdalene is one of a group of four churches bearing the name of Wiggenhall (the others being St. Mary the Virgin, St. German's, and St. Peter's), situate close to the banks of the tidal river Ouse, to the south of the ancient Borough of King's Lynn, and in the western portion of the County of Norfolk. All the churches are interesting architecturally, and contain features worthy of special notice; for instance, at St. German's are some beautifully carved benches with representations of the Seven Deadly Sins, the Sacraments of the Church, and other subjects, on either side of the poppy heads of the bench ends; at St. Mary the Virgin is a fine brass eagle lectern, dated 1518; and two portions of the old screen with figures of St. Mary Magdalene, Dorothy, Margaret, and (?) Scholastica on the one part, and (?) St. Catherine, St. Barbara, the Virgin and Child, and St. John the Baptist on the other. Both these churches have remains of Decorated and



GENERAL VIEW FROM SOUTH WEST.

Perpendicular work, as has that of St. Mary Magdalene, which will shortly be described.

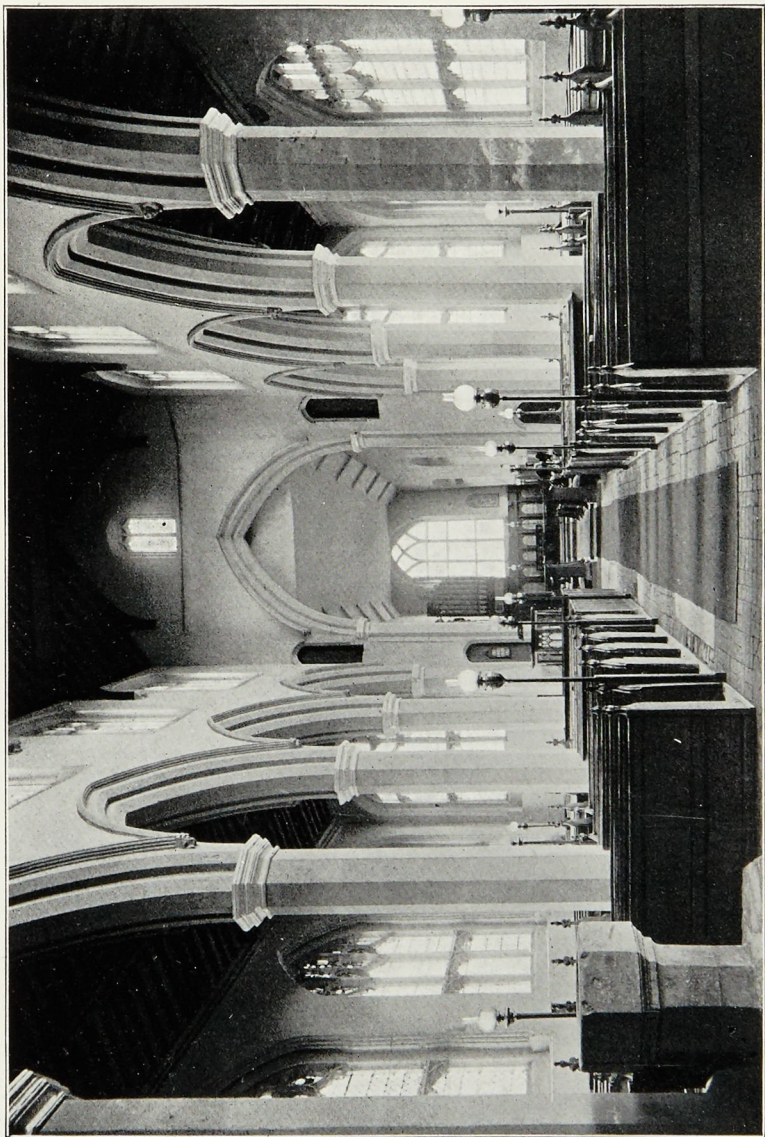
The village of Wiggenhall St. Mary Magdalene is situate on the west bank of the Ouse, and there is an old timber bridge here over the river, which has fallen into disrepair, and is now only serviceable for foot-passengers. A similar bridge crosses the river at Wiggenhall St. German's about one and a half miles lower down.

The church dedicated to St. Mary Magdalene is a fine edifice, consisting of a west tower, nave, aisles, south porch, and chancel (Plate I.). As far as can be ascertained from the architectural features, it appears to have been built early in the fourteenth century, and to have been restored and beautified about the year 1470. Two shields over the south doorway furnish us with a clue to the benefactors at this later period. Although the main object of this article is a description of the old glass in the windows of the north aisle, still a short account of the interesting details in the church may not be out of place, and a commencement may be made in the interior, starting in the chancel (Plate II.). The east window is of three lights with intersecting mullions of the Decorated period. On the south are three three-light late-Perpendicular windows. The roof is underdrawn, and the windows on the north side have been blocked up. In the south wall is a small oblong aumbrey, then a piscina with a trefoiled arch, and then three sedilia within a frame, having four-centred arches with cinquefoiled fringe resting on plain shafts. These of course belong to the Perpendicular period. On the floor of the sanctuary is laid the altar stone, with the five crosses still very distinct. Some portions of Jacobean panelling across the east and on the south wall have been preserved.

The chancel arch is very fine Decorated, of date *circa* 1320, with grooved hood-mould terminating on heads, two chamfered orders and semi-octagonal responds. Above is a two-light Perpendicular east window, and on either side of the head, the upper rood-loft doorway, apparently of the Decorated period. The lower doorways are in the east wall on either side of the chancel arch, that on the north being on a higher level than that on the south. This seems to have opened to a former pulpit. The steps are continued down to an archway in east wall of north aisle. There is a bracket for image above the south arch. Above the chancel arch is (or rather was¹) part of a painting of the Doom. It is apparently earlier than the two-light window and upper part of the wall, which are of the fifteenth-century date. On the north side only some faint draped figures can be made out. On the south, close to the apex of the arch, is a spotted demon like an animal holding a scourge, and hard by is a figure rising from a tomb. To the right are several heads and another spotted hairy demon with a man or woman on his back, and driving along another man, whose head is turned back, towards the jaws of hell. There is another red or black man rising from the tomb, and traces of scrolls, heads, &c., and perhaps part of a large red bat-shaped wing, but this is somewhat hazy. The upper portion of the subject has entirely disappeared. The painting seems to have been executed in the fourteenth century, and is one of the many representations of this awful subject depicted in this situation.

The nave arcade consists of five beautiful arches, with continuous hood-mould on heads, two chamfered orders, resting on octagonal columns and capitals, of the same

¹ This painting has recently been concealed by a fresh coat of whitewash by the churchwardens, who considered that the new vicar would be pleased to find the walls of his church thus freshly embellished.



INTERIOR LOOKING EAST.

WALTER
BEADY

style and date as the chancel arch. Above are three-light four-centred Perpendicular clerestory windows, containing some small fragments of old glass, and a fine high-pitched timber roof, with tie beams and angels at the terminations of the intermediate members. The aisle windows, five on each side and one on east and west, are all of late fifteenth-century date. The main compartments are divided by an embattled transom, with ogee heads to the lights above, and cinquefoiled heads to those below the transom. The west on south, and the west window of each aisle have been blocked up. The aisle roofs are lean-to, of the same date. In the north aisle is a small oblong aumbrey, and at the east end a small doorway, one of the entrances to the rood-loft. On the floor is the matrix of a brass with figures of a gentleman and lady, and there has been another larger brass in the nave. Here are some well-carved benches with poppy heads to the ends. The font is good octagonal, and coeval with the earlier part of the church. At the east end of the south aisle is the space for the reredos, and a plain sedile in the sill of the east on south window. Across the west bay of the aisles are portions of the rood-screen (Plate III.), with faint traces of figures, one said to be St. Agatha, on some of the panels, also of colour on the mouldings. The main doors (Plate IV.), with figures of the Evangelists, are also preserved, viz., from north, on red ground, an angel with white vestment and green wings, holding scroll with name "Matheas"; next, on a green ground, a winged red lion with nimbus, and name "Marcus" on scroll below; next, on green ground, a grey eagle, nimbed and with red wings, and name "Johis" on a scroll below; and then, on red ground, a nimbed and winged green ox, with scroll bearing the name "Lucas" below. These figures are all rather large. There is a low Decorated doorway leading

to the tower space. The west window looks new, and is of flamboyant late-Perpendicular design within a Decorated containing-arch.

The old glass, to which reference has already been made, remains in the north aisle windows. When inspected, in August, 1904, and June, 1907, it was in a deplorable condition. Many broken panes were patched up with putty, brown paper, or any other material ready to hand, one of the figures had been turned inside out, and the mullions of the windows were in so shaky a condition, being patched with brick, or allowed altogether to go to decay, that it was hardly safe to rest a light ladder against them. The series of Saints seems to have been neglected and unnoticed, and no doubt many of the figures have been blown out in recent times, so that we have now only a sample of what must have been one of the most complete series of saintly portraitures ever introduced into our English churches. Even the parson of the neighbouring parish alleged that no such figures were in existence, and it therefore seems necessary that some record of those remaining should be preserved, as many of the Saints represented are of extreme rarity and not found elsewhere in England. All the figures in the north windows commemorate distinguished ecclesiastics, popes, archbishops, &c., and can be identified by the name on a scroll, in many cases curiously anglicised. Only in the case of some of the Apostles are emblems introduced. They do not appear to have come from one workshop. The colouring in some of the windows is richer than in others, and more than one system of lettering is used in the titles of the several saints.

Starting with the west on north window (Plate V.), we find the figures all seated in large arm-chairs, no doubt intended for their thrones, and varying from twelve to eighteen inches in height.

In upper compartments:—

1. From left, a Pope with triple tiara and patriarchal cross, clad in red, holding cross in right hand and book in left, and with name on a scroll below, "S̄cs kalixtt," for St. Calixtus, the Pope who suffered martyrdom in the year 222, and whose name is still specially associated with the Catacombs at Rome (Plate XI).

2 and 3. Plain glass.

4. Another Pope, clad in blue, with patriarchal cross in left hand and open book in right. He also has the triple tiara, and name below, "S̄cs Hyllari" (Plate XI).

There are two distinguished Saints of this name, viz., St. Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, who died in 368, and St. Hilary, Archbishop of Arles, who died in 449. Neither of these attained to the dignity of pope, so that there appears to be some error in the representation.

In the middle compartments we have, from left:—

1. A Bishop with pastoral staff, hands clasped on his breast, red vestment, plain mitre, name below, "S̄cs Britius."

St. Britius, Brice or Brize, was Bishop of Tours, and died in the year 444. The Church of Brize Norton in Oxfordshire is dedicated to him, and there is a late twelfth-century reliquary there, which no doubt formerly contained relics of this Saint.

2. A Bishop in blue vestments and plain mitre, holding pastoral staff in the left hand, and giving the benediction with the right, the white alb is shown, and the name below, "S̄cs Aldelm" (Plate XI).

St. Aldhelm was one of the most noted of our English saints, and was Abbot of Malmesbury and afterwards Bishop of Sherborne. He died in the year 709.

3. An Ecclesiastic, the head gone, in red vestment, holding pastoral staff in right hand and closed book in left, name below, "S̄cs Sixtus."

There are two Saints of this name, both being Popes, viz., Sixtus I., who lived and suffered martyrdom in the reign of Trajan, and Sixtus III., who died in 449. The portrait is not that of a pope, and there is some mistake, or possibly jumble of more than one figure here.

4. Bishop in blue vestment, with pastoral staff in right hand and closed book in left, plain mitre, name below, "S̄cs Samson" (Plate XI.).

St. Sampson was born in South Wales, where he was ordained a Bishop. He migrated to Brittany, where he founded the great Abbey and Episcopal See of Dole, and died about the year 564.

5. Bishop (head gone) with red vestment, pastoral staff, hands clasped on breast, name below, "S̄cs German."

There are several Saints of this name, but this is no doubt intended for St. Germanus, the great Bishop of Auxerre, who made several missionary journeys to Britain, and died in the year 448.

6. Bishop with plain mitre, blue vestment, holding closed book and pastoral staff in left hand and giving benediction with the right, name below, "S̄cs Cutbtus."

This is, of course, St. Cuthbert, the great Bishop of Lindisfarne, who died in the year 687.

It will be noticed that the figures are represented alternately in red and blue vestments, being balanced by the ground-work of each compartment, which is alternately blue and red. There are no remains of the large figures, which must formerly have occupied the main divisions of this and the other north windows.

In the second window from the west (Plate VI.) all the figures are in white vestments on a blue ground. They are seated, but the thrones do not show except where stated.

In upper tier:—

1. A Bishop with pastoral staff in left hand, name not now decipherable.

2 and 3. Only lower part of two figures with loose skirts, and elaborate golden thrones, no names visible.

4. A Bishop giving the benediction, with name, "S̄cs ipolts."

This is clearly intended for St. Hippolytus, who was Bishop of Arabia, and probably suffered martyrdom in the year 251.

In middle compartments:—

1. Part of seated figure of a Bishop, with name below, "Sanct' laod'."

This is, without doubt, St. Leodegar or Leger, the celebrated Bishop of Autun, who suffered martyrdom in the year 678.

2. An Abbot, seated, with pastoral staff, and giving the benediction, name below, "S̄cs Botulp" (Plate XII.).

This commemorates St. Botolph, the well-known English Saint, who died in the year 655. His body was afterwards preserved at Thorney Abbey in Cambridgeshire.

3. Now turned inside out, a Bishop with name, "S̄cs Januari."

St. Januarius was Bishop of Benevento, and suffered martyrdom in the year 305.

4. A Bishop, head only left, and name, "Pödic."

Can this be intended for St. Prosdecimus, first Bishop of Padua, who died about the year 103?

5. An Abbot with pastoral staff, and giving the benediction with the left hand, name below, "Sanct' egidi'."

This is, of course, St. Egidius or Giles, who lived a hermit life for many years and was the founder of the Abbey of St. Gilles, near Nismes. He died early in the eighth century.

6. An Ecclesiastic, head and object in arms gone, name across, "S. romanus."

St. Romanus was Archbishop of Rouen, and died in the year 639.

In the middle and fourth windows the figures are standing behind battlements; in the middle window (Plate VII.), in upper compartments:—

1. A Bishop, head and name only partly visible.
2. Plain glass.
3. On one side, a white rose within a blazing star, the badge of King Edward IV., no doubt not in its original position.
4. A figure, not an ecclesiastic, with low round hat, holding sword in left hand, and name on scroll, "csmca" or "esmea," "S̄ms."

The lettering here is difficult to decipher, and no conjecture can be hazarded as to the identity of this Saint.

In the middle compartments:—

1. A figure in white with a sword, and name below, "S̄cs medardar."

Although the sword seems again out of place, this is undoubtedly intended for St. Medard, Bishop of Noyon, who died in the year 545. The Church of Little Bytham in Lincolnshire is dedicated in his honour, and it is traditionally reported that the skull and other relics of the Saint were once preserved there.

2. Figure in blue, head gone, name below, "S̄cs Gildard."

St. Gildard or Godard, was Bishop of Rouen and a contemporary of St. Medard. His body was finally laid to rest in the Church of St. Medard at Soissons, and he was commemorated jointly with that Saint on June 8th.

3. Figure in blue, head gone, with pastoral staff, name below, "S̄cs Julianus."

There were several Saints of this name, but this probably portrays St. Julian the Hermit, commonly called "Hospitator," who died about the year 370, or St. Julian, Bishop of Mans at the end of the third century.

4. Figure in blue, head and name gone.

5. Mitred figure in green with archbishop's cross, part of name only decipherable, "hun" (Plate XII.).

6. A large head inserted, name below for the original figure, "S̄cs albinus."

St. Albinus was Bishop of Angers, and died in the year 549.

In next window (Plate VIII.), in upper tier:—

1. A Bishop or Abbot in green vestments, and name below, somewhat indistinct, "S̄cs victor."

This is not St. Victor of Marseilles, but either St. Victor, Pope, who died in the year 201, or more probably St. Victor, Anchorite and Confessor, of Saturniac or Saint Vittre, near Troyes, of the seventh age.

2. A figure in red, head gone, with patriarchal cross and part of the inscription, "silvester."

This St. Silvester was Pope, and died in the year 335.

3. A figure with upper part (? mitre) destroyed, holding a book, part of name concealed by white glass and putty.

4. A Bishop in green vestments, name at side, first letter blurred out, "S̄cs .iddrs."

May this have been St. Desiderius, who suffered martyrdom with St. Januarius in the year 305?

In the middle compartments are:—

1. A figure, bareheaded, with grey cloak and yellow tunic, giving benediction with the left hand, and name, "S̄cs paulus" (Plate XII.).

2. Only name on scroll, "S̄cs petrus," remains, all above is destroyed.

3. A figure in white tunic, upper part gone, name, "S̄cs johis."

4. Figure, with blue tunic, holding (?) a spear, with part of name, "S̄cs t.," probably for St. Thomas.

5. A Bishop in blue vestment, giving benediction with right hand, name below, "S̄cs edmūd."

This is St. Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury, born at Abingdon, and buried at Pontigny in 1242.

6. Blank.

In east on north window (Plate IX.), in upper tier:—

Only (4) remains, with figure in white, and name "Sēs felicianus."

St. Felicianus lived in Rome, and with his brother, St. Primus, suffered martyrdom in the year 286.

In middle compartments:—

1. Blank.

2. A very elegant mitred figure, with archbishop's cross in left hand and giving the benediction with the right, name below, "Sē cornelius" (Plate XII.).

St. Cornelius was Pope, and suffered martyrdom at Rome in the year 252.

3. Blank.

4. A figure in white, with the inscription illegible outside. A female head has been inserted here.

5. A bearded man, bareheaded, with white garment and blue sleeves, holding book, no name.

6. Blank.

In the east window of the aisle (Plate X.) are fragments of several angels, one with peacock wings, another with the balances, and the word "troni," for thrones, below. There is little doubt that here was represented the Heavenly Hierarchy.

In the top compartments east and west is a Bishop. There is also the head of a female Saint crowned, and part of a large cross. This no doubt commemorated St. Helena.

In Blomefield's *History of Norfolk*, continued by the Rev. Charles Parkin, in the account of this church in vol. ix., p. 170, published in 1808, it is stated that in this east window "is the broken effigies of St. Nicholas, the Pope, on his throne; and in the other windows north, those of St. Bruno, St. Adelm, St. Sampson,

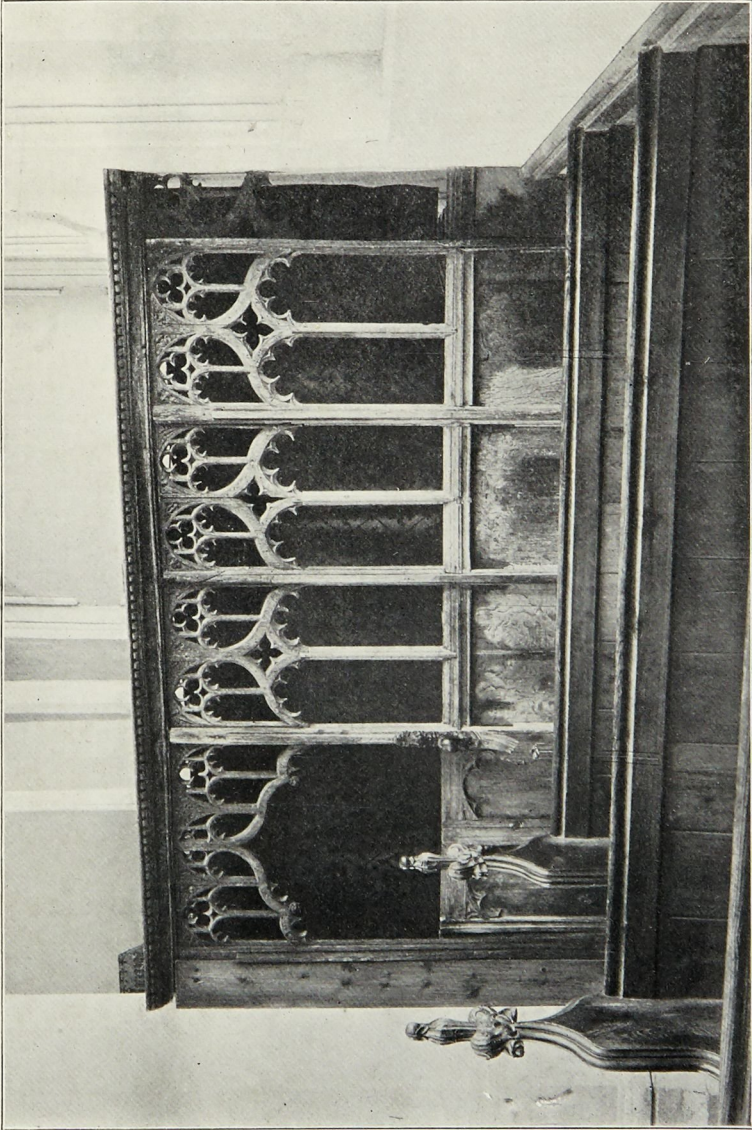
St. German, St. Cuthbert, St. Hugh, Bishops; and St. Leo and St. Silvester, Popes." Some of these, SS. Sampson, German, Aldhelm, Cuthbert, Silvester, still remain, and St. Leo is no doubt St. Leodegar, but the others have perished since that date. Parkin also mentions numerous shields, which have all disappeared, and states that in the east window had formerly been the Royal Arms, those of the Earl Warren, and of Albany, Earl of Arundel and Warren, quarterly, and the effigies of St. Mary Magdalen.

It is indeed to be regretted that ruthless destruction and wilful neglect have combined to leave us so little comparatively of what must have been a remarkable series of portraits of saints and martyrs. One can picture in one's mind the complete representation, probably of the apostles and prophets, popes, archbishops, and other ecclesiastics, filling up the windows in the north aisle; while those in the south glowed with an equal number of female saints, though of these not a fragment remains in situ. Great care and anxiety must have been exhibited in the selection of the saints, many of whom are of extreme rarity, and not to be found elsewhere in England. As to the date of the glass which remains, we may take it to be of the same period as the windows which contain it, and we can get corroborative evidence from the shields over the principal (south) doorway, and the white rose within the blazing star in the middle window, which prove it to be of the time of Edward IV., between the years 1461 and 1483. The pious benefactor who enlarged the church and embellished it with this wonderful martyrology will be pointed out in the description of the shields, which will shortly be given.

The south porch, with parvise above, is excellent Perpendicular work, and there is a fine inner doorway

with hood-mould, and ogee mouldings to the arch. On the spandril spaces above, on which are roses and foliage, on either side is carved a large shield—that on the west is charged with a cross engrailed, that on the east with a bend between six crosses crosslet. These are not noticed by Parkin, but they are important, as they clearly indicate two at least of the chief contributors to the reconstruction of the church. Gules a cross engrailed argent was one of the armorial bearings of the Ingaldesthorp family, and in this instance probably commemorates Isabel, only daughter and heir of Sir Edward de Ingaldesthorp, who died seized of lordships in this and other towns in 1456. The said Isabel was probably mainly instrumental in carrying out the new work between the years 1461 and 1483, as evidenced by the style of architecture, and the badge of Edward IV., already mentioned. She was married to John Nevill, Marquis Montacute. The other shield commemorates some member of the great family of Howard, who, though not apparently specially interested in this parish, may have been induced to contribute towards the restoration of the church.

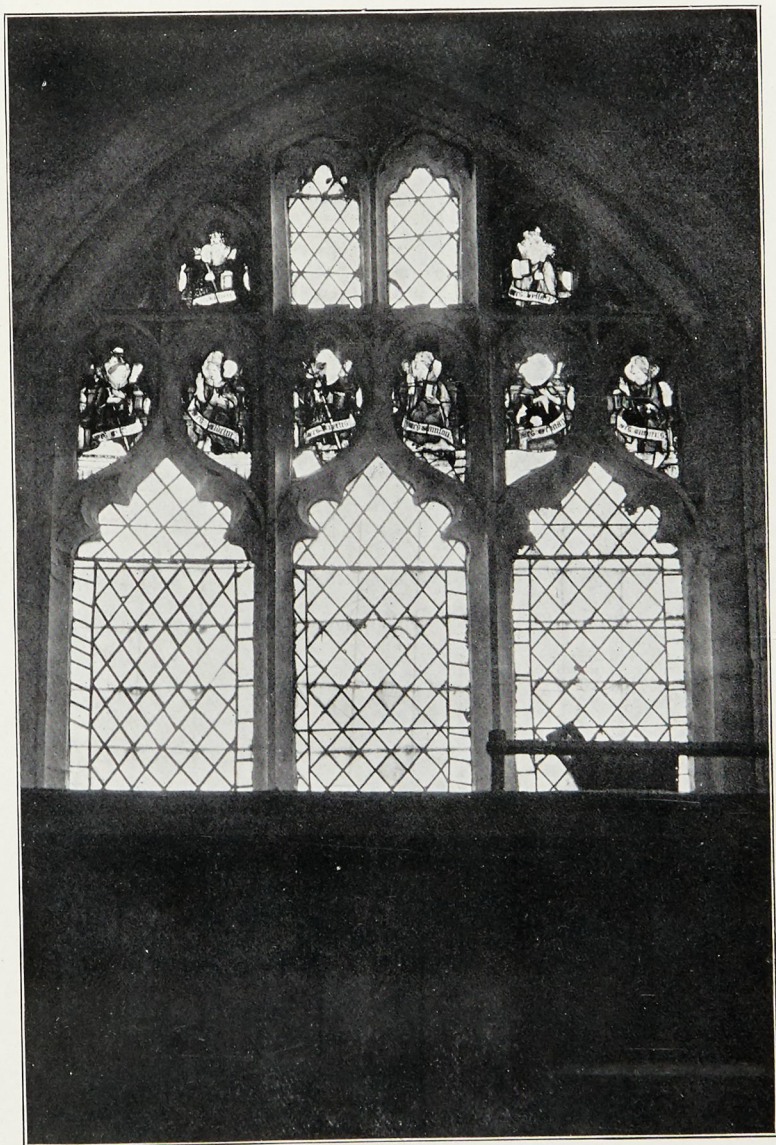
There are east and west windows and good outer arch to the porch. There is also a window on the south side of the parvise, with pretty little niche above. The floor of the parvise has been destroyed, but there is a doorway in north-west corner from steps leading down to lower doorway in the south aisle. The two rood-loft staircases are within turrets, capped by pinnacles, on either side of the centre of the east gable of the nave roof, the steps leading up to the aisle roofs on either side. There is a small window on south-east side of south turret. On the east gable of the nave roof is a sancte bellcote. The nave roof has a stone parapet and is not embattled. There is a plain



PART OF ROODSCREEN.



DOORS OF ROODSCREEN.



FIRST WINDOW FROM WEST.



SECOND WINDOW.



MIDDLE WINDOW.



FOURTH WINDOW.



FIFTH WINDOW.



EAST WINDOW.



ST. SAMPSON.
ST. HILARY.

ST. ALDHELM.
ST. CALIXTUS.



ST. PAUL.
ST. —HUN.

ST. BOTOLPH.
ST. CORNELIJS.



SOUTH DOORWAY.

Perpendicular doorway on south of chancel. On the north side one blocked window is visible. The north nave doorway is Decorated with hood-mould and good arch mouldings. The tower is of the Decorated period, embattled, with two-light upper belfry windows and plain lancets in the middle stage. The lower west window is new, but the original Decorated hood-mould remains. There is a staircase within the south-west buttress.

There are six bells bearing the following inscriptions:—

On 1, 2, 4, 5, 6. "Lester & Pack of London fecit 1767": and, in addition,

- on 4. "At proper times our voices we will raise
In sounding to our benefactors praise";
- on 5. "Though much against us may be said
To speak for ourselves we are not afraid";
- on 6. "Nicholas Edwards and Richd. Whistler
Ch. Wardens."

On No. 3. "Thomas Mears Founder London 1841."

In the sixth year of King Edward VI. there were three bells weighing 8, 10, and 12 cwt.

Such is a brief and somewhat superficial account of the Church of St. Mary Magdalene, Wiggenhall, and it is hoped that the result of this record will be the careful preservation of the glass and other objects of interest, to which attention has now been especially directed. It is most satisfactory to find that the new Vicar is most anxious to bring about this result.