

Notes on the Roof of the Nave of
All Saints' Church, Hecton.

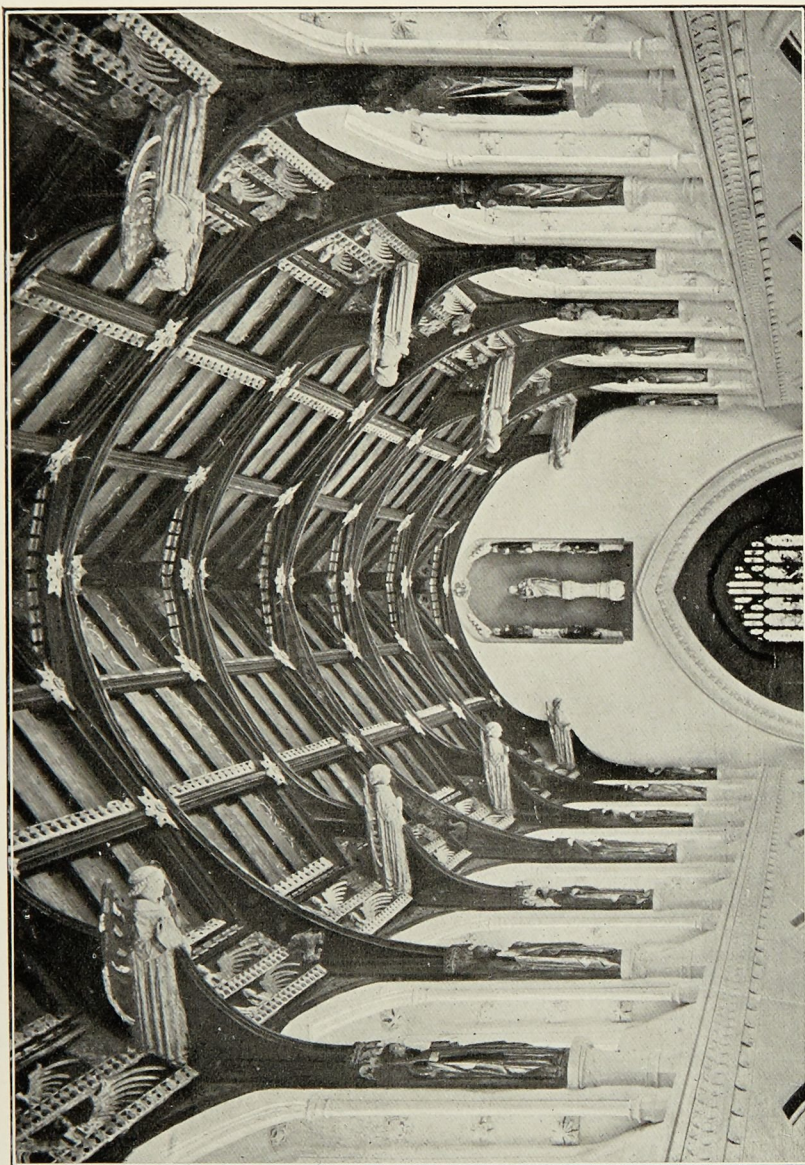
COMMUNICATED BY

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"IN the year 1838 the roof of the church nave was thoroughly repaired and all the mutilated parts of the carving in the angels, bosses, etc., were replaced; the gaudy colours of the roof, painted in blue, yellow, red, white, and green, in which state they had been left since the Reformation, were obliterated and oak colour ordered to be put on instead; the angels and carving were made gold colour to enrich and enliven the roof, and the figures of the Apostles, etc., supporting the roof between the clerestory windows, were made stone colour in order to give greater elevation to the roof."

So runs the "Old Church Record"; and acting on the above information, and hoping against hope that some at least of the Old English colours might be brought to
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ROOF OF NAVE, NECTON CHURCH.

light again, the work of removing the modern distemper colouring was taken in hand, with the result that much of the pre-Reformation colour has once more been displayed to view.

All the underside of the boarding of the roof was found to be dark red with a white scroll pattern running up the centre of each board, the rafters were painted white, and the main principals white, ornamented with red Tudor roses.

Most of the red it has been found possible to preserve, but the white had become so impaired by age and by the removal of the modern colouring that it was found impossible to keep even the smallest traces; only one or two of the red Tudor roses are to be seen now, here and there surrounded by a little white.

The mouldings on the main and intermediate principals, purlins, collars, wall pieces, and ridge, have still traces of colour—red, white, and green, being the most prominent. The crestings, dentels, mouldings, and cornices, show similar colours; perhaps red prevailing. The winged figures of the cornice show signs of several colours, but white appears the chief. The bodies of the larger angels on the hammer-beam are white with deep cuffs of red, and the underside of the outstretched wings chiefly vivid reds, yellows, and blues (the yellow showing considerable signs that it once was gilt). Each of the larger angels and the smaller ones in the cornice is carrying a different emblem, *e.g.*, incense boats, crowns, shields, mitres, castles, chalices, etc.

On either side of each intermediate principal, and attached to the ribs of the same, are some very quaint carvings of birds and animals, there being sixteen in all. One is exceptionally curious, representing a dog with a litter of puppies. On the outside circular moulding of the ribs, also of the purlins and ridge, are broad bands

of colour running diagonally, some alternately red and green, others white and green, or white and red. The bosses at the intersection of the purlins and principals showed considerable traces of colour and some gilding.

The great feature, however, of the roof is the eighteen full-length figures beneath the principals between the clerestory windows. These are 4 ft. 6 in. in length, and are all brilliantly coloured, with the exception of those of two bishops and two doctors, on which very little colour is to be found. The rest of the figures represent the Apostles, ranged on either side of our Lord on the north wall, and on either side of the Blessed Virgin on the south wall. There is a canopy over each figure, the underside of which is painted sometimes white and sometimes blue with lead stars.

The following is a complete list of these full-length figures between the clerestory windows, with detailed description:—

South side (commencing from the East).

1.—*S. Andrew.* Represented as a middle-aged man with short black beard, clothed in a cerise surcoat or cloak, with undergarment of grass green. In his right hand is a cross saltire, in left a book. The canopy of the figure is white.

2.—*S. Jude.* Represented with short beard; cloak of grey blue, lined with white; undergarment magenta. He is carrying a boat across both hands. The canopy shows signs of red paint.

3.—*S. John.* Represented as quite a young man, very fair and effeminate-looking; surcoat deep red, lined with white; undergarment dark blue. In his left hand is a blue chalice; his right is raised with two fingers pointing towards the chalice. The canopy is a brilliant blue.

4.—*Blessed Virgin Mary*. Represented with fair hair, with crown on head, clothed in blue cloak, with undergarment magenta. Both her hands are raised in the act of adoration (perhaps directed towards her Son our Lord, who is placed opposite His Mother on the north side of the church). The canopy shows signs of white, red, and gold.

5.—*S. Matthew or S. Paul*. Represented with long grizzled beard, evidently a man of some years, with deep furrows running across the forehead; surcoat dark red, lined with white, with undergarment of deep blue. He is leaning on a sword, and in his left hand is a book. (It has been suggested that this figure represents S. Paul, who would thus pair off with S. Peter on the opposite side, in the same way as S. John pairs off with S. James.)

6.—*S. Matthias*. Represented with long grizzled beard; surcoat grey, lined with salmon pink; undergarment deep blue, ornamented with gold floral pattern. In his right hand is an axe or halbert; in his left hand is a book. Canopy blue.

7.—*S. James the Less*. Represented with long dark brown beard; surcoat of deep brown red, lined with white; undergarment of blue, with gold flowers running up the same. In his right hand is a fuller's club, painted bright red; in his left hand he carries a book. Canopy blue.

8.—The figure of a Bishop, with practically no traces of colour except in canopy.

9.—The figure of a Doctor in Divinity, with no colour.

North side (commencing from the East).

1.—*S. Simon*. Represented with short black beard, with red cloak, lined with white, and blue undergarment.

In his left hand is clasped a fish, in his right a book. (This is the only figure of the eighteen at all damaged; the end of the nose apparently having been knocked off.)

2.—*S. Bartholomew*. Represented with short beard, with blue-grey surcoat, lined with white; undergarment magenta. In his right hand is a butcher's flaying-knife; his left is concealed under his cloak, in which it has been suggested he is carrying the skin of a man.

3.—*S. James the Great*. Represented as wearing the flapped hat and cloak of a pilgrim, with wallet and staff, being the first of the Apostles who departed to fulfil his mission of evangelisation. He appears to be a young man, very fair, and bearing a family likeness to our Lord, his kinsman. His cloak is red, lined with white, and his undergarment blue.

4.—*Our Lord*. Represented as very fair, clothed in a long flowing deep purple-brown garment, with a red-brown undergarment, the cuffs of which are light red. In His left hand He carries a blue orb, in the top of which is a cross; His right hand is raised in the act of blessing.

5.—*S. Peter*. Represented as a fair young man with short beard. His dress is very ornate, with gold floral work; cloak of red, lined with white, and undergarment dark blue. In his right hand he holds a key, in his left a book. The canopy over the figure is white.

6.—*S. Philip*. Represented as very bronzed in complexion, clothed in magenta surcoat, with deep blue undergarment, all highly embellished with gold flowers. In his right hand he carries a blue basket containing loaves (*John* vi. 7); in his left hand a book.

7.—*S. Thomas*. Represented with dark brown beard, clothed in deep red surcoat, lined with salmon pink, and undergarment of blue, both of which are decorated

with a floral pattern in gold. He carries a long spear in his right hand, and in his left a book.

8.—A Bishop, with little or no colour.

9.—A Doctor in Divinity.

N.B.—(i.) The garments of the figures at the west end of the church seem to be much more elaborate in colours and gold floral work than those further east.

(ii.) All the colour now visible in the roof is original work of about 1490, no new colouring or touching up in any way having been done in the work of the restoration.
