

CHIPSTEAD CHURCH.

By MAJOR HEALES, F.S.A., M.R.S.L.

CHIPSTEAD CHURCH may, in an archæological point of view, be ranked amongst the more important examples in the county, and has the specially good fortune to remain fairly free from the hands of the restorer. I trust that under the appreciative care of the rector it may long be preserved from injury.

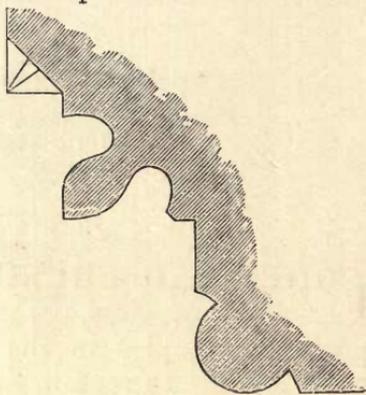
Nearly thirty years ago a paper was read at Cambridge, before the Ecclesiological Society,¹ by our eminent member, Mr. Street, in which he broached a theory that the churches of Chipstead, Gatton, Merstham, and Merton, in this county, and that of Cliffe at Hoo, in the neighbourhood of Gravesend, were all the work of the same architect. The paper was the result of a careful observation and comparison of these buildings, in the examination of which many very curious points of resemblance were noted; though whether, taken altogether, they warrant more than a "perhaps," may be open to further consideration; and probably the author of the paper, if now called upon to write upon the subject, might feel that the evidence in favour of the theory then suggested is less conclusive than it seemed at the time.

He assumes that the architect commenced with the font at Merstham, though adding this was perhaps, and more probably, earlier; if so, the Church of Chipstead was the first of the works in this series.

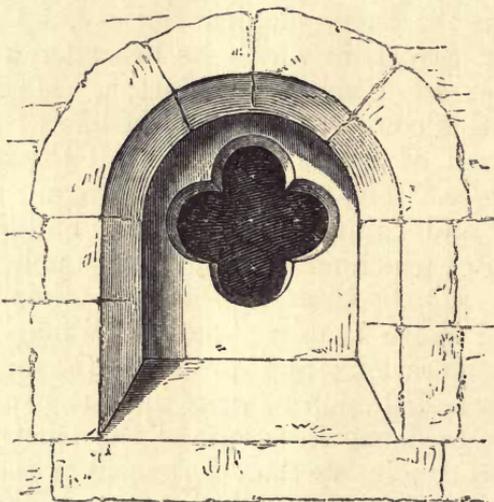
It would scarcely be within the scope of my present duty to enter upon the points of similarity in detail—points which could scarcely interest or be appreciated by those who have not made mediæval architecture a special

¹ *The Ecclesiologist*, N. S. VIII. p. 31 (1850).

study; but which together, when very carefully examined and compared, led to the opinion expressed. But those amongst us who happen to be acquainted with Merstham Church will at once recognize the resemblance of the doorway in the north transept here¹ to the west doorway at Merstham,² which is of somewhat earlier date, and is ornamented with the dog-tooth ornament such as occurs here as an enrichment of the round-headed doorway on the north side of the nave. The transept-doorway, as seen from the exterior, is, in fact, one of a



SECTION OF NORTH DOORWAY-HEAD.



CLERESTORY WINDOW, NOW WITHIN THE BUILDING.

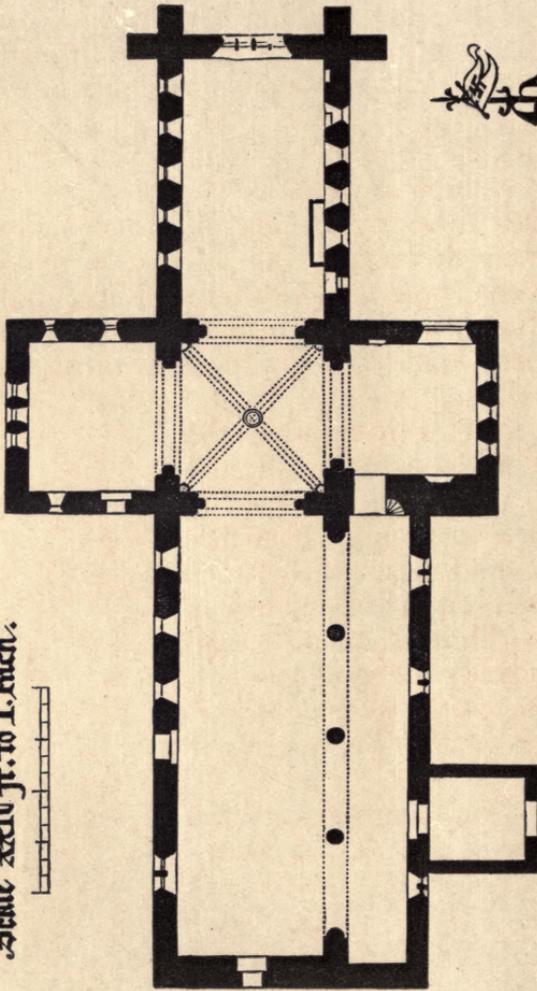
rather rare type, but specimens may be found elsewhere, such as one which occurs at Kidlington, in Oxfordshire.³

¹ See wood-engraving, *post*.

² Engraved in the *Collections* of this Society, vol. iii. p. 1, in illustration of a Paper on Merstham Church, delivered by the present writer on the occasion of the Society's visit to that locality.

³ Doorway at Kidlington, Oxfordshire, engraved in the *Glossary of Architecture*, vol. ii. pl. 48, with date c. 1220.

Scale XXV ft. to 1 Inch.



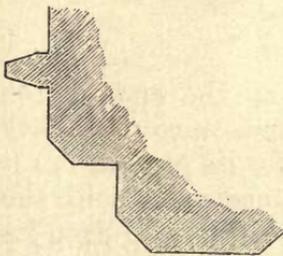
GROUND-PLAN OF CHIPSTEAD CHURCH, SURREY.

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There is also a singular similarity in the clerestory of quatrefoil windows in the churches of Chipstead and Merstham, which until a recent restoration of the latter under the careful superintendence of Lord Hylton, were both within the building, in consequence of the wall of the aisle and pitch of its roof having been raised—so that these openings, which originally gave additional light to the nave, became at a subsequent period simply ornamental.

The earliest part of the church is evidently the nave. The west door may well be ranked as of the Norman period; yet the north doorway, which is rather more elaborate, though round-headed, is (as previously mentioned) ornamented with the dog-tooth moulding, and clearly of the transitional period, or near the end of the 12th century; and the lancet window near it must be referred to the same date.

It is part of Mr. Street's theory that the ground-plan of the church, as originally designed, consisted of a nave and chancel (a plan, indeed, of which the county furnishes abundant examples), and that while the work was in progress it was determined to enlarge the building by the addition of an aisle, and the adoption of an entirely different ground-plan—the cruciform, with central tower. Whether this was so or not we can never hope to prove.

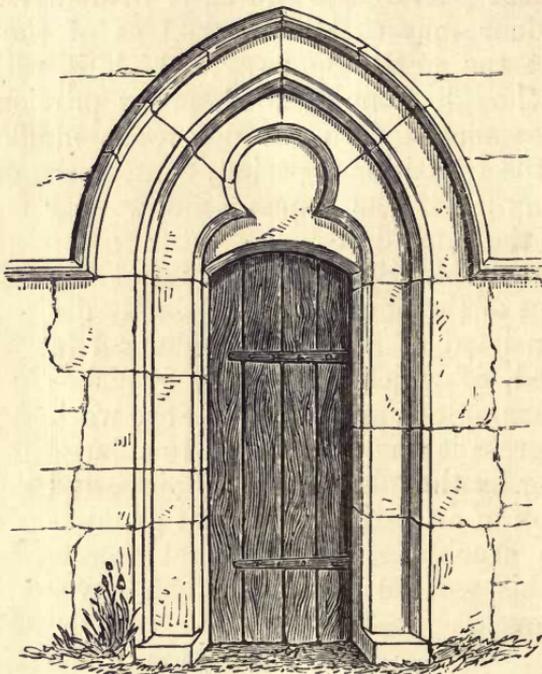


SECTION OF NAIVE ARCH.

The south side of the nave has a character which leads us to give it a date rather later than that of the north side; and the section of nave - arches perfectly accords with that of the tower - arches and the north transept doorway, while the design of the interior of the latter must be deemed coeval with the range of chancel lancets.

CAP & BASE OF
NAIVE-PILLAR
(S. SIDE).

The mouldings of the nave pillars are simple, but possessing a distinct character. The south chancel is modern; the original south transept was destroyed (it is believed) by a fire in the 17th century, and the views given in the work of our great county historians, Manning and Bray, show that its destruction had taken place previously to 1794. It remained for the late rector, the father of the present rector, to rebuild it, which was carefully done in 1855, taking the north transept as the general model.



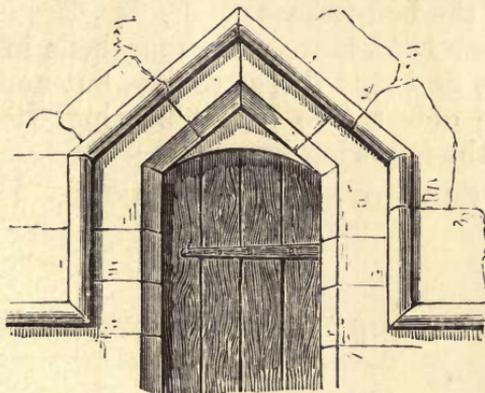
TRANSEPT DOORWAY: EXTERIOR.

It will be noted that the triplet at the end of the north transept has a very modern appearance; possibly cleaning and renovation may account for its present bran-new look, but its style is anything but accordant with the rest of the building. The work by which it acquired its present appearance was performed in 1854, at the expense of Mr. Cattley, the father of the present churchwarden. Here we must refer to the doorway in the transept. Considering that the church already had two, if not three entrances in the nave, one might deem

another hardly necessary; but probably the transept served as a chantry screened off by a parclose from the rest of the church, and belonging to the Lord of the Manor or some other great family, a suggestion which is strengthened by the fact of there being an aumbry or cupboard constructed near the east wall, and most likely a piscina will be found in the east wall or south-east corner whenever the plaster is stripped off.

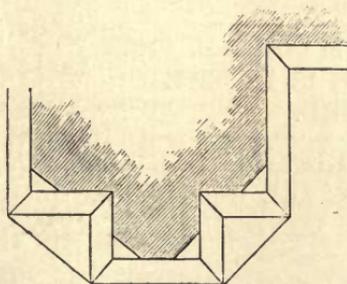
SECTION OF HEAD OF
TRANSEPT DOORWAY:
EXTERIOR.

Before proceeding further, attention will be drawn to the simple but effective arches and piers of the tower and to the beautiful

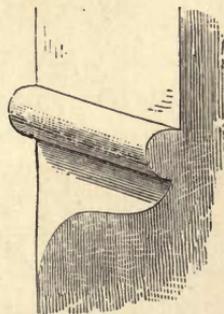


TRANSEPT DOORWAY: INTERIOR.

groining of the tower. Nothing can be more simple,



PLAN OF N. W. PIER OF TOWER.



CHAMFER-STOP, TOWER PIER.

and yet nothing can be more careful than the ma-

sonry, especially of the vaulting ribs, and the carved foliage of the central boss. I learn with regret, that the tower has shown signs of weakness, and it is considered scarcely safe to ring the peal of bells. Bell-ringing is a science which, as now practised, was unknown until about the 17th century, or no doubt the strength of many a tower which has been injured or destroyed by the oscillation, caused by the swinging of the bells, would have been adapted to the requirement; but at the same time it is only fair to the art or science, as we may term it (for a peal, properly so called, is a matter of singular intricacy, as well as some manual dexterity), to advert to the fact that the damage to towers usually arises in consequence of the improper wedging of the bell-frames.

In the year 1553 there were four bells in the steeple,¹ and now we find that there are five, but none of them so ancient, the oldest (the tenor) bearing the date 1595. They bear the following legends:—

OVRE HOPE IS IN THE LORD. 1595.

R.  E.

Our hope is in the lord. 1607.

R.  E.

OVRE HOPE IS IN THE LORD.
JOHN HODSON MADE ME. 1658.

W.  H.

JOHN HODSON MADE ME. 1658.
OVRE HOPE IS IN THE
LORD.

THE REVEREND JOHN GRIFFITH RECTOR. MESS^{RS}.
SIMON ROSE & ELIAS FEW CH. WARDENS.
WILLIAM MEARS OF LONDON FECIT 1785.

R. E. is Richard Eldridge of Chertsey, a very eminent bell-founder, whose initials and stamp occur at dates

¹ Surrey Church Goods, *Surrey Archæological Collections*, iv. p. 181.

between 1592 and 1623, and the motto was a favourite one of his, as for instance, at West Chiltington, Sussex, dated 1602, and also in black letter.¹ John Hodson was a great London bell-founder, whose initials are often found in Surrey, Kent, and Middlesex, and his name in full at Hailsham, Sussex, in 1663 and 1668,² and the firm of Mears still flourishes.

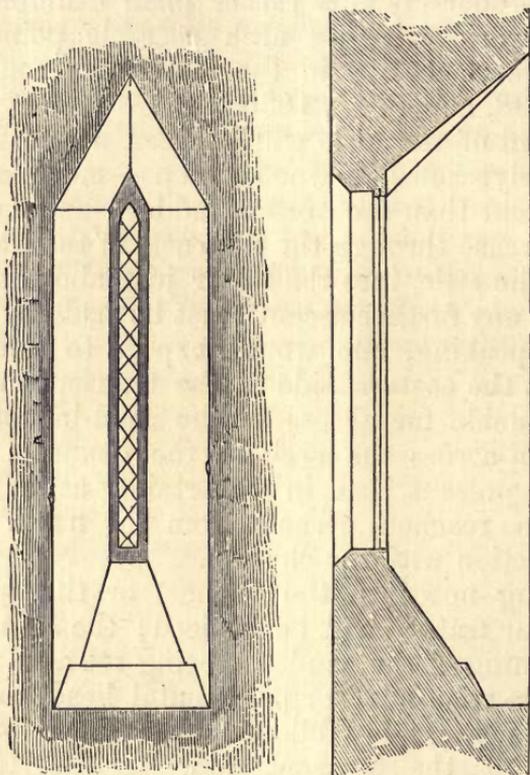
The south doorway is a rather plain example of perpendicular work, with its arch scarcely pointed, and under a square head; in the jambs are roughly cut I. T. L., 1538, and P. L., 1636.

At the end of the aisle will be seen a doorway, probably formerly reached by wooden steps—more convenient and permanent than the present ladder—and leading by a stone staircase through the thickness of the wall, across the end of the aisle, into the tower just above the vaulting, whence any further ascent must be made by a ladder. Generally speaking, one would expect to find such a staircase on the eastern side of the transept in order to make it available for access to the rood-loft on the top of the screen across the arch to the chancel; but here we are, at present, left in uncertainty as to how the rood-loft was reached, perhaps from the north transept near its junction with the chancel.

Proceeding now into the chancel or the transept, a very singular feature will be noticed; the actual lancet-headed opening of the windows being set as it were in a frame with a triangular or pedimental head constructed of two slabs, the splay following the same form. The inner side of the transept door is also triangular-headed, as seen in the previous illustration. Possibly, instances may be found elsewhere; but, except in spire lights which are subject to different considerations, and the pedimental canopies over pointed arches, which are of quite a separate type, I do not remember ever to have seen another example, or even a reliable drawing of one, built during the period of Gothic architecture and subsequent to the Saxon date. The eminent

¹ Tyssen's *Church Bells of Sussex*, p. 69. ² *Ibid.* p. 27.

archæologist, Mr. Freshfield, thinks that the original church was Saxon, and that these are remains of that structure adopted and adapted by the early English builder. It may have been so, but as there is no mention in Domesday Book of a church then existing here, the presumption is great that none existed; and I do not remember to have seen any Saxon heads very closely



CHANCEL WINDOWS. Scale, 3 feet to 1 inch.

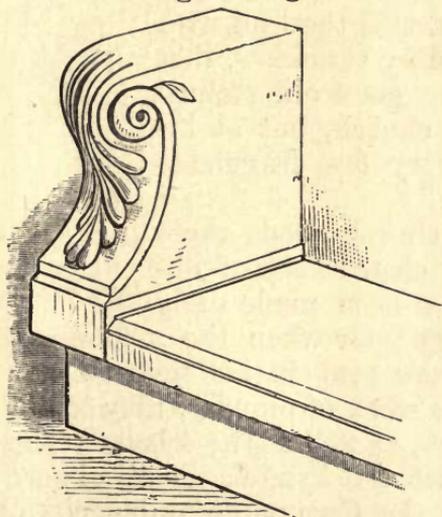
corresponding with these. In spite of the singularity of the form I do not think there is sufficient ground for assigning to them any other date than that of the windows themselves, which are clearly Early English. Probably they will not be adopted as a pattern, since there is a little awkwardness where the lancet window head and triangular splay contrast.

At all events these triangular heads of windows and

door form so singular and striking a feature in the design that I must run a risk of rashness in doubting Mr. Street's conclusions (which if I were an architect I might hardly venture to do). I think that if the architect of this church had also designed the other churches with which Mr. Street has associated it, he would infallibly have introduced similarly-constructed window and door heads in at least some of them as well as here, and the similarity of his design would not have been limited to various, but by comparison unimportant, matters of detail.

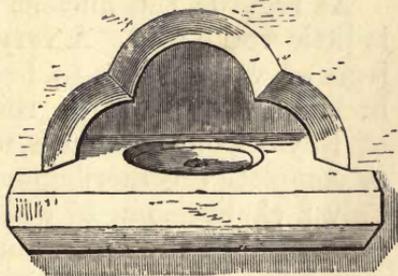
The priest's door in the chancel I suspected, and have since found from Cracklow's view, to be modern, as there was no doorway at that date.¹

The next work was to raise the tower a story; the walls of the aisle were heightened at a late date, and in consequence of the aisle-roof being of necessity also raised, the clerestory windows came within the church to which they had before given light.



STONE BENCH-END.

Another very unusual feature in the church is presented by the sedilia being a stone bench against the wall, instead of either recesses in the thickness of



PISCINA.

the masonry or formed by cutting down a window-sill to a convenient level; the carving of the elbows is very singular, and might be of a very early date. The piscina will also be noted on account of its unusual and not elegant form; near it is a large aumbry.

¹ Cracklow's *Surrey Churches*, 1823.

The font is a large octagon, with panels of decorated tracery rather rudely cut in each face. The font may be of that date, or perhaps earlier, with the panelling sunk at that period.

The chancel screen is a good one, of Perpendicular date —towards the end of the 15th century. About the same date a large window took the place of the three detached lancets, which we may assume to have probably occupied the east end of the chancel in the original design: this fact appears from the bases of the jamb shafts.

The stained glass will next attract attention, and the Society will hear with surprise that much of it is the work, both in painting and firing, of the present rector and Mrs. Aubertin, whose successful skill and taste render it unsafe to define, without a close examination, what is old and what is modern. The remainder of the glass consists of fragments collected by him from time to time, and at various localities, as opportunity occurred, and set in the lead with his own hands. It is stated by Cracklow, that there was at one time some good old stained glass still existing in the church, but at his date (1823) there were very few fragments remaining.



BASE OF EAST
WINDOW,
JAMB-SHAFT.

As regards the ancient church-goods there is little to be said. A very clear sweep of objects of value seems to have been made early in King Edward VI.'s reign; for when the second set of Royal Commissioners were sent in his seventh year to complete the sacrilegious work of plunder, they found only 2 chalices, one of which, as well as the 4 bells in the steeple, they received "unto the kyng's use." There was one vestment left for the Communion-table cloth, while the other ornaments had been sold for 22s. 8d.; copper-gilt articles, weighing $3\frac{1}{2}$ lbs., realising 21 pence, and 3 lbs. of other manufactured copper-work having been sold for 6 pence.

The pulpit is late in the Jacobean style; and this is so often the case that I come to the conclusion that pulpits seldom existed in ordinary parish churches during

the Gothic age. I am, of course, aware of sundry examples of pulpits of the Perpendicular period, but they are very exceptional: most of those which we see of Gothic carving have been simply constructed by cutting up screen-work and patching it together.

There are few monuments to which I need call attention. At the east end of the aisle, broken in two, is a stone coffin-lid sloping in width from head to foot, and its ridge marked by a simple floriated cross in relief, dating perhaps early in the 14th century. Outside the church, to the west of the porch, is another now exposed to the destructive influence of weather.

Manning and Bray mention a flat stone, with a partially-obliterated inscription, bearing the date 15th March, 1475, and the rector informs me that a brass was stolen some years ago.

Next is the little brass in the chancel-floor, consisting of a small female effigy, and the following inscription:—

HERE LYETH THE BODY OF LUCIE ROPER y^e DAUGHTER OF LACTANSIVS ROPER & GRANCHILD TO HYMPHRIE HYNTLEY CITIZEN AND IREMONGER OF LONDON WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE y^e XXIIIIth DAYE OF FEBRVARY AN^o 1614. BEINGE ABOVE THE AGE OF XXIIII YEARES.

CHRISTVS MIHI VITA; MORS MIHI LVCRVM.

It is in fair preservation, but not specially remarkable.

There are also several incised inscriptions, beginning with that to John Hamden, D.D., Rector, who died 26th January, 1631, aged 55. One to Alice, daughter of Dr. Hooker (best known as "The Judicious Hooker"), who died 20th December, 1649; and several, somewhat later, to members of the families of Pigeon and Stephens.

A helmet and armorial banner hang in the chancel.

It is proper to advert to two stones, each bearing the date 1253 in Arabic numerals, very rudely scratched: they were found in the jambs of the east window, into which they had been built; and in one of the two the date, set inwards in the wall, was protected by a piece of lead. Such numerals were not in use in England till a period far later, nor is there anything to warrant the

belief in the high antiquity of the execution of these scratchings. I should suggest that there may have been a dedication inscription in the chancel (which from its architecture we may ascribe to about that date); that such inscription was removed and destroyed in the 15th or early in the 16th century, when the present east window was inserted; and that the then rector, or the workmen, with a conservative feeling not usually exhibited, in order to preserve the record, roughly cut the date in these stones. Mr. Freshfield informs me of an instance at St. Christopher le Stocks, London, of the care with which some fragments of glass, discovered in 1590, were preserved and the date appearing on them was recorded with a note of the circumstances in the vestry-book.

In this age of "restoration" (so called ironically, I suppose), it is uncommon to meet with a church of any size or architectural pretension that has not suffered more or less severe injury from the efforts of restorers, which, well-intentioned though they be, will be bitterly regretted hereafter, and will inflict a lasting disgrace upon the present age. I may, fortunately, make this remark on the present occasion without risk.

It now only remains to add a few remarks upon the parish register.

The existing Register Book commences in 1656, but for some time it is evidently a very imperfect record. Thus of *Christnings*, there is in that year but one entry (which is dated 5th February), while in the following year there are eleven; in 1661 there is but one entry, in 1663 only two, and in 1664 but four, including one "at London" relating to the Pigeon family. The *Buryalls* commence in the same year, but there are only two or three per annum. The record of marriages we must assume to have been kept by the registrar appointed by the Commonwealth Parliament, at all events up to the Restoration; but after that we find no record till 1670, and then only one or two per annum for many years, showing clearly that the register was very imperfectly kept. And of this there is further evidence in the form of

entry: thus, on an opposite page, instead of in the sequence of date, is this record—

“1663. Thomas Sparkes and Anne Matthew were married upon all Souls day in this year”; and

“1664. M^r George Evelyn, son of y^e right worshipful S^r John Evelyn, late of Godstone, Knight, & M^{rs} Mary Longly, of Colsden, were here married by M^r Hampton, of Blechingly, Sept. 8th.”

Why they came here or how they acquired a domicile does not appear. Burials of persons dying in other localities were not uncommon, as from London, Reigate, Chaldon, and Merstham.¹

The families of Pigeon and of Stephens (better known as of Epsom) are the only other noticeable names up to the year 1700 (beyond which would be out of place in an archæological paper), and they appear thus:—

“1693. M^{rs} Margaret Stephens, wyfe of M^r Anthony Stephens, of Epsom, was buried June 10th, who dyed June 7th, and was wrapt in Linnen.

“1695. Anthony Stephens, Esq^{re}, of Epsom, was buried May 10th, and was wrapt in Linen.”

The note about wrapping in linen was in consequence of the Act of Parliament, 18 Charles II., cap. 4 (1666), for “the encouragement of the woollen manufactures of this kingdom, and prevention of the exportation of the monies thereof for the buying and importing of linen.” A singular Act for protective duties—which prohibited the burial from and after 25th March, 1667, of any person “in any shirt, shift, or sheet, made of or mingled with flax, hemp, silk, hair, gold, or silver, or other than what shall be made of wool only”; or that any person should be put into any coffin lined or faced with any such material, under a penalty of £5, to be employed to the use of the poor in providing a stock or work-house for the setting them at work; the only exception being in the case of any one dying of plague. The Act proved unsatisfactory in its working and was repealed and its intention re-enacted more carefully by the

¹ *e.g.* 1693. “M^r Matthew Atkinson, of London, Goldsmith, was buried July 4th, who dyed June 29th, and was wrapt in Woollen.”

Act 30th Charles II., cap. 3; but it seems to have been little regarded after a few years, and was abrogated by the Act 54th George III., cap. 108.

Connected with the parish we may note the entries respecting Mr. Ingram, who was appointed to the rectory by the King, by lapse, on 27th February, 1678-9. He apparently was curate of the parish, and perhaps in charge, for some time previously, for we find in the Register Book the following entry:—

1675. John Ingram, Minister of this parish, and Mrs Elizabeth Pigeon were marriede Aprill 29th, at Christ Church parish, at y^e Bank side, Surry.

Whether this was or was not a clandestine marriage does not appear, but it proved very prolific, as shown by the Register, where are the entries of the following baptisms:—

Mary, daughter of John Ingram, Curate of this parish, and Elizabeth his wife, born 9th March, baptized 19th March, 1676.

Hannah, daughter of John Ingram, Rector, born 27th July, baptized 14th August, 1679.

John, born 13th January, baptized 18th January (24 January, interlined), 1681.

William, born 20th March, baptized 4th September, 1683.

Samuel, born 2nd November, baptized 11th November, 1684.

Elizabeth, born 9th May, baptized 13th May, 1686.

Anna, born 17th July, baptized 22nd July, 1687.

Thomas, born 5th January, baptized 24th January, 1688.

Sarah, born 27th October, baptized 20th November, 1690.

James, born 20th July, baptized 4th August, 1692.

Judith, born 12th July, baptized 26th July, 1694.

Mrs Ingram died on the 14th November, and was buried on the 19th November, 1714, wrapt in woollen.

Up to this date all the entries in the Register Book during Mr. Ingram's period are apparently in his own handwriting, but after that date he appears to have given it up, as the handwriting was thenceforth quite different and wanting in its former regularity; he, himself, died on 1st and was buried on 5th February, 1717: it seems as though overwhelmed by his loss, he gave up his customary task and died after a lapse of little more than two years.

Of surnames there do not appear any specially worthy

of mention, though naturally a few well-known in the neighbouring parishes appear here, such as Best and Bonwick ; of unusual Christian names in the 17th century may be noted Eusebiah, Emanuel, Thumper, and Sententia.

In conclusion, I have to acknowledge with sincere thanks the facilities which the Rev. Peter Aubertin, M.A., the Rector, has been good enough to afford for visiting the church by the Society, and by myself on its behalf, and for examining the Registers, as also for his information as to the work which has been done to the church during the long period of the incumbency of himself and his father.
