

HENRY DE YEVELEY,  
ONE OF THE ARCHITECTS OF WESTMINSTER HALL.

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The biography of English artists in general during the middle ages has been a subject greatly neglected, to the prejudice of our national reputation in comparison with the Continent of Europe; and the names and works of our mediæval Architects have shared in the common fate.

In the illustrated edition of Walpole's *Anecdotes of Painting, &c.* 1828, the editor Mr. Dallaway has given (at vol. i. p. 208) brief notices of some half-dozen "eminent master-masons," of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but among them is not to be found the name of Henry de Yeveley. And yet this architect was *Master-mason to three successive Kings of England, and to Westminster Abbey*; and records are still extant that he was employed in many important works, particularly in the remodeling of the great hall at Westminster during the reign of Richard the Second, and in the erection of that monarch's tomb.

Walpole it may be presumed discredited, or at least he ignored, the statements of an earlier writer, that Henry Yevell built for the King the London charter-house, King's hall at Cambridge, and Queenborough castle; and that he rebuilt St. Stephen's chapel at Westminster. (*Constitutions of Freemasonry*, edited by James Anderson, M.A. 1738.) And in the earlier edition of the same *Constitutions* (by J. T. Desaguiliers, 1723,) Henry Yevele had been mentioned (p. 31) as "the King's Freemason or General Surveyor of his buildings, employed in building several abbeys, and St. Stephen's chapel at Westminster."

Preston says he was one of the five deputies appointed by Edward III. to inspect the proceedings of the fraternity of Masons.

Some of these statements are indeed probably guess-work. St. Stephen's chapel was begun about 1330; Queenborough castle is attributed to the celebrated William of Wykeham.

Some slight notice of Yeveley might have found its way into Walpole's work, either from the collection of Rymer, or from the

more popular *Survey of London* by Stowe, where his interment in the church of St. Magnus near London Bridge is mentioned, and he is designated as Free-mason to Edward the Third, Richard the Second, and Henry the Fourth. Stowe says "his monument remaineth;" but he does not describe it further, nor give the epitaph, of which no copy appears to be extant, the original having probably perished in the Great Fire of 1666. Strype, in his edition of Stowe, added a few brief notes from Yeveley's will; and this has now been recovered from the Hustings rolls.

The name of Yevele is evidently local, and it was probably derived from the town in Somersetshire now called Yeovil,—this being one of the many ancient forms under which that place appears. But of Yeveley's immediate parentage or family nothing has hitherto been discovered.

Henry de Yeveley, mason, was director of the King's works at Westminster as early as 1365, if not before, and during the 364 days from September 28, anno regni 39, to September 27 in the following year, he received the wages of one shilling a day.\* At the same date he supplied 7,000 Flanders tiles, for pavements, at 6s. 8d. the 1,000, and six mouncells of plaister of Paris at 12s. the mouncell.†

In 1366 the name of Henry de Yeflee occurs as supplying some of the stone required for the works at Rochester castle. Thirteen tons of Stapleton freestone were purchased of him at 8s. a ton; and thirty-two tons of Thomas FitzJohn.‡

In 1370 Henry de Yeveley, mason, was employed to retain masons to be sent in the King's retinue over the sea, and was paid the sum of 5l. 12s. 6d. on that account.§

On the 1st July, 1376, at the requisition of master Henry

\* Brayley's Westminster Palace, 1836, p. 196. † Ibid. p. 189.

‡ Fabric roll from 11 June 40 Edw. III. to 11 Jan. 42 Edw. III. printed in the *Archæologia Cantiana*, ii. 112.

§ Issue Roll of Thomas de Brantingham, Bishop of Exeter, and Treasurer, 44 Edw. III. as edited by Fred. Devon, 1835, p. 3. Yeveley and the workmen are all called "plasterers" by Mr. Devon; but their designation in the original is doubtless *cæmentarii*. The *cæmentarius* was a builder in stone; and *lathomus* or *latomus* a stone-carver or cutter: but probably in many cases either term was used for masons without discrimination.

Yeveley, then tenant of the manor of Langeton in Purbeck, an *inspeximus* was granted of the record in chancery of the liberties of that manor, as determined by *quo warranto* before the King's justices at Sherbourn in 6 Edw. I.\* It was doubtless as a merchant in stone that Yeveley had become interested in that locality.

In 1381 master Henry Yevele was employed to engage thirty stone-cutters (*latomos*) for the King's service.†

In the same year he designed the south aisle then undertaken to be added to the church of Saint Dunstan's in Thames Street, at the expense of John Lord Cobham. The indenture of agreement is still preserved in the British Museum. It was made on the eve of Christmas 5 Ric. II. between that nobleman and Nicholas Typerton mason, and the aisle was to be erected *solom la devyse Mestre Henry Iveleghe*, as his name is written upon that occasion,‡ at the cost of 25 marks.

In the same year, at Michaelmas, he had received from Lord Cobham (under the designation of *Masoun et citezein de Loundres*,) the sum of 20*l.* due to Thomas Wrewk mason for the works going on at Cowling castle, near the junction of the Thames with the Medway; and by another still more interesting document, dated the 23d July in the following year, we find that he was employed to measure the work done at the same castle by William Sharnale, which amounted to the cost of 456*l.* of which 270*l.* 10*s.* 4*d.* was that day paid.§

In 1383-4, by letters patent dated 20 Feb. 7 Rich. II. under the designation of *Henricus Yevele latomus*, he was confirmed in the possession of two shops and four shillings yearly rent, in the parish of St. Martin Oteswicke, formerly the property of Master Excestre, and which he had recently purchased of John Tottenham, carpenter. This confirmation was considered necessary because he feared that he might easily lose the property through the

\* Rot. Pat. 50 Edw. III. m. 13.

† Rymer's Collections, Brit. Mus. Harl. MS. 4592.

‡ Harleian Charters, 48 E. 43: printed in the Account of the Church of St. Dunstan-in-the-East, by the late Rector, the Rev. T. B. Murray, M.A. F.S.A. 1859, small quarto, p. 10.

§ These documents are printed in the Freemasons' Magazine and Masonic Mirror, 1862, New Series, vi. 404.

procurement of certain rivals, who had endeavoured to cause it, by false colours, to be seized as an escheat to the crown. The King's favour in the matter was conceded in consideration of the great labours which the said Henry daily sustained in the royal service.\*

By an indenture dated 20 April, 7 Rich. II. (1383), between Henri Yevele, citizen and mason of London, of the one part, and William Palmere, citizen and horse-dealer (*merchant des chevaux*) of the same city, and Isabella his wife of the other, the former party gave to the latter a yearly rent of 40s. issuing from his lands and tenements in the parish of St. Martin Oteswiche, on condition that if Margaret the wife of Henry should survive her husband, and ask her dower of a tenement with four shops, together with 4s. of quit-rent issuing from the tenements once belonging to John Tudenham, carpenter, which the said William and Isabella held for their lives, of the grant and lease of the said Henry, by the service of 20s. per annum, then the said annuity should be in force, but otherwise void.†

In 11 Rich. II. "Master Yevelee" was chief mason of the new work then in progress at the church of Westminster, and received for his fee 100s. a year, with 15s. for his dress and furs. Henry Zyevely is also named as chief mason in 17-18 Ric. II.‡

At the latter date he was a party to two very remarkable engagements which are preserved in the collection of Rymer.

The one, dated on the 18th March, 18 Ric. II. (1395), is an indenture for making, well and faithfully, all the *table* of the walls of the Great Hall within the palace of Westminster, on one side and the other: raising them for two feet of assise, and inserting twenty-six *souses*, or corbels, of Caen stone. The parties to this agreement were the King on one part, and Richard Wasshourn

\* Nos de gracia nostra speciali ad supplicacionem prefati Henrici, consideratione magnorum laborum quos ipse in servicio nostro indies sustinet, statum quem ipse in shopis, &c. The original patent, with the royal seal in white wax, is preserved in the British Museum, Harl. Charters, 43 E. 28.

† From the original among the Harleian Charters, 58 D. 30. The seal has been lost.

‡ Fabric Rolls appended to Gleanings from Westminster Abbey, by George Gilbert Scott, R.A., F.S.A. 1861, Appendix, p. 26.

and John Swalwe, masons, on the other; and the work was to be done according to the purport of a form and model made by the advice of Master Henri Zeveley, and delivered to the said masons by Watkin Waldon his warden. These terms—*selonc le purport d'une fourme et molde faite par conseil de mestre Henri Zeveley*, surely raise him to the dignity of an architect, and invest him with the credit of having designed some of the more conspicuous features of Westminster Hall.\* The same observation may be made with regard to the word *devyse* already quoted from the document relating to St. Dunstan's-in-the-East. In both cases other masons were employed under his direction.

The *souses*, or corbels, in the Hall were clearly introduced for the support of the grand roof, which has been so much an object of the admiration of subsequent ages. We have no authority, however, to attribute the merit of the timber-work to Yeveley. In the division of labour which was then prevalent,† it is probably due to the Master-Carpenter, and the name of Nicholas Walton is found in that capacity.

Another indenture, dated on the 1st April (within a fortnight of the preceding), relates to the "tomb of fine marble" still remaining in Westminster Abbey, which was then undertaken to commemorate the reigning sovereign and his queen, Anne, daughter of the Emperor of Germany, recently deceased. It was made between the King on one part, and Henri Yevele and Stephen Lote, citizens and masons of London, on the other. (This Stephen Lote was afterwards an executor of Yeveley's will.) The tomb was to be made after a pattern remaining with the said masons, under the seal of the Treasurer of England, to occupy in length all the space between the pillars where the said Queen was interred, and to be raised to the same height as the

\* Rymer, *Fœdera*, &c. vii. 794. The name is there misprinted Zeneley. See an abstract of the same document in Brayley's Westminster Palace, p. 437.

† Some interesting papers on these subjects by Mr. Wyatt Papworth will be found in the Transactions of the Royal Institute of British Architects; see that on "Superintendents, &c." 1860, Jan. 23, p. 38; and that on "Master Masons," 1861, Dec. 2, p. 37-60; with the Index to both papers.

tomb of King Edward the Third. It was to be finished by the feast of St. Michael in the year 1397, at the price of 250 pounds.\*

Yeveley died in 1400; and by his will, dated 25th May, 1 Hen. IV. enrolled in the Court of Hustings at Guildhall, by John Clifford mason and Martin Seman clerk his executors, he left his body to be buried in the chapel of St. Mary within the church of St. Magnus, where his tomb was then already built. He devised a tenement with houses, shops, &c. on Oyster-gate, in the parish of St. Magnus at London Bridge, purchased 43 Edw. III. of the executors of John Lovekyn, once Mayor of London, and certain tenements with a quay adjoining, called Fish Wharf at the Hole in the aforesaid parish of St. Magnus, purchased 14 Ric. II. of John Horn of Northflete, late citizen and fishmonger of London; and also another tenement with a quay adjoining, annexed to the said Fish Wharf within the Hole aforesaid, on the east part, once belonging to Thomas Osbern son and heir of Gosselin de Clyve, and afterwards to William Polle fishmonger, purchased of John Devene and his fellows 17 Ric. II., and an annual rent of 13s. 4d. out of a corner tenement, situate upon Oyster Hill, opposite the church of St. Magnus and in the said parish, purchased of John Southcote esq. 21 Ric. II.; all which he devised to Katherine his then wife, for her life, on condition she remained sole and unmarried, and that she should provide two sufficient chaplains to celebrate divine service at the altar of St. Mary in the said church of St.

\* This indenture is printed in Rymer's collection, vol. vii. p. 795. "Mem<sup>dm</sup> quod xxviii<sup>o</sup> die Augusti anno r. R. Ric. secundi xviii<sup>o</sup> dominus Johannes Innocent clericus liberavit in Thesaurariam alteram partem cujusdam indenturæ factæ inter dominum Regem ex una parte et magistros Henricum Yevele et Stephanum Lote latomos ex altera parte, pro una tumba marmorea facienda et reparanda pro Anna nuper Regina Angliæ et pro dicto domino Rege." At the same time agreement was made for the royal effigies which were to be executed by Nicholas Broker and Geoffry Best copersmyths of London. (Palgrave, Calendars, &c. of the Exchequer, 1836, ii. 50.) Payments to Yeveley and Lote on account of the tomb occur in Devon's Extracts from the Issue Rolls, 1837, pp. 232, 264. On the subject of this monument, and particularly its heraldic devices, see a memoir by the present writer in the *Archæologia*, vol. xxix. pp. 32—59.



Magnus, during all her life, for his soul and the souls of his late wife Margaret, Roger and Mariona his father and mother, his brothers and sisters, his lord King Edward the Third, Sir John de Beauchamp knt., John Haket, and all to whom he was in duty bound, and all faithful souls.

And after the decease of said Katherine, or her not keeping sole, nor maintaining such two chaplains, he devised all the said premises to Sir William Frankish, parson or rector of St. Magnus, and his successors, and to Edmund Bolton and Peter Blake, wardens of the fabric of the said church, and their successors for ever, for maintaining two chaplains to celebrate divine service at the said altar of St. Mary, for the souls as aforesaid, and to maintain a lamp perpetually burning, day and night, before the Salutation of the blessed Mary in the aforesaid chapel, and to pay yearly to the parish clerk 12*d.* for keeping and lighting the said lamp when necessary, and to the rector of the said parish 2*s.* yearly, for saying or singing with the said chaplains *placebo* and *dirige, cum nota*, and one mass on the testator's anniversary for his soul and the souls aforesaid, and 5*s.* yearly among all the other chaplains of the said church to have his soul and the souls aforesaid in their memory; and to the master clerk of the said church 12*d.* and to his under-clerk 8*d.* to do their offices in due manner as to a year's mind belongs; and for bread or victuals and drink 6*s.* 8*d.* to be spent among the parishioners coming to his *dirige* in the night, and 10*s.* among the poor to pray for the souls aforesaid, and 3*s.* 4*d.* for two new wax candles burning, one to wit at his head and another at his feet, at the time of his anniversary, and afterwards to burn before the image of St. Mary in the said chapel so long as they lasted. And he willed that the said two chaplains should receive at the hands of the said rector and wardens 14*l.* yearly out of the rents of the said tenements, *id est*, each of them 7*l.* for their salary or stipend. And, if it should please the Rector and parishioners to charge the chaplains of the church, or their competent assistants, to sing daily a mass of Saint Mary with note or on every Saturday, he desired his said two chaplains might have the appointment, and also to assist in singing nightly the anthem called *Salve Regina*,

with note,\* before the same altar, with saying a colect and *de profundis*. The two churchwardens to receive for this service yearly 13s. 4d. If his tenements, &c. were hereafter let at an advanced rent, the excess was to be placed in a box for their repair. In case of failure of his foundation at St. Magnus, the income to be transferred to the use and maintenance of London Bridge, and to find two chaplains in the Bridge Chapel. He desired that Thomas Hoo his chaplain might be one of the said two chaplains, and that he should not be bound to be present at the said canonical hours, nor other charges aforesaid, except according to his power.

To Katherine his wife he left for life his tenement called la Glene, in the parish of St. Magnus, and all his tenements in Basynglane and Cordwaner Street, in the parish of St. Martin Otyswiche, provided she kept herself sole, otherwise she to have her dower only; the reversion (when accruing) to be sold, and the money to be distributed for the benefit of his soul and the souls aforesaid, in celebrating masses, distributing to the poor, mending of ways, marriage of poor maids, and other deeds of charity. His wife Katherine to have also for life all his lands, &c. at Wenynghton and Alvythele, or elsewhere, in Essex, with all his store alive and dead; the reversion as before, and specially in aid of the rebuilding of the old isle where the sick poor lie within the church of the hospital of Saint Thomas the Martyr of Southwark; but he wished that Isabella his wife's sister should have for life that mansion in which she lived in the said parish of St. Martin Otyswiche rent free. He appoints as executors his wife Katherine, John Clifford mason, Stephen Lote mason, Richard Parker his cousin, and Martin Seman clerk, and as overseer John Warner, alderman.†

\* The chantry for singing the Anthem *Salve Regina* every evening in the church of St. Magnus had been founded in 17 Edw. III. according to a certificate of which a translated copy is given in Strype's Stowe. Five wax lights were burned at the time of the said anthem in the honour and reverence of the Five principal Joys of our Lady aforesaid.

† Hustings Roll, 1 Hen. IV. memb. 3.