

NOTES ON PINNER CHURCH AND PARISH.

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BY

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WHEN the London and Middlesex Archæological Society came here in 1867, my predecessor, the Rev. Dr. Hind, gave a full and interesting account of the antiquities of our church and parish. Mr. Hartshorne also read an able paper on Headstone Moat House. Both these papers are printed in the Society's Transactions (vol. iii). My task will be briefly to bring the history of the church up to date, and to make some observations on the connection of Pinner with the Archbishops of Canterbury, a point on which further light has been thrown by recent investigations.

Those of you who were present at the former meeting, will rejoice with me that the appearance of the church is greatly changed for the better. Dr. Hind, while pointing out its beauties, had to deplore its dilapidation. The rib of the chancel arch had fallen, the east window was out of the perpendicular, a west gallery and organ blocked up the tower arch and hid its beautiful proportions, whitewash covered the walls and roofs. Some portion of the external walls, and the buttresses of the tower were roughly patched with brick and roman cement, and the soil round the chancel had been allowed to rise to a

height of three or four feet. No wonder Dr. Hind expressed in his paper a fervent hope that something might be done to improve the condition of the building. Nothing was done till 1879, when William Arthur Tooke, Esq., of Pinner Hill, generously undertook to restore the church of his native village as a memorial to his father. His pious act is recorded in a Latin inscription on a brass over the south door. The work was placed in the hands of the late Mr. J. L. Pearson, A.R.A., an ecclesiastical architect of the greatest distinction, and was carried out in a conservative spirit. The tower was completely renovated. The last gable of the chancel and the south porch were re-built; the windows and doors, the bases and capitals of the columns were renewed throughout the church, and the nave and chancel re-roofed. In place of the attic windows which had been (probably in the 18th century) thrust through the lath and plaster ceiling—a churchwarden's makeshift for a clerestory—Mr. Pearson substituted the dormer windows of carved oak which are one of the prettiest features of the church. The chapel on the south aisle of the chancel (built in 1859, to accommodate the children of the Commercial Travellers' Schools) was heightened and lengthened. A stone vestry replaced the brick annex which formerly stood on the north side of the chancel. The earth was removed from round the east end of the church, and a dry area with retaining walls constructed. Other parishioners, stimulated by the example of Mr. Tooke, presented gifts: Judge Barker, an organ; the family of Mr. Weal, a reredos; Mr. Rummins, an altar; Mr. Bird, choir stalls and

pulpit, etc. Since my coming to Pinner in 1886, other gifts have been made for the adornment of the church, including a massive silver communion service to replace the old silver chalice and patten which had been stolen in 1840, and replaced by Sheffield ware : a carved oak screen across the Tower archway (memorial to Mr. Hogg) ; a second row of carved oak stalls ; a set of richly worked frontals for the altar, and the usual ornaments for the re-table. The handsome old Jacobean altar rails, after many years exile, have been restored to their place. Some fragments of stained glass mentioned by Mr. Sperling in his "Church Walks" as the oldest in Middlesex, were in existence in Dr. Hind's time, but have long since disappeared. The modern glass is either bad or indifferent.

Among the MSS. at Lambeth Library is preserved a deed of Archbishop Walter Reynolds, dated at Croydon 1321 (Registered Folio 126), empowering a prelate (whose name is illegible) to dedicate in canonical form the chapel of Pynnor of the Archbishop's immediate jurisdiction in the Deanery of Croydon and in the Parish of Harrow saving to the Mother Church all its rights and customs. The architecture of the main body of the church corresponds with this date, the columns and arches being in the style of Gothic known as "decorated." The lancet windows at the end of the aisles and in the transepts are Early English, and point to the existence of an earlier church. The question arises, was the earlier church destroyed, and some of its material used again, or have we in this transept as it stands the older church incorporated in the new ? There is much to be said for the later view. The piscina in the east wall indicates the position of the altar, and the fact

that the transept faces south instead of east is not evidence to the contrary, since orientation was not always strictly insisted on. Another plausible explanation is that the transept was built as a first instalment of the church in the 13th century, the whole design being then in contemplation. Certainly the design was not complete at the date of the consecration of the church, for the tower and the porch were added at a considerable interval and are of the 15th century. For some six centuries Pinner has nestled beneath the shadow of this fine old church. Our village street, in spite of many changes and innovations, retains the old-world character stamped on it in bygone ages, and the place has a long history. Although Pinner was not made a civil and ecclesiastical parish till 1766, when George III was king, there is evidence to show that it was a thriving community in the reign of Edward III, and the presence of this fine church proves that earlier still it was a place of some importance. From the days of William the Conqueror, Pinner seems to have been one of the chief constituents of that group of townships, manors, and hamlets, which made up the vast manor and parish of Harrow. The connection of Harrow with the See of Canterbury goes as far back as the 9th century. Until the time of the Conquest, however, that connection is obscure and intermittent. William I restored to Lanfranc (his Norman Primate) the lands in Middlesex which had been alienated from his See. Lanfranc built our Mother Church of St. Mary on Harrow Hill. St. Anselm consecrated it in spite of the attempt made by the Bishop of London to assert his episcopal rights. From that time forward for more than 500 years the

Primates of all England were undisputed masters of that tract of land known as the Manor of Harrow, and ruled with absolute sway in all causes civil and ecclesiastical, saving only the prerogative of the Crown. This Archiepiscopal Manor of Harrow was something like a small province 35 miles in circumference, and covering an area of 12,000 acres (not counting common lands). Seven separate ecclesiastical parishes, each with its own church and vicar, now exist in what was once the huge parish of Harrow. All these are modern except Harrow and Pinner. Pinner up to the middle of the 18th century would be properly described as a hamlet or chapelry of Harrow, but the term hamlet gives a misleading notion of its size and importance, and of the measure of local self-government it enjoyed. In the Lambeth Library is a charter of Edward III granting to Pinner the privilege of a weekly market and two annual fairs (one of these fairs is still held annually on Whit-Wednesday); Pinner Church had always its own chaplain, its own wardens and keepers of the church goods. Pinner village had its own reeve, bailiffs, aletasters, bedel, and other officers responsible for the welfare and good conduct of the inhabitants to the archbishop or his steward. Since Mr. Hartshorne's paper on Headstone was written, fresh light has been thrown on the internal economy of the manor by the Rev. W. Done Bushell who has examined and published in his "Harrow Tracts" many original documents, and also by Mr. W. O. Hewlett, who has been through all the Court Rolls of the Manors of Harrow and Harrow Hill from the reign of Edward I to that of Elizabeth. The affairs of

Pinner and of the other townships and hamlets on the archbishop's estate were not managed from Harrow as a centre, but at the Manor Courts, which sat periodically at different points within the circuit of the manor, the Court Baron once in three weeks, the Court Leet twice a year or oftener. Headstone Moat House (now in Pinner) was one of these points. It is in fact the only house on the estate which can now be identified with certainty as a manor house of the archbishops. Though Mr. Hartshorne thinks the archbishops did not make it their residence till the middle of the 14th century, we know they continued to do so for a hundred years from that date when they visited their estates in Middlesex. Archbishop Arundel writes from Headstone in 1407, and Archbishop Chicheley held a court at Pinner in 1435, while staying at Headstone.

A most interesting and instructive sketch of the history of Harrow Manor was contributed to Mr. Howson's and Mr. G. Townsend Warner's book on Harrow School, by Mr. W. O. Hewlett, in 1898. It was known to all antiquarian writers who investigated the past history of Harrow, that though some of the various estates on the archbishops' land came to be called manors in old deeds and registers (as for instance Headstone Manor, Roxeth Manor, Wood Hale Manor) they were manors only in name, and their tenants possessed no manorial rights of their own, but held under the archbishops, who were lords of the manor of Harrow. Mr. Hewlett, however, has discovered that, prior to the year 1240, there existed another manor within this manor of Harrow, which was called the Manor of the Rectory of Harrow Hill.

This inner manor was coterminous (roughly speaking) with what we should now call Harrow proper, and its lord was the Rector of Harrow, who was appointed by the archbishop, and did fealty and suit of court to him as over-lord.* In his own manor the Rector had full manorial rights, holding his own courts, etc. Though an ecclesiastic, often of high rank, he had no cure of souls in the parish, but appointed a vicar for this office. The vicar would, most likely, in his turn appoint a priest to serve the chapelry of Pinner. The larger outer manor of Harrow, under the immediate jurisdiction of the archbishops, included besides Pynnor, Sudbury, Wembley, Alperton, Preston, Kenton, Uxenden, and Tokynton (where stood a chapel that seems to have been destroyed in the 16th century). The archbishops, though themselves only able to pay occasional visits to their manor, were represented by their stewards, who held courts at Harrow and at different places within the ambit of the manor. †

The tenants on a large manor like Harrow would include those who held their land by knight service, and became in course of time freeholders; villains, whose services to the lord were by degrees commuted for rent, and who eventually became copyholders, and borderers, or cottars, who held smaller portions of land, and whose services to the lord, though less accurately defined were of a menial sort. To the local courts of the manor all tenants, whether free or holding by base tenure, were summoned. The

*The Court Rolls are headed Harrow. The Court held these on Wednesday and Saturday.

† I believe they did regularly, but the actual *locus* has not been mentioned. Most likely in the manor house of the Rector, viz., Mr. Musgrave.

Court Baron was for the free socage holders, who decided all matters relating to their own class, the steward being but the registrar of their complaints and of the decisions they arrived at. The Customary Court was for the villains, who held in that court the position of jurors, the lord or his steward acting as judge. The manor also possessed a Court Leet, which sat twice a year or oftener, for the trial of offenders, and passed sentence on all criminals, whether guilty of such misdemeanours as short measure, adulteration, etc., or of some capital offence. Archæologists need not to be reminded that for a long period, while parliamentary powers were weak and undefined, these courts were both popular and active. Though appeals were allowed from the Manor Court to the County, and from that again to the King's Courts, at Westminster, yet the whole business of police and local government was transacted in them, and they took cognisance of all the domestic and financial affairs of the manor. As Canon Denton has said : These manorial courts, as they existed in the 13th century, were legislative and executive assemblies, local police courts, courts for the recovery of debt, parish vestries, sewers courts, and family tribunals, and so in the main they continued till the 17th century.

By the kindness of Mr. Hewlett, of Harrow, I have been allowed to examine the extracts he has made of the Court Manor Rolls of Harrow, now in possession of Lady Northwick, which have never been printed. Pinner is frequently mentioned, and the following entries will be found curious and interesting.

A.D. 1384. [7 Richard II.] A surrender is recorded by John Lewin to John Honeywood of a

message in Pynnor, under the condition that John Honeywood provide for John Lewin, during his life, every other year, a new woollen garment, and in every year a pair of boots, a pair of shoes, and a pair of woven linen shirts. Also a bed chamber, food and a bushel of apples.

1423. [2 Henry VI.] It is found by the Inquisition now taken, according to the custom of the manor, by oath, that on Thursday next before the Feast of St. Margaret last [July 13] one Joan, the daughter of Roger Webb, at Pynnor, suddenly fell into a certain vat of Edromell [Hydromell]* by which accident she died, and the aforesaid vat is valued at 2s., and herewith the Bailiff of the Liberty is charged. [The vat became the property of the lord as a deodand.]

1424. [3 Henry VI.] There is an election of tenants to make a new rental, the number of tenants in each hamlet being given. Pinner stands first, and has four.

1427. [5 Henry VI.] The chief pledges present that William Downer, Hereman Ducheman, William Roghed, and John Roberd were arrested at Pynner in a case of suspected felony, and imprisoned in Windsor Castle. Therefore precept is given to seize all their goods within the Lordship and keep them to the Lord's use until they have been acquitted by the Law of England.

1436. [14 Henry VI.] A surrender recorded by John Blake of lands at Pinner to the use of Hugh Edelyn and Thomas Gardyner, the Wardens of the Chapel of Pynnore.

* Hydromell was a liqueur distilled from honey.

1445. [24 Henry VI.] *At this court nothing fell to the Lord for the pannage of the pigs of the tenants there because it is found by the tenants that no pannage happened there in the Lord's woods this year, and they also say that the woods are grievously devastated by reason of the timber having been felled for the building of the College of the Lord Henry Chichele, the late archbishop at Oxford. [All Souls' College.]*

1472. [12 Edward IV.] Surrender by Avice Clerk of ten acres of land with the appurtenances thereof in Pinner to the use of Robert Alye, the Executor of the Will of William Fenton, late vicar of Harrow, to the intent that the said Executor shall sell the said ten acres at as high a price as possible, and dispose of the money arising therefrom, that is to say, five marks of silver thereof for the repair of the books in the chapel of Pynnor, and the residue of the money for hiring one honest priest to celebrate divine services in the said chapel of Pynnor for the soul of the aforesaid Avice and the souls of all the faithful dead.

1475. [15 Edward IV.] Surrender by Henry atte Street, of five selions of land with the appurtenances in Pynnor and Roxheth, to the use of Henry Payne and Thomas West, the keepers of the goods of the church or chapel of St. John Baptist, Pynnor, aforesaid.

1484. [2 Richard III.] The admission recorded of one of the wardens of the church or chapel of St. John Baptist, Pynnor, to premises in Pynnor, late of Thomas Gardner and Petronilla his wife, and formerly of Roger Roughead.

NOTE.— *In the 1st year of Edward VI, at the suppression of chantries, these tenements were seized by the King's commissioners "for lack of evidence by whom they were given, and to what intent." Roll 34, Exchequer Augmentation Office.*

1488. [4 Henry VII.] Mention is made of Wolcey's tenement in Pinner, belonging to Thomas Peryman—this may account for the persistent tradition that connects Cardinal Wolsey's name with the Headstone Manor. Both Mr. Hartshorne and the Reverend W. D. Bushell deny that he had any connection with the manor of Harrow.

1492. [8 Henry VII.] A surrender recorded by John a'Bernys to the use of Robert Seffrey, chaplain, and John atte Strete, of a cottage in which the said Robert now dwells.

1501. [16 Henry VII.] A surrender recorded by Thomas Savage, clerk, of a garden in Pynnor street, to the use of John Nicholas, and his admission.

1505. [20 Henry VII.] The view of Frankpledge. The chief pledges of Pinner present that Ralph Gape keeps bad rule in his house by receiving a certain woman of evil disposition into his house to the common nuisance.

1518. [10 Henry VIII.] Precept to seize five selions of land in Pynnor fields, held by the Wardens of the church at Pynnor, but by what right the Homage know not.

1525. [17 Henry VIII.] The view of Frank Pledge with the court holden there on Wednesday, the Feast of the Invention of the Holy Cross. The Homage present that Isabella, the late wife of John Crosse, tenant for the term of her life of one cottage with a garden adjoining, in Pynnor, parcel of a tenement of Richard Gille, and lying between the rectory barn and the land of John Marshall, late William Stevyns, and formerly of Richard Blackwell, of Edgware (as appears in the 21st year of

Henry VII) died after the last court, and further they say that after the death of the aforesaid Isabella, the premises remain to the Wardens of the church of Pynnor for the time being and their heirs, to sell and dispose of the money arising from thence to find a chaplain to celebrate there for the soul of the said John Crosse, and the admission of the new Wardens of the church or chapel of Richard Redings and William Edlyn to the use aforesaid. A sale of the above premises by the said Wardens is recorded to Richard Edlyn at a court holden on the 18th February, 1527-28. [19 Henry VIII.]

1533. [25 Henry VIII.] View of Frank Pledge with the court holden May 9th. Also it is presented by the jury for the King, that John Stroder hath erected a certain dovecote in Pynnor to the nuisance of the inhabitants there, by the destruction of the corn of his neighbours. Therefore he is commanded to destroy the said dovecote before next Court, under pain of 40s.

1539. [30 Henry VIII.] Also they present that John Edlyn have or keep only one wool mark, and one brand upon his sheep. And that he do not keep more sheep upon the Lord's common there than according to his tenure, and that he remove his foreign sheep after the 1st of May next coming, under the pain of 40s.

1540. [32 Henry VIII.] Also they ordain that the Bedel cause to be read publicly, in the church of Harrow and in the chapel of Pynnor, at the time of mass or vespers, on Sunday, the pains contained in

his estreats for the space of one month, under pain of 20s.*

1552. [6 Edward VI.] A surrender recorded by John Burton the younger, of lands and premises in Pynnor to the use of his brother Richard, and the heirs of his body, with remainder to Thomas Burton, his brother, and his heirs, upon condition that the aforesaid Richard or Thomas shall pay to the wife of the said John Burton yearly 46s. 8d. for ten years next following, and that they expend upon the repair of roads with le gravelle, £3 6s. 8d., viz., 40s. between Broksbridge Stone and Alperton, and another 6s. 8d. on the churchway of Roxhey.

Many a glimpse into the domestic life of our forefathers is afforded by such extracts as these. One in particular helps us to picture the aspect of the surrounding country at the time when this church had not long been completed by the erection of the tower. The County of Middlesex was for centuries a woodland district. Villages like ours were built on a clearance in the woods, and consisted of a street of houses standing in their gardens, occupied by the farmers, behind which was an area of meadow and arable land. Beyond this, forest stretched for miles. Archbishop Chicheley, it appears, cut down the great oaks to furnish timber for his College of All Souls (Oxford), and those trees have continued scarce in this district ever since, though it is still thickly wooded. There is a tradition that the great cross on our church tower was set up to guide people through the forest glades. This is quite possible, though we have no record of

* Probably this was a warning of the severe penalties contained in the Act of the Six Articles passed in 1539.

the cross earlier than 1640, when it seems to have been restored. Another theory to account for its origin has been suggested by a member of your Society, namely, that the cross being the official emblem of the archbishop's rank, it was made a prominent feature in a church, built most likely by an archbishop, on his own land (was it Winchelsea?) in order to emphasise the primate's claim of complete episcopal jurisdiction over a district which was territorially in the diocese of London.

The long connection of Pinner with the See of Canterbury must be considered as a piece of great good fortune to its inhabitants. No doubt the parish was deprived for a long period (nominally, though not in reality) of the independence, civil and ecclesiastical, to which its size and importance entitled it, and its early history is merged in that of its larger and more famous neighbour. But this nominal dependence and comparative obscurity was a trifling price to pay for the solid advantage of being under the protection of a potentate so powerful, wealthy, influential, and well-versed in public affairs as the Primate of all England in pre-Reformation days.
