

BUCKS CHURCHES.

The Rector of Bletchley, the Rev. F. W. Bennett, à propos of the recent visits of emissaries of the Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments, calls attention to the fact that a survey of the present fabrics has not supplied a knowledge of their history. "It is possible," he writes, "to learn something of their origin from documents preserved in the Public Record Office, Chancery Lane, and in the British Museum. Documentary evidence of their date and of their founders are the most important facts to learn. In the case of Bletchley Church there is, in the British Museum, a copy of a charter of Henry I. to the Priory of Longueville confirming the gift of church and tithes. At the beginning of the reign of Henry I. the church had not been built, but it is mentioned in the charter of Henry II. Thus the date of the fabric is between 1100 and 1155, and it appears to have been built by the monks brought to Newton Longueville from the priory of Longueville in Normandy. The style of architecture of an ancient church will give an approximate date, and if a search be made of the charters and inventories of about that time valuable and definite information could be obtained." He suggests such a search to the clergy of this County.

St. Lawrence, Old Bradwell.

Our member, Mr. E. Swinfen Harris, F.R.I.B.A., records the erection of a new tower screen of oak from his designs, screening the ringers and forming a vestry, the work having been carefully carried out by Mr. H. Watson, who also did those in the chancel. The screen is glazed with quarry glazing, which had been removed to make way for stained-glass windows inserted by the Vicar, the Rev. K. C. Baily.

Great Hampden.

An appeal without date has been issued this year by the Rector, for help to complete the work of restoration. It is estimated that about £600 further is needed. "If this amount is raised it is intended to have the work carried out under the direction of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings."

Macaulay's Essay on Lord Nugent's Memorial of John Hampden was circulated with this appeal. Donations may be sent to the Capital and Counties' Bank, High Wycombe.

St. Mary the Virgin, Haddenham.

The architect of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners inspected the Parish Church in the summer, and reported, *inter alia*:— “The chancel arch is in a condition of distinct instability, with cracks so large and advanced that it ought to be dealt with thoroughly. The responds of the nave arcade and of the chancel arch have deflected considerably, and are now much strained and shattered.” According to the “Bucks Herald” (Aug. 19) this report concludes with this most alarming advice: “The old church is one of so much interest and charm, as a beautiful and complete example of very early work, that *no stone should be left unturned* to carefully and properly protect it.” We know from sad experience that this fairly well describes the drastic treatment that many of our old churches have undergone, but strongly protest against its application to Haddenham. But perhaps the Commissioners’ architect did not really mean it.

St. Martin, Fenny Stratford.

Dr. W. Bradbrook reports that the armorial ceiling is to be “re-painted and restored shortly, there being now a sum of money large enough to begin on,” and he has been asked to bring the matter before the Advisory Committee of our Society, and “ask for advice as to the proper painters to do the work.”

This church was re-built through the exertions of Dr. Browne Willis, F.S.A., and was consecrated by the Bishop of Lincoln on the 27th May, 1730, and has since twice been enlarged. The ceiling is divided into forty compartments, which were painted with the arms of the contributors to the building fund; thus affording very interesting local heraldry. Restoration of old paintings is hardly ever justifiable. For a description of these coats of arms and illustrations see the paper contributed by Dr. Bradbrook to RECORDS VIII., 374.

St. John Evan: Whitchurch.

I have received the following note from the Vicar, the Rev. Hugh Wood, whom we should congratulate both on the advice he chose and the success which has attended his efforts—with the hope that the remaining £150 may speedily be raised:—

The restoration of the Parish Church of Whitchurch was begun on April 25th, according to the plans and estimates of Mr. Wm. Weir, architect of the Society for the Preservation of

Ancient Buildings. The general idea of the restoration has been the preservation of everything old when possible. Details :

- (1) A new oak roof to the chancel to replace the deal roof, which was impossible of preservation.
- (2) The 15th century nave roof of oak taken off, strengthened and replaced.
- (3) The oak roofs of the N. and S. aisles taken off, strengthened, and replaced.
- (4) The lead of all the roofs re-cast and re-laid.
- (5) The exterior walls stripped of rough-cast and re-pointed.
- (6) The stone work of the windows repaired without the use of new stone.
- (7) All the windows re-leaded and re-glazed with old glass in diamond pattern.
- (8) The ancient original oak seats of the church of the 14th century strengthened and replaced.
- (9) The deal pews of the nave removed and replaced by new oak seats.
- (10) The whole of the floor of the nave taken up, excavated to a depth of 18 inches, concreted, and laid with new oak.
- (11) The ancient tiles found in the above excavation have been employed to form a footpace for the Altar.
- (12) The interior wall and pillars freed from the whitewash with which they had been covered, and a fresco on the east wall of the chancel uncovered and a fresco on the north wall of the N. aisle uncovered. Both frescoes are very imperfect.

The above work will be completed by Nov. 30th, with the exception of the new oak seating, which is expected to be in position by February 15th, the date fixed for the re-opening by the Bishop of Oxford. The bells are to be re-hung by June, 1912.

The whole cost is £1,800, of which about £1,650 has been paid or promised.

The principals of the Nave roof were found to be so much decayed that the roof must very soon have fallen.

W. N.