

RADNAGE. CHURCH OF ST. MARY.

REPORT OF CHURCH RESTORATION SUB-COMMITTEE.

(The Society is mainly indebted to Mr. FORSYTH, F.R.I.B.A., for the following Report).

The Sub-Committee, comprising Mr. A. H. Cocks, Mr. W. Niven, and Mr. W. A. Forsyth, visited this Church in response to the Vicar's invitation on February 16th, 1912. Mr. S. Brockleby, the Architect engaged upon the Restoration, and the Rector, Rev. B. J. Corder, met the Committee.

The Church, which is of considerable interest, has a central, square tower, nave and chancel, and no aisles, and appears to date from the early part of the 13th century.

The whole of the rough-cast and modern plastering of the exterior had been stripped, exposing the flint rubble walls and brick extensions. A number of interesting features were brought to light, whilst some doubtful points were cleared up.

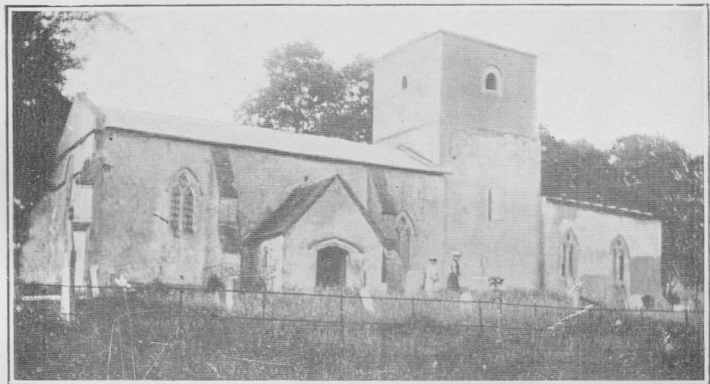
The walls generally are of a typical flint rubble kind, upon which evidences of the original mortar face are to be found. Stone is sparingly used in the quoins of walls and buttresses.

The chancel walls have been raised in brickwork, probably in Tudor times, although no clerestory windows were inserted.

The windows generally are of two-light design, having stone mullions and traceried heads of no great interest. They are uniform in size, and from their imperfect lines and stilted members, appear to have been brought from another Church and built in.

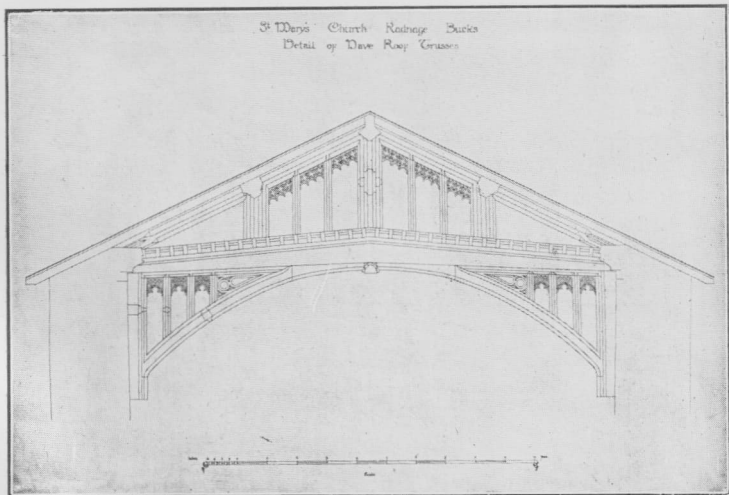
A series of putlog holes, probably of 13th century origin, was discovered. These holes were dressed around with chalk in the flint walling. The intervals of the holes are much the same as in current practice.

The interior is one of impressive dignity. The features which first claim attention are the two heavy

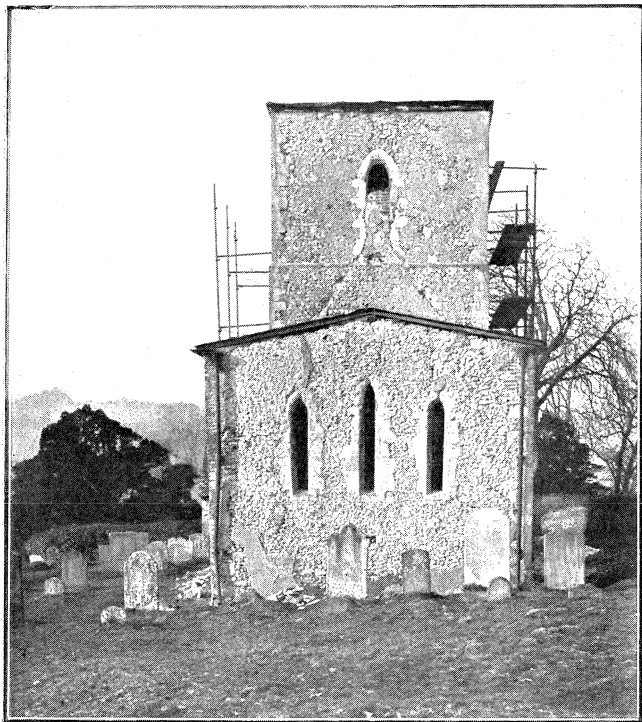


RADNAGE CHURCH.

General View from the South West.



NAVE ROOF.



RADNAGE CHURCH.

View of East End.

pointed arches below the Tower. These arches are of massive simplicity, and show up well in the darkened space below the Tower, separating the Chancel from the Nave in such a marked way. The 15th century oak-framed roof of the Nave has carved members, and is an excellent example of the carpentry of the period for which English roofs were famous.

Three lancets in the east wall form the chief interest of the Chancel, which is simple in its architectural character.

The Church generally has escaped drastic restoration. Many repairs are necessary, and certain works of restoration are desirable.

From the information placed before them, the Subcommittee desire to make the following suggestions in the work to be undertaken:—

REPAIRS TO WALLS.—It will be necessary to cut out all loose parts of the rubble facings to a considerable depth, in order to receive the new flint rubble masses, and it should be particularly borne in mind that the flints should be selected to match the old in size and colour, to be well incorporated with strong lime mortar and built up to a boarded centreing, after the manner of current concrete laying. All old, dusty mortar must be removed, and the old wall completely saturated before new work is laid. All rubble work which is sound, although having open joints, should not be disturbed, and in no case should “pointing” or “rendering” be attempted in repairing this flint rubble. The exposed brickwork of the Chancel walls should be allowed to remain to view.

Roofs.—The old lead requires adjusting in the welts and drips. No new lead should be used, and if new sheets are required the old metal should be re-cast at the site. Timbers probably require repair at the wall ends. All repairs must be done in position. Corbels may be introduced, if required. Timbers should be cleaned, and not oiled or stained in any way. On no account should any attempt be made to replace the missing moulded or carved parts of the roofs.

Floors.—In the event of wood blocks being laid in the floors below the seats in the Nave, the passages

and other spaces should be laid in tiles—9-inch or 12-inch square tiles, with heavy joints for preference. The same suggestion applies to the Chancel, and in either case breadth and simplicity of treatment are essential.

INTERNAL WALL SURFACES.—As little repair as possible should be attempted to the plastered faces, and in all cases care should be taken in ascertaining if old coloured decoration lies behind the whitewash and can be preserved. All new plastering must match the old, and be finished with a wood float. All stonework should be brushed down, and not touched with a tool. The proposal to put up an oak panelled dado in the Chancel is not to be recommended.

RINGERS' FLOOR AND SCREENS.—The proposal to lower the ringers' floor to the level of the springing of the tower arches, and thus to fill in the tympanum of each arch, is not justified as a work of restoration, in view of the scanty evidence at disposal. The bell carriage requires some "framed" repairs.

NEW VESTRY.—It is to be regretted that a new Vestry forms part of the proposed work. It did not transpire that any sudden demand had arisen requiring additional seating accommodation in the Church, to the exclusion of the space hitherto used for Vestry purposes. The Church has an interesting constructional history apart from its unusual architectural character, and although the proposal is to erect a detached Vestry on the north side, approached from the north door of the Nave, the new building will materially detract from the archæological value and interest of one of the best Churches in the Diocese.

Funds are urgently needed to complete this work and will be gratefully received and acknowledged by the Rector, the Rev. B. J. Corder, the Rectory, Radnage, Bucks. Donors may feel confidence that the work will be carried out in accordance with the recommendations of the above report.