

HITCHAM.

NOTES ON THE 14TH CENTURY GLASS IN THE CHANCEL OF ST. MARY'S CHURCH.

[BY THE LATE JAMES C. POWELL, F.S.A.]

The remains of ancient painted glass in Hitcham Church seem to belong to the time of Edward III., and are interesting from many points of view.

When I visited the Church in July, 1906, I found the windows in a ruinous and jumbled state, and it was difficult at first to discover what was the design of the windows and what the figures represented. Heads, hands, wings, and texts had been displaced during previous repairs. But with careful study the design seemed to become clearer, and, after drawings had been made of the glass as it was, it was possible to piece the figures together and bring order out of chaos.

In the XIVth century few colours were used, and in these windows there are not more than six different glasses: white, ruby, yellow, blue, green, and flesh colour.

The windows of the Chancel consist of a four-light East window and tracery, and four two-light windows with tracery, two on either side.

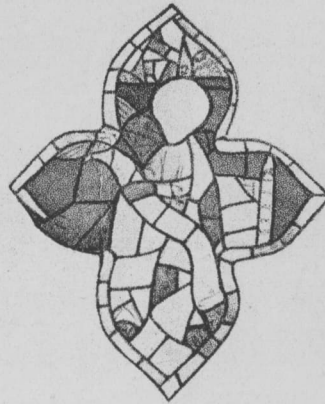
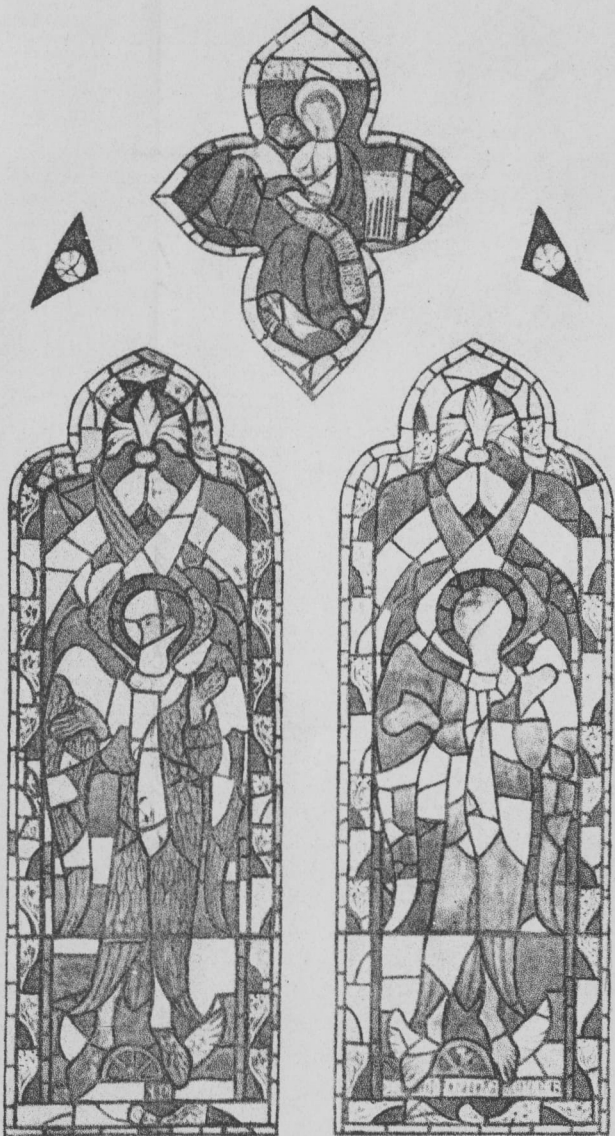
Each side window has a quatrefoil piece of tracery, and the four quatrefoils contain figures of the Evangelists, each holding a scroll of his own writings. The figures are seated on white thrones, with scrolls across their knees, and their symbols are placed behind them, as though inspiring them. The figure of St. John is missing. Each figure is robed in gold and white, and their "creatures" or symbols are golden, with green wings. The ground work of the quatrefoils is ruby, and there are remains of labels with the names of the Evangelists.

When I first saw them, S. Matthew had a quotation from S. Mark, and S. Mark had none. On looking over the collection of antiquities in Mr. Rutland's house at Taplow I found the missing text from S.

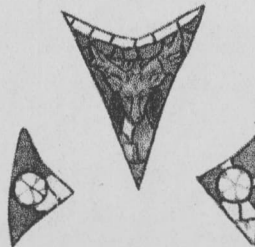
S. MATTHEW WITH ANGEL.
 TEXT. VS: EST ITC: IN: BGTN
 DE IN DIEBUS: CRODIS: REG
 S. MATTHEW II. I.

S. MARK WITH WINGED LION.
 TEXT: RECVBENTIBVS: VNDE
 CIVM DISCIPVLIS: APARVIT IL
 S. MARK XVI. 14.

S. LVKE WITH WINGED BVLL.
 TEXT: MIS: SVS: EST ANGELVS
 GABRIEL: AD: MARIAM: VIRGINEM
 S. LVKE I. 26.



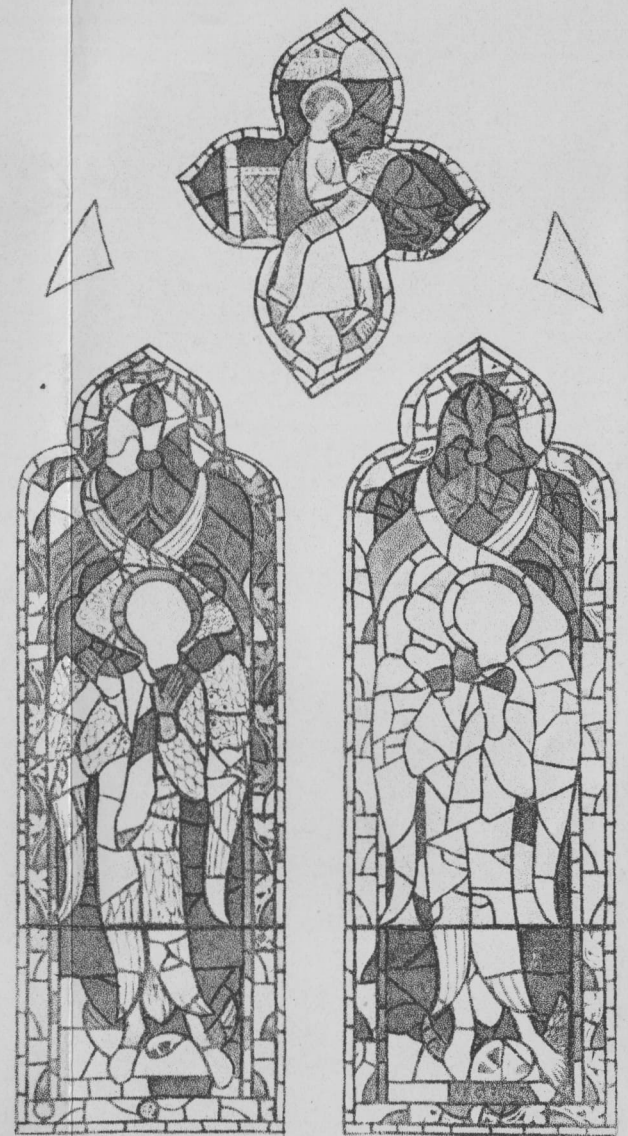
STAGS
 HEAD



TRACERY
 FROM EAST WINDOW

HITCHAM

14TH CENTURY GLASS IN CHANCEL



SIZE OF LIGHTS 5'4" x 1'10½"
 TRACERY 2'9" x 2'2"

Matthew, and Mr. Rutland very kindly gave it up, so that it might go back to the Church. The two scrolls are of exactly the same shape, and could easily be transposed.

S. Matthew's text is us est in Beth
. da in diebus — erodis Reg.
S. Matth. ii. 1.

S. Mark's: recumbentibus unde
cim discipulis apparuit il
S. Mark xvi. 14.

S. Luke's: missus est Angelus
Gabriel ad Mariam Virginem.
S. Luke i. 26.

Each of the main lights of the windows contains the figure of an angel placed under a canopy, and is surrounded by a border of natural foliage. Each angel has six wings, and, with flat, splayed feet, stands on a wheel, which is also winged. The winged wheels are unusual: the artist no doubt wished to illustrate the words of the Prophet Ezekiel: "When the living creatures were lifted up from the earth the wheels were lifted up for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels." Ezekiel i., 19, 20.

The angels are designed in pairs, gold-winged and white-winged. Two gold-winged angels are placed on blue grounds, and have ruby nimbi. The canopies under which they stand are white, with an inner shafting of green, and the borders are formed of white leaves on a ruby ground. The drapery round the neck of the angels is white. The wheels are golden, with white wings. In the next pair the colouring is reversed; the wings are white with eyes inserted in places. The nimbi are blue. The draperies of the necks have been gold, but little remains. The ground work is ruby. The wheels are white with golden wings: the canopies are gold with green inner shaftings. The borders are of white leaves on blue grounds. There are remains of an inscription under each figure, which suggests the words "Seraphim," "Dominiones," "Virtutes;" these, with Cherubim, Throni, Potestates, Principatus, Archangeli, Angeli,

would make up nine orders of angels, which undoubtedly were originally illustrated in the East and side windows. In the window nearest to the East on the North side are remains of a figure with fragments of borders and canopy. The borders are larger in scale, and therefore probably belonged to the East window.

The remains of 14th century glass in the East window are in the tracery lights. The central panel at the top contains a seated figure of Christ with a cruciform nimbus of gold and ruby drapery. The hands and feet show the stigmata with streams of blood issuing from the wounds. In the four cusps of this tracery-piece are remains of the symbols of the four Evangelists, the head of the eagle of S. John and the angel of S. Matthew being still visible; the blue ground-work is richly patterned. The two quatrefoils, on either side, have six-winged angels with golden wings, and white draperies round their necks. One holds a green cross, on which a delicate pattern is painted; the other holds a staff in one hand, and in the other a crown or wreath of green colour.

One more piece of old glass in the East window is a small triangle in the centre of the tracery above the large lights. It contains a stag's head affronté, gold on a ground of ruby glass. This piece of glass, when first removed, was so coated with whitewash and plaster that it was impossible to decipher the design. It is of importance, as it gives a clue to the date and to the donor of the windows.

In the book of "Standards," at the Heralds' College, is the badge of Sir Andrew Wyndesore (gules, a stag's head argent). This Sir Andrew was of the time of Henry VIII., but his ancestors had from early times been Wardens of the forests of Berks and Castellains of Windsor Castle, from which they took their name. They lived at Stanwell, which is about six miles as the crow flies from Hitcham, five from Windsor, and 2½ north of Staines. The ancestor of Sir Andrew in the time of Edward III. was Richard de Windesore of Stanwell, M.P. for Berks and Middlesex. Richard was three times married, and his second wife was Julian, daughter and co-heiress of James Molyns, of

Hampshire. The arms of Molyns are a cross moline, and this appears on some of the old tiles remaining in the Chancel, together with the cross of S. George and the arms of Merton Abbey. To the Priory of Merton was attached the right of presentation to Hitcham from 1167 to its dissolution. There are also tiles with hunting subjects, suggesting the neighbourhood of forest-land. The following points are worthy of consideration:—

1. Did the above Richard de Windsore, whose badge was a stag's head, build the Chancel as a memorial to his wife Julian, who was the mother of his son, James de Windsore, who succeeded him?
2. Were the windows made by glaziers from Windsor Castle, who were working under William of Wykeham, who had been appointed surveyor of the works at Windsor in 1356?
3. Thomas, the glazier, working under William of Wykeham at New College, Oxford, introduced the Nine Orders of Angels in the tracery lights of the ante-Chapel.

In re-leading and repairing the windows I was anxious to add no new coloured glass or imitation of ancient painting, and for this reason filled all vacant places with plain glass. This arrangement no doubt weakens the rich colour effect of the original design, but adds to the historical interest of the windows by calling attention to the genuine 14th century glass that remains.