

THE PARISH AND CHURCH OF MAIDS
MORETON, COUNTY OF BUCKS.

BY JOHN L. MYRES.

THE Parish of Maids Moreton contains 1,240 acres and 543 souls (reduced in 1890 to 440). The soil is clayey, alternated with gravel. The River Ouse bounds the parish on the east, and a branch of the Grand Junction Canal passes through it. The name of the place is derived from its locality, being originally a moor, and the prefix from two Maiden Sisters of the Peyvre family who built the church.

Moreton was partly the property of Walter Gifford, and partly that of Lewens de Newenham after the Conquest. Gifford's lands passed to the noble families of Clare Audley and Stafford. The paramount manors, to which no lands are annexed, descended to the Dukes of Buckingham and Chandos. De Newenham's manor passed to the family of D'Oyley, founders of Osney Abbey, near Oxford, in the reign of King Henry I., and was bestowed by them upon that foundation. The family of De Moreton held the manor under the Abbey during several generations. After the dissolution of Osney in 1541, King Henry VIII. granted this manor to Christ Church College, Oxford. In 1802, Samuel Churchill, Esq., purchased the lease of the manor, and it descended to the Dukes of Buckingham and Chandos.

In the beginning of the reign of King Edward I., the family of Peyvre, or Peovre, of Toddington, county Beds, held a considerable estate here, and, as above stated, two pious maidens of this family are traditionally stated to have founded the church.

Hugh Greenhow held a manor here of the Honour of Gloucester, in 1408. It was afterwards escheated to the Crown, and was granted in 1443 to All Souls College, Oxford, under the name of Greenhow's Manor. In early documents, the estate is called Moreton Juxta Bucks. This manor is still the property of the College, but is held on lease by the Rev. William Andrewes.

In 1447, Richard Fowler, Esq., held an estate here which passed to the Lamberts. An heiress of the last

family carried it in marriage to Sir Edward Bagot, Bart., and it subsequently came to the Moores.

In 1665, King Charles II. raised George Moore, Esq., to the dignity of Baronet, as of Maids Moreton, his native place. He soon afterwards sold this estate to Dr. G. Bate, and dying in 1678, without male issue, his title became extinct. Edward Bate, son of the doctor, became lessee of the manors in this parish belonging to All Souls and Christ Church Colleges, and was a Magistrate of the County. He built a mansion near the church, in which he died in 1717. This mansion belongs to the manor called Greenhow's, and is one of the residences of the lessee of the manor. Moreton Lodge, near the centre of the village, bearing date 1715, lately belonged to the Duke of Buckingham.

The Benefice is a Rectory rated in the Liber Regis at £18 2s. 11d. The advowson never belonged to the possessor of the principal manor. The Peovres were patrons from the reign of Edward I., until the time of Henry VI., when the advowson passed by marriage to the Broughtons.

The Blake family of Maids Moreton afterwards possessed it, and four members of that family have been rectors of this parish.

It was subsequently sold and conveyed to several persons successively. At the inclosure of the parish in 1801, land was assigned to the rector instead of tithes.

The Rectory House is a modern dwelling on the west side of the church, built by the present rector, Rev. Bolton W. Johnstone, A.D. 1878, with funds, raised partly from Queen Anne's Bounty, partly by Donations by the late Mrs. Andrewes Uthwatt, and the rector.

The present school was built by subscription in 1864, and was enlarged to accommodate one hundred children in 1891.

The following list of field names has been supplied by an inhabitant.

Allmead.	Calf's Close.
Allotments (recent).	Carbury.
Barrett's Edge.	CHACKMORE FARM.
Buckford (Great & Little).	Chattle (Long & Short).
Bruckford Meadow.	CHURCH FARM.

Church Hadland.

CLOSES :—

Adam's Close.
 Common Home Close.
 Great Close.
 Hill Close.
 Home Close.
 More Close. (Moor?)
 Portel Ash Close.
 Round Close.
 Winner Hill Close.

Colgrove (Great & Little).

College Farm (All Souls).

Daman's Goshotten.

Elder Stump.

Far Field.

Flaxlands Behind.

Foller Field. (Fallow?)

FURLONGS :—

Brook Furlong.
 Meadow Furlong.
 Wellmore Furlong.

George's Hill.

Grass Yard.

Gravel Pit Field.

GROUNDS. [ferent farms].

Dairy Ground (4, on 3 dif-

Great Ground (3).

Middle Ground Common.

?Gall Ground.

Road Ground.

Rubble Ground.

Stud Bridge Ground.

Hides.

Holloway (Great & Little).

Linse Borton Hedges.

THE LEYS.

Close Leys.

Common Leys.

Dry Leys.

Middle Ground Common
 (v. above).

Mill Meadows.

MORETON FARM.

New Diggin.

No Man's Green.

North's Field.

Page Hill.

Pattle Minard's Field
 (Pightle).

Park Furze Grove.

Park Furze Damans.

Penny Hill.

Plantation Field.

Pond Piece.

Poors Meadow (a charity;
 probably assigned at
 the time of the En-
 closure, in lieu of com-
 mon rights).

Pukel (Pightle) Black Piece.

Rainbow Gall Ground.

Ridgway.

Shomley (Great & Little).

Shoulder of Mutton.

Spratsell.

Stoneall.

Sunny Hill.

Tom Flaxland's.

Tom Portel's Meadow.

WATER SLADS FARM

(? Walter).

Watte's Hill.

Willow Thorn.

Winemer Hill

(and a Close above).

The following account of the Parish Church is printed from a manuscript in the possession of the Rector. The periods enclosed in square brackets contain comments, and additional information from various sources.

A MONOGRAPH ON THE CHURCH OF ST. EDMUND'S,
MAIDS MORETON,

By CHARLES E. KEYSER, M.A., F.S.A., Oct. 19th, 1880.

The Church of St. Edmund, Maids Moreton, possesses many special attractions to those who take an interest in English ecclesiastical architecture. In the first place, it affords us an admirable example of the style commonly called the Perpendicular, or Third Pointed, which, above all others, is considered that most peculiarly English, and not to be found in any foreign country; and, secondly, it is of great value, as being one of the few instances where the date of the building can be accurately fixed, owing to the tradition, or rather historical commemoration, of its foundation by the two maiden daughters of the Lord Pruet, about the year 1450. It also exists as one of the very few examples of a church, wholly rebuilt from the foundations, and completed in its entirety, without any portion of the former structure having been incorporated with it, as even in the somewhat parallel instance at Hillesden, an earlier tower has been retained, and it is extremely rare to find a Fifteenth Century church which has been erected on the site of an earlier structure, where a doorway, chancel arch, or some portion of the former fabric has not been preserved. The chapels at King's College, Cambridge, and Skirlaugh, in the East Riding of Yorkshire, cannot be adduced as parallel examples, as they were both erected as original foundations, where no ecclesiastical edifice had previously existed. So, again, in the case of Salisbury Cathedral, the present splendid structure was begun and, with the exception of the spire, completed within a very short period, but on an entirely different site from that of the former cathedral which existed at Old Sarum.

There can be little doubt that during the course of the impending restoration many relics of the former church will be brought to light, and, if any inference may be drawn from the font, the only relic preserved from the earlier edifice, we may presume that a church was existing here at least as early as the latter part of the twelfth century. Most excellent examples of this date may be seen in the neighbouring churches of Leck-

hampstead, Whaddon, and Shenley Mansell, and generally the beauty of the various details, especially in the early fourteenth century churches in the vicinity of Buckingham, proves the existence of wealthy and generous landowners, in the four centuries succeeding the Norman Conquest.

Before commencing a description of the church of Maids Moreton, it is worthy of notice that it is dedicated to St. Edmund, King and Martyr, who was murdered in Essex by the Danes, and whose body was finally translated to the great abbey of Bury St. Edmunds, in Suffolk; but though he became very popular throughout England, it is rare, except in the eastern counties, to find a church dedicated in his honour. Accordingly, on the authority of Parker's "Ecclesiastical and Architectural Topography of England," we find that this is the only church in the diocese of Oxford—comprising the counties of Berkshire, Buckingham, and Oxford—which is dedicated to this saint.

The church of Maids Moreton is on a very simple plan, and consists of a west tower, nave with north and south porches, a chancel with a sacristy or vestry on the south side. As has been previously mentioned, it is wholly of one date, and though of course, even during the period occupied in its erection, some slight modifications of the Perpendicular style may have been introduced, it will only be necessary in explaining the various details to mention, with respect to the dates, those portions which, from their character, appear to be the latest parts of the structure.

The tower is lofty, embattled, and in three stages, with a staircase turret at the north-east angle, and is a very fine specimen of fifteenth century work. [This turret does not rise above the roof parapet.—B. W. J.] On the west side is a doorway with a segmental headed, or, as it is commonly called, a four centred arch. [In the old oak door, which in the recent restoration has been removed, and placed in the tower for preservation, are perforations said to have been made by the troops of Oliver Cromwell.—B. W. J.] Above it is a curious projecting canopy, with a series of panelled and triangular-headed battlements, and below a cornice studded with roses. The canopy is supported on a rich fan tracery vaulting,

springing from an angle shaft set within a hollow on either side of the doorway; above is a well-proportioned window of four lights; and above again, and on each face of the tower, is a very peculiar deeply splayed arch, divided into two portions by a receding buttress, which is carried up the centre of it; on either side of which is a small trefoil headed window, or rather has been, as only a few retain their glazing and still open to the interior of the tower, and it is, of course, possible that they never have been glazed. A close examination of the masonry will easily determine this point. Above again, and still within the recessed arch and divided by the buttress, are the belfry windows, two on each face, more lofty than those below, and also trefoil headed. As a suitable finish to this most peculiar design, six very beautiful foliated cusps spring from, and form a most elegant fringe to, the heads of each of these recessed arches. The parapets running round the church are flat, and not embattled; good base mouldings are carried round the exterior walls, and simple and effective buttresses support the main walls and porches. On either side of the nave are three lofty windows, and two on each side of the chancel; the western ones, which are much smaller than the others, having hoodmoulds or labels terminating in brackets sculptured to represent angels.

The principal entrance to the church is by the north porch, a very fine specimen of Perpendicular architecture. The outer arch is plain, of two recessed orders; at the angles of the porch are graduated buttresses, and a parapet with panelled battlements runs round the upper portion. At the north-east and north-west angles are quaint projecting figures of eagles, formerly supporting the gargoyles, or spouts, to carry the water off the roof. The [outer] door is curious, with a row of balusters in the upper portion, and erected, as appears by the date above, in the year 1637. Within, the porch has very rich fan-tracery groining, with circles enclosing foliage, etc., springing from six shafts, four at the angles and the other two in the centre of the east and west walls, so as to divide the groining into two bays.

On each side of the east and west groining shaft is a small and deeply splayed window, divided by the shafts in a manner somewhat similar to the upper lights in the

tower. [These little cusped slits were formerly closed by shutters, of which the hinge pivots remain in the masonry.—J. L. M.] The inner door is segmental-headed, and recessed in two orders, separated by a deep hollow—a very unusual feature, but one which may be also observed in the other doorways and the chancel and tower arches. The inner order is plain; the outer has a series of trefoils forming a fringe to the arch; the door is also original, and ornamented with nice panelling. [On each side of the porch inside is a stone bench, on which are several rude figures scratched, as follows:—whether they are symbolic horseshoes, or the scheme of some game, is uncertain.—J. L. M.]



The south porch is more shallow than the north.

The outer archway is four-centred, and has a hoodmould resting on angel brackets; above is a small canopied niche for an image, probably, but not necessarily, of the patron saint, and there are good cornice mouldings above. The present high-pitched roof is a much later addition. Within, the ceiling is groined and ornamented, with the fan tracery springing from four angle shafts; the inner doorway is now closed. [The old pitch has since been restored (1890), and the doorway re-opened. In the outer arch is a light iron gate, as this porch is not ordinarily used.] On the north of the chancel is a small doorway, with plain mouldings, divided by a deep hollow, on a similar design to the main north entrance. In the interior the same excellence of detail and careful finish of every portion may likewise be noticed. The tower arch is lofty and well-proportioned, and is continued to the ground without imposts or capitals; in fact it is a noticeable feature in this church, that capitals are only introduced to the shafts supporting the groining of the north and south porches. Beneath the belfry-stage of the tower is good fan-tracery vaulting of a character similar to that to be found at All Saints' Church, Stamford, and in many of the celebrated Somersetshire church towers, springing from angle corbels supported on figures of Seraphim.

On either side of the nave are three windows of three lights each, all containing some remains of the ancient glass with which they were adorned, chiefly the heads of rich canopies, and also in the upper part figures of saints,

in most cases much mutilated. [It is said that this defacement took place when Maids Moreton was occupied by Parliamentary troops in the Civil War.] In the eastern window, on the north side, is St. George on foot, fighting with the dragon; and in the western, on the south side, St. Stephen, carrying his usual emblem, viz., a large stone. [These fragments have been collected and put together in the west window. Their colouring is more subdued than that of the east window, presently to be described, and they are probably by a different hand. Some of the white glass has a strongly greenish tinge, notably the canopy above St. Stephen, and is therefore earlier than the very clear white of the foliage and canopies of the east window.—J. L. M.] The north and south doorways are set within curious recessed arches, carried up to the same height as the windows. Over the north doorway are painted, on the whitewash, the arms of the founders of the church, viz., three fleur-de-lys on a chevron sable, with an inscription recording the pious act of the maiden ladies, and with the Royal Arms painted below. [The inscription runs, "Sisters and Maids. Daughters of Lord Pruet"—doubtless an error for Peyvre or Peover, through the ignorance of the artist—"the pious and munificent Founders of this Church."] The date of this is probably 1637, the time when the north door was inserted within the outer arch of the north porch. These recesses, as well as all the blank spaces on the walls, have been well bedaubed with whitewash, and there can be little doubt that, in the event of the whitewash being removed, the original mural paintings will be brought to light; that over the south doorway, as being opposite the principal entrance, being most probably a picture of St. Christopher, bearing the infant Saviour on his shoulder, and crossing a river, as he is commonly portrayed. [No wall paintings, however, seem to have existed in the nave, nor are there any certain traces even of a coloured wash.—J. L. M.]

The nave roof is of timber, and of low pitch, of the character called "Truss and Rafter," and is strengthened by three tie-beams, supported by braces and wall pieces, resting on stone corbels, where the original ones remain. On two of the corbels on the north side are sculptured the symbolical representations of St. John and St.

Matthew. The spandrils, or spaces between the tie-beams and the roof, and between the tie-beams and the braces, are ornamented with nice open-work tracery. In the centre of each of the tie-beams is a sculptured boss; on the eastern and western ones is an angel holding a shield, while on the central one is our blessed Saviour, with the hands upraised, and the side and feet bare, so as to show the five wounds—a not uncommon mode of representation, especially in connection with the great Day of Judgment, from the twelfth to the sixteenth century. Perhaps the earliest example in England is in a mural painting of late twelfth century execution, discovered over the chancel arch of Patcham Church, near Brighton, Sussex. The special signification of the position is explained in a passage of the Venerable Bede. On the floor of the nave is the stone formerly containing the brasses of the ladies who built the church; the impressions of the two female forms, exactly similar in size and shape, and a shield still remaining above each, charged with the three fleur-de-lys on a chevron, afford positive proof that by this stone were the maiden ladies commemorated. On the floor near the font, and to the north-west of the chancel arch, are collected many of the old encaustic tiles, some charged with a fleur-de-lys, being evidently heraldic, and an additional memorial of the pious ladies. A squint, or hagnoscope, has been pierced through the east wall of the nave, on the south side of the chancel arch, in an oblique direction, so as to command a view of the high altar, and to enable those worshippers in the nave to witness the elevation of the Host at the celebration of High Mass. [In the corner splay of the eastward window of the south side, is a mutilated bracket, nearly on a level with the sill; and in one of the panels below the same window a pierced stone, with the outline of a piscina, broken off flush with the wall. On the east wall also of the nave, above the hagnoscope, there are traces of another bracket; so that it is evident that this angle has probably from the first been used as a side chapel; dedicated, tradition says, to St. John.—J. L. M.]

The chancel arch is similar to that supporting the tower, and is continued in like manner without imposts to the ground. Beneath it is the rood screen, in a fine

state of preservation, but at present varnished over; the whole is divided into twelve panels, two on each of the doors and four on either side. Figures of the Apostles or other saints have doubtless been painted on the panels, and may again be brought to light if it be thought advisable to remove the coat of varnish. [There is no trace, however, of painting on the panels now.] Above, the spaces are open, with some light tracery in the upper part. The beam, with the original cresting, also remains; but if there were ever a projecting canopy, as at Hillesden, it has been destroyed. It seems on the whole probable that there never was a canopy, nor does there seem to have been any means of ascending to the top of the screen, the wall being apparently not thick enough to contain a staircase, and no other arrangements being at present visible. [There are some irregular holes filled with cement in the west side of the lower part of the north chancel-arch pier; but they are hardly large enough to have held the supports of a rood stair. At present there are two figures of early date, in very black oak, standing on the ends of the rood screen. They were formerly in the possession of Lady Kinloss, and were presented by her to the church in the belief that they originally belonged to it. They may have been corbel fronts, or bosses of the old roof.]

The chancel roof is constructed on the same principle as that in the nave, and is divided into two bays; the eastern portion being filled in with a series of flat panels, on a level with the wall-plates and tie-beams, twelve in number, painted light blue, and with pictorial representations of the clouds, moon, and stars, and having gilt metal bosses at their points of intersection. This flat ceiling, which almost cuts off the head of the east window, was probably the last portion of the edifice to be completed, and it may have been the intention of the architect to continue it throughout. There are considerable remains of colour on the wall-plates and on a boss in the centre of the central tie-beam, on which is sculptured a representation of our Lord seated in Majesty, and with the right hand raised in the act of benediction; this being evidently in contrast with that in the nave, where our Saviour is portrayed, showing the wounds. [Unfortunately, this ceiling was removed in 1882, before its

value was appreciated; and the above, is, I believe, the only extant account of it.—J. L. M.]

The east window has a depressed or four-centred arch, and is considered by Mr. Caveler (in his account of this church, see Parker, "Ecclesiastical and Architectural Topography of England, Diocese of Oxford, Buckinghamshire," No. 19) to be later than the rest of the building; but if so, it is probably only the concluding portion of the design, and should this be the case it was contrary to the usual practice, which was to commence the building at the east end. This east window is of five lights, and the upper part, which has rather complex tracery, contains very considerable remains of old glass of rich colour and beautiful design, with flowers and foliage and sentences on scrolls, such as "Ave Maria," "Miserere mei Dno," the sacred monogram "IHS," "XPS," etc. [All the tracery lights retain their original glazing, and the canopy heads remain; in white on alternate red and blue grounds. The white glass is particularly good, and the drawing free and excellent.—J. L. M.] At the east end of the chancel in north and south walls are good three-light windows, also containing fragments of glass. One perfect figure remains in the head of that on the north side. [It apparently represents an angel playing a harp, and is executed in white glass with yellow stain, on a blue ground, with white and yellow stained border.—J. L. M.] At the west end of the chancel is a smaller two-light window on either side; in the upper part of that on the north is a beautiful head in ancient glass, with flowing yellow hair, probably intended to portray our Saviour. [This is also in its original position. The lateral spaces of the quatrefoil are filled with white oak-leaves, which spring from behind the nimbus.—J. L. M.]

In both walls of the chancel are deep arched recesses enclosing doorways similar to those in the nave; the north doorway being the priest's entrance, while the south leads to a small and original sacristy, with east and south windows and good fan-tracery vaulting. It is much more usual to find the sacristy on the north side, and the contrary being the case here, proves, in conjunction with the fact of the north and not the south porch being the principal entrance, that the main

portion of the village was then, as it is now, to the north of the church.

In the usual position, on the south side of the chancel, are three very richly-sculptured sedilia, with flat projecting canopies supported on slender shafts, strengthened, or rather adorned, with miniature buttresses; the heads of the canopies are ornamented with very elegant panelling, and ogee-headed and crocketed canopies on their outer faces, and they may be compared with the very rich example still existing at Furness Abbey in Lancashire. Within, and at the back of the sedilia, is a mural painting, somewhat obscured by the whitewash, of the Last Supper. The figure of our Saviour without the nimbus, but with rays of glory emanating from His head, is in the centre, and He seems to have just handed the sop to Judas Iscariot, who is standing up and holding the bag in his hand. On the opposite wall, below the north-east window, is part of another mural painting representing our Saviour hanging on the cross; His head illuminated by the heavenly rays. The figures of the two Marys, or the Virgin and St. John, will probably be brought to light beneath the present layers of whitewash.

Within the south-east angle of the chancel is placed a small pillar piscina; it is certainly in an unusual position, and as there is ample space for it between the sedilia and east wall, where it is almost invariably placed, the reason why the usual arrangement has been departed from will probably be brought to light on the removal of the whitewash. [No explanation has emerged, and there do not appear to be even traces of fresco on this piece of wall.—J. L. M.]

The Communion table, with the date 1623, and the Communion rails of the same period, are really very excellent specimens of carved woodwork, and should certainly be retained at the impending restoration. [The Communion table of oak has four large carved pillars, and in the middle of the frame in front, on a shield, is the date 1623. There stands in the belfry a fine oaken bier, dated 1659.] There is a large square pew on the north side of the chancel of about the same date. [Now removed. The church is now furnished throughout with oaken benches.]

The font, as has already been observed, is the only relic of the former church, and stands in the centre of the nave. It is of late Norman character, and has a large circular bowl [twenty-six inches broad, and thirteen and a half inches high], resting on a massive octagonal stem and base. The bowl is enriched with a series of [six] ornamented and beaded semicircles connected together, and each enclosing a large leaf, and with a smaller leaf filling up the intermediate spaces between each. [These leaves are modified palmettes, the large with 8 or more, the smaller with 7 leaflets. Three types are exhibited, 3, 2, 1 of each.—J. L. M.] Its date is about 1170 [for the bowl; for the stem, not earlier than the present church; while the foot is recent], and it affords an example of the very common practice of retaining the font when all else belonging to the former church was swept away. A font of about the same date has been preserved at Hillesden, and it affords a proof of the very natural veneration with which the font wherein so many generations of parishioners had been baptized into Christ's Church was regarded by those whose wealth enabled them to devote their resources to the erection of a more glorious temple of God, and at the same time retain the hallowed vessel wherein they and their ancestors were first absolved from the curse of sin.

It may be worthy of notice, that many instances have occurred in the course of recent church restorations, where beneath the existing font a more ancient one has been found buried under the floor, showing a very different spirit to that which has prevailed in more modern times, but now is happily everywhere discountenanced, where the font has been turned out into the churchyard and made use of as a convenient tub to catch the rain-water from the roof, or has been transferred to the garden of the parson or the churchwardens and converted into an ornamental flower vase, or even put to more menial offices, such as a pig-trough, etc., of which, alas, many instances have been recorded. [At Broughton, near Newport Pagnel, the old font, octagonal, with heraldic panels, has been inverted to serve as the base of a sun-dial in the churchyard; not before this century, to judge from the superstructure.]

[Over the south door inside are three painted tablets,

with the Lord's Prayer, Creed, and Ten Commandments. Plastered on the south wall of the belfry is a rude stone head with distinct traces of green colouring upon the eyes, and of red on other parts.]

A north-west view of the church is given in Lipscomb's "History and Antiquities of Bucks," Vol. iii., p. 44, and in the "Gentleman's Magazine," Vol. lxxiv., p. 813, and the font and sedilia are figured in the Bucks volume of Lyson's "Magna Britannia." Some account of the church is also to be found in Parker's "Ecclesiastical and Architectural Topography of England, Diocese of Oxford, Bucks," No. 19, and in Murray's "Handbook of Berks, Bucks, and Oxon."

THE RESTORATION OF THE CHURCH.

This ancient and historical fabric has undergone a thorough and complete restoration since 1882. For many years it had been in a dilapidated condition. On the present Rector being appointed (A.D. 1877), he undertook the work, which was commenced in 1882. In the course of this year, the chancel and part of the nave were completely restored, and the remainder of the church in 1887, the total cost of chancel and the nave being £1,576 1s. 3½d., £650 of which was contributed by the patroness of the living, Miss Mary Turner Andrewes, of South Fields, Maids Moreton.

The architects were Messrs. St. Aubyn, of the Temple, London, and the contractors Messrs. Marshall and Boyse, Buckingham, who have carried out the work of restoration with great satisfaction.

On the south, in the angle of the nave and chancel, a new vestry has been added to the old, to which it is connected by an open arch, and lighted with new windows. None of the old features of the church have been disturbed by the addition.

The whole of the chancel and nave have been re-cleaned and coloured, and the open oak-work roof has also been cleaned and repaired. The pulpit has been removed into the north-east corner, thus making room for the new lectern placed in front of the rood screen. The pulpit is of carved oak and open tracery panels with stone base, and approached by a flight of stone moulded

steps, and on the front is a brass tablet bearing the inscription—

“To the Glory of God, and in loving memory of Robert Browne and Sarah Dorothea, his Wife, who fell asleep April the 3rd and December the 17th, 1836.”

All the windows have been glazed in diamond lead glazing with cathedral plate glass, with green tinted margins, and have a very pretty effect with their subdued light. The south door, bricked up for years, has been re-opened, and the south porch restored. The seating of the church is of new open benches in oak, and the nave is covered with a paving of Godwin tiles. The old stone font has been carefully restored. A new screen has been added to shut off the tower from the nave; it is closely copied from the rood screen, and holds the original doors of the latter, which were removed to gain space in the chancel. The belfry has been thoroughly restored, and the plaster and whitewash all removed, with a most pleasing result.

The stone ceilings in the vestry, and north and south porches, in fan tracery, have been restored to their original beauty. The old tile roof on the south porch has been removed, and replaced by a lead roof according to the original design. Repairs have been also made to the outward stone work of the fabric.

The re-opening of the church for divine service took place on the 20th of October, 1887.

MONUMENTS.

(1) In the centre of the nave is a large slab, on which were the effigies of the maiden sisters, in brass; but of the original brasses only the escutcheons remain. They bear: argent, on a chevron sable, three fleurs de lys of the field” (Peovre).

In the restoration of the nave, it was necessary to remove the slab covering the supposed vault enclosing the remains of the maiden sisters. There was no vault underneath, but a rough stone coffin, containing a skeleton enclosed in a coarse kind of sail cloth. On each side of the coffin (not more than three feet from the surface) lay portions of skeletons, supposed to be the sisters, as on one of the skulls were still the remains of woman's hair, tied in a knot, of a light auburn colour. These remains

were carefully collected and placed in the stone coffin, where they now lie under the stone slab.

Since the restoration of the church, new brasses, designed by Professor Brown, of Cambridge, have been inserted in the slab covering the remains of the ladies Peovre, the supposed founders of the church, and laid in the old matrix, as nearly as possible representing the originals, removed, as is thought, by Cromwell's soldiers. The tablet under the feet of the figures bears the inscription :—

“In pious memory of the two Maids, daughters of THOMAS PEOVRE, Patron of this Benefice. Their figures are placed in the Ancient Matrix by M. T. Andrewes, Lady of the Manor, A.D. 1890.”

(2) On a slab in the centre aisle :—

“Here lies interred the bodies of Mr. JOHN BIRTWISLE and of PHILLIPA his wife. He departed this life Jan'y 1st, 1697, aged 76. She departed this life 1696, aged 74 years. In memory of these relations this stone was laid by their niece, Mrs. Elizth. Havil.”

Above are the arms, incised on the slab, a chevron ermine between three ? otters ?, impaling on a chevron three bezants, between three goats' heads erased.

(3) A large marble monument of classical design, standing on the north side of the chancel, opposite to the vestry door. The inscription is :—

“Conjugi charissimæ
 Omnibus vitæ officiis bene de se meritæ
 Hoc Scripturale marmor
 Maritus posuit tristissimus
 EDVARDUS BATE, Armer,
 Mutui Amoris Ergo.
 Qui nunc fideli PENELOPE meæ
 Fatorum vice redditus
 Uno atque eodem sub tumulo jacet
 Et piis notis potiuntur ambo.
 Utriusque uterque
 Desideratum acquiescens ad latus.
 Obiit Illa An. Æt. 60. Salutis 1713. Oct^{bris} 24.
 Ex Antiquâ Lovetorum de Liscombe Familia
 Raris Dotibus Insignis Fœmina.
 Ille provecioris ævi spatio decurso
 An. Æt. 75. Dom. 1717. die mensis Septembris 15.½
 Plenus Vitæ Conviva recessit
 Amicis, Propinquis, Liberis
 Perpetuum sui Desiderium relinquens.
 Patrem habuit GEORGIUM BATE medicorum sui sæculi clarissimus.”

The arms on the monument are a fess engrailed between three hands coupéd at the wrist, bearing on an escutcheon of pretence three ? talbots ? passant, and impaling the same arms. The crest above is a stag's head argent, horned sable.

(4) On the north-east wall of the nave, over the pulpit, is a tablet, with the inscription :—

“In a vault underneath here lieth interred the body of the Hon^{ble} PENELOPE VERNEY, first wife of the Right Hon^{ble} RICHARD LORD WILLOUGHBY DE BROOKE, and eldest daughter to CLIFTON PACKE, Esq., of Prest-Would, in Leicestershire, by PENELOPE, his wife, second daughter to EDWARD BATE, Esq., of this town shire, departed this life the 24th of August, 1718, aged 48.

“Underneath this stone doth lye
As much nature as could dye,
Which when alive did vigour give
To as much beauty as could live.

“Also in the same vault lieth interred the body of the Hon^{ble} Col. JAMES PENDELBURY, Col. of the royal train of artillery and Master Gunner of England to the day of his death, and Sub-Governor of the Tower of London during the latter end of the reign of Queen Anne. He was in all the battles of the late wars, and there served faithfully, valiantly, and dilligently. He departed this life the 10th of Nov., 1731, aged 79. He married, in 1719, PENELOPE PACKE, widow, who survived him and erected this monument.”

(5) A slab on the floor of belfry :—

“In a vault underneath this stone lyeth the body of PENELOPE BATE, wife of EDWARD BATE, of Maids Morton, and second daughter of ROBERT LOVETT, of Lifcombe, in the county of Bucks. She departed this life on the 24th day of October, in the 60th year of her age, anno domini 1713.”

This monument has been removed from the north side of chancel to the bell tower, at the restoration of the church, the vault containing the remains being at the north side of the communion table.

(6) On another slab, now in the belfry floor, but formerly in the nave :—

“Under this Stone in a Vault lies ye body of ye Rev^d Mr. RICHARD MAJOR. He was Rector of Foscott 43 years. He departed this life November the First, 1740. Aged 72.”

Close by is another slab, to the memory of his wife.

(7) A marble slab in the centre aisle :—

“Sacred to the memory of EDWARD OAKLEY GRAY (late of this parish), Esq., whose mortal remains are interred in a vault underneath. He departed this life 19th of March, 1816, in the 56th year of his age. Also of ELIZTH, his wife, she departed this life at Bath, in the Abbey Church of which city her remains are interred, 7th August, 1797, in the 50th year of her age.

(8) At the west end of the south side of nave is a marble monument :—

“Near this spot lies the body of ROBERT BROWN, Esq., of this place and late of Aylesbury, Lt.-Col. of Militia, and many years a highly respected magistrate and deputy-lieutenant of the county of Bucks. He departed this life April 3^d, 1836, aged 81. In the same vault are deposited the mortal remains of SARAH DOROTHEA, his wife. She departed this life Dec. 17, 1836, aged 65. Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord ; even so, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours.”

(9) Marble monument in chancel :—

“Sacred to the memory of the Revd WILLIAM JOHN GILBERT, M.A., late of Brazenose College, Oxford. He departed this life on the 3^d of March, 1832, aged 35 years.”

MAIDS MORETON IN THE CIVIL WARS.

Dr. Bate, above mentioned (quem “patrem habuit” Edwardus), was son of the Rev. George Bate, rector of this parish, and was physician to Charles I., Cromwell, and Charles II. He was a very learned man and distinguished writer. Anthony à Wood says that after his removal to London, he published many excellent works ; that he died in 1669, and was buried at Kingston.

Mr. Bate, of Maids Moreton, was a staunch Royalist, and his brother was rector of the parish when Col. Purefoy mutilated the ornaments, and destroyed the painted glass in the church, in 1642. Bitter was the hostility of the Parliament against Mr. Bate ; and when, after the death of his brother in the following year, he would have presented another member of the family to the living, the House of Commons ordered, “That Mr. Daniel Evans shall serve the Cure of Maids Moreton, in the County of Bucks, and that the Bishop be enjoined not to give any Institution, Induction, or Collation to Mr. Bate upon any pretence whatever.”

The parish Register records the injury done to the church, in 1642, by Col. Parefoy's soldiers, then quartered at Buckingham. With the exception of the first paragraph, the following entries are signed by "Matthew Bate, Rector."

"Mr. George Bate, the reverend and religious Rector of this town of Moreton and of Leckhamstead, nearly heart-broken with the insolence of the rebels against the Church and King, dyed the 11th, and was buried the 14th of March, 1642, in the middle of the body of the Chancel."

"A.D. 1642. This year the worst of Parliaments wickedly rebelling against the best of princes, King Charles I., the kingdom suffered a long while under most sad afflictions, especially churches, whilst they pretended Reformation, were everywhere robbed and ruined by the rebels. In this Church of Moreton the windows were broken; a costly desk, in the form of a spread eagle gilt, on which he used to lay Bp. Jewell's works, domed to perish as an abominable idoll; the Cross (which with its fall had like to have broke out the brains of him who did it), cutt off the steeple by ye souldiers att the command of one called Colonel Parefoy (then quartered at Buckingham) of Warwickshire. We conveight away what we could, and among other things the Register was had, and for that cause is not absolutely perfect, for divers years, tho' I have used my best diligeance to record as many particulars as I could come by."

"A.D. 1653.—Now came in force a goodly act made by the Usurper Cromwell's litle Parliament, or ye Parliament of Sts., as they called itt, that is of all manner of dissembling hypocrites, and filthy hereticks, who ordered not ye baptism but ye birth of children to be recorded in ye Parish Registers, thereby insinuating that children should not be baptized, and encouraging people to withhold their infants from yt sacred ordinance. But there was never any that I know of, of that mind in Morton. And though ye baptism of some be not expressed here, yet these are to certify all whom itt may concern, and that on ye word of a priest, That there is no person heereafter mentioned by ye then registers of ye parish, but was duly and orderly baptized."

On the next page (1654):—

The Register was to be chosen by ye parish, approved and sworn by two justices, etc.:

"December 17th, 1653.

"We have sworn and do approve of Thomas Robotham to be Parish Register for Mayds Morton. SYMON BENNET.

"WM. HARTLEY: a sorry shop-keeper, but a fierce anabaptist, and ye fitter to make a justice of ye peace in those times."

The signatures are autographs : the comment in Mr. Bate's hand.

"By the Act before-mentioned in ye year 1653, marriages were not to be performed by ye minister, but ye Justice of the Peace, yet none in this Parish were bedded before they were solemnly wedded in ye Church, and that according to the orders of the Church of England."

"A.D. 1660.—This yeare, by ye wonderful goodnesse of God, His Sacred Majesty, King Charles ye 2d. was peaceably restored to his martyred Father's Throne, the powerfull armyes of his enemies being amazed spectators of, and in some sort unwilling assistants to his return, after 12 yeares exile. And from this time antient orders beganne to be preserved.—LAUS DEO."

The Register, from which the above quotations are made, begins in 1558, but until Matthew Bate's time is a copy, in his handwriting, of the original. It is prefaced as follows :—

"ANN DOMINI, 1663.

"John Phelpot and Thomas Scott, ye churchwardens, bought this Booke. Its cost twelve shillings and sixpence, and an handsome standish of pewter, which cost fowre shillings.

"The old Register is reserved with this which is for many years transcribed out of that, but not for certaine having carefully examined it, transcribed very exactly. However if any occasion as to matter of law be concerning the age, marriage, or death, of any person so far as it is but transcribed, the originall is more authentique testimony. From His Maiestye's King Charles the Seconds most happy restauration this Booke beginnes. And may he and his posterity sitt upon ye English throne till it be ended, and afterwards till time shall be no more. Amen.

"1785."

and below is—

"The old Register of Mayds Morton ffaythfully transcribed by

"MATTH. BATE,

"Rector."

Besides the entries already quoted, there is not much which is extraordinary in the volume. On the last page, however, are a number of "Certificates granted by this parish from January 1st, 1758"; then go on until 1772, and some are endorsed "useless," *e.g.* :—

"Certificates allowed for Rich^d. Hurst and Elizabeth his wife, to Castle Thorp, Bucks. . . . useless."

The church plate consists of nineteenth century plated chalice, paten, and flagon, without mark or inscription of any kind. It weighs in all 4 lbs. 2 oz. The flagon is $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, $5\frac{1}{2}$ across the base, and $3\frac{1}{2}$ at the brim. Round the lid is a degenerate rope ornament, and another on the base. The lower end of the handle terminates in a heart-shaped shield, as though to receive an heraldic device. The chalice is $8\frac{1}{4}$ inches high, $3\frac{3}{4}$ across the base, and the same at the brim; $4\frac{1}{2}$ deep in the bowl. It is quite plain except for two small bead ornaments on the foot, which is hollow, and closed by a flat plate below.

The paten is 6 inches broad, 2 high, and $2\frac{3}{4}$ across the foot; it has two bead ornaments on the rim, and one on the foot. There is no record of the donor of this plate.

A cannon ball, weighing about four pounds, was found embedded in the clay, at the bottom of a pond in the parish. This ball is supposed to have been discharged in this locality during the Civil War.

Charities.—In 1743, John Smart, a gentleman, gave £100 to the poor of this parish, the interest or produce of the same to be given in bread on Sundays to such of the poor 'as shall come constantly to church.' The sum was expended in the purchase of £158 2s. 6d. stock, 3 per cent. consols.

William Scott, by will dated about 1800, left £100, the interest to be applied in apprenticing poor children of this parish. With this sum, £164 3s. 9d. 3 per cent. consols have been purchased.

The Poores' allotment consists of 26 acres of pasture land allotted when the parish was enclosed. There is a piece of land containing 1a. 3r. belonging to the Church, the rent of which is carried to the church rates.

Maids Moreton Parish partakes in Elmer's charity. (Beachampton.)