

BUCKS CHURCHES

*Holy Trinity, Medlow.**

The work was commenced on the 10th of May, and is, properly speaking, not restoration, but reparation. It was entrusted to the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, Mr. William Weir acting as architect.

The repairs to the masonry were finished early in October, but there remains a certain amount of carpentry and plumbing to be completed, while the repair of the bell-frame and the re-hanging of the bells are suspended until funds admit of their being done.

The Transitional style has generally been attributed to the latter part of the 12th century. In rural districts no doubt it lingered.

The Church is a 13th century building in the Norman-Transitional style, with an Early English doorway at the south entrance. There is a richly-traceried window of the Decorated period in the south aisle, and a small Perpendicular window in the north aisle. The remaining windows are Norman-Transitional or Early English, are very beautiful, and appear to have escaped any damage in restoration. In the quatrefoils of the chancel windows some early stained glass remains. The tower appears also to be of the 13th century. It has a saddle-back roof, surmounting a moulded parapet, underneath which is a very fine corbel course. The upper windows of the tower are two-light windows enclosed in a dripstone, and the head pierced with a quatrefoil, while the lower windows have only one opening. The bells are a ring of five, four dating back to 1685, the fifth having been re-cast in 1841.

The Church is a flint building with stone dressings at the angles and doorways. It was partially restored in 1876 by the late Sir Gilbert Scott, but the work seems to have stopped at the nave. It was well done, and the fabric appears not to have been damaged in any way.

Comparatively little work has been done in the nave on this occasion, and the tower demanded attention first.

Many serious cracks extending from the base of the tower to its summit, and from the interior to the outside of the walls, were repaired by cutting out the loose portions and bonding together the solid portions of the walls. Two substantial brick ties were built into the north and south walls above the first floor level, and were taken round the east and west angles in both cases. The lower windows have been filled with leaded lights, and the upper ones with oak louvres. The woodwork of the roof was entirely renewed, and the lead has been re-cast and re-laid. The ground floor has been re-laid with new bricks, and on the first floor some new beams have been put in, others repaired, and a new oaken floor has taken the place of the old one, which was quite rotten. Outside, the rough-cast put on in 1747 has been removed and the flint work repaired and re-pointed in places on three sides, but on the north face of the tower the original limewash finish has been left undisturbed. The parapet of the tower was repaired with concrete, as was that of the roof of the Church wherever necessary, but the corbel course was left practically untouched, save for some little re-pointing and other minor repairs.

Next in importance, the chancel was stripped of rough-cast and ivy. It was in a ruinous condition, and most of the interior plaster was perished. The oak ridge plates were rotten, and had to be

* RECORDS ix., 365.

renewed; in some cases the core of the wall between the inner and outer surfaces had to be dug out and replaced with concrete, in some few places the foundation was missing. The chancel is now thoroughly repaired, freshly plastered on the inside, and the flint surfaces re-pointed on the outside.

Much similar work has been done in the aisles, porch, vestry, and baptistery.

Most of the mural paintings had been destroyed by damp or new plaster, but those previously visible, and some curious scroll work over the arcading of the nave, have been cleaned and rendered more distinct.

The completion of the present stage of the work includes new west doors of oak in place of the present deal ones, the removal of the superfluous exterior doors of the porch, to be replaced by iron gates, and two substantial screens to enclose the portion of the north aisle used as a vestry.

Portions of the masonry of an earlier Church (Saxon ?) were found in the walls of the tower and chancel, and include a piscina in two pieces, fragments of a font, the moulding of a window, and portions of an arch. These, with an altar rail, probably Laudian, it is proposed to affix on shelves on one of the vestry screens. An Aumbry was uncovered in the south aisle, and on the south side of the chancel the tympanum of a Norman door was disclosed.

The interior of the Church has been finished by giving two coats of limewash to the walls; this brings out much delicate ancient colouring, and improves the general effect.

Nov. 9, 1909.

J. W. CRUIKSHANK, Vicar.

All Saints', High Wycombe.

On November 1st, being the patronal festival, the new peal of twelve bells was "opened" after being dedicated by the Ven. the Archdeacon of Buckingham. The following table gives the dates, inscriptions, and approximate weights of the new bells and of those that have been re-cast:—

NEW BELLS.

Treble (5 cwt.)—"Mears and Stainbank, Founders, London, 1909.
In Fide Vade. W. A. S."

Tenor (32 cwt.)—"Mears and Stainbank, Founders, London, 1909.
Ad Vitam. W. A. S."

These two bells have been presented by the Wycombe Abbey School.

BELLS RE-CAST.

5th (6½ cwt.)—"Re-cast by Thomas Mears of London, A.D. 1802.
Re-cast 1909 by the efforts of the Church Helpers' Society. Mears and Stainbank, London."

9th (12 cwt.)—"Re-cast by Thomas Mears of London, A.D. 1802.
Re-cast 1909 by the efforts of the Ringers—B. Page, F. Hayes, R. Coles, G. White, H. Butler, R. Wheeler, E. Markham, G. Twitchen, W. Phipps, P. W. Witham, F. W. Boxell, F. K. Biggs, J. W. Wilkins, J. Neighbour.
Mears and Stainbank, London."

The first peal in the present tower, which was completed in 1522, consisted of five bells, to which a sixth was added in 1636. In 1711 the bells were re-cast by Richard Phelps, of the Whitechapel Foundry, and, 5 cwt. of new metal being added, eight bells replaced the former six. In 1788 two more were added, thus bringing the number up to ten. In 1802 the treble, 4th, and 8th were re-cast by Thomas Mears, of London; in 1890 the 6th, and in 1905 the

treble, were re-cast by Mears and Stainbank, of the Whitechapel Foundry. This, in brief, is the history of the bells down to the time of the recent alterations, and also shows the re-castings that have taken place since the paper on the "High Wycombe Church Bells" was written in 1890, and which appeared in the RECORDS, Vol. VI., p. 341. The old frame of 1711 has been removed and a new one constructed to carry the twelve bells on one level. The work has been excellently carried out by Messrs. Mears and Stainbank at a cost of about £800.

R. S. D.

Sculptured figures of St. Timothy and St. Stephen have been placed in the vacant niches of the south porch.

Elmer.

Works of repair have been carried out, and a new spire built above the timber belfry. It is a very small church, dedicated to St. Peter, and is said—strange as it seems—to have no memorials of the departed inside or out.

Stoke Poges.

The base of a Mediæval Altar-cross is reported to have been found here, of which I hope full particulars will be available for our next volume.

W. N.

Note on Hanslope Church.

On the work carried out in 1904-5 in the south aisle, and south side of nave.

The aisle was furnished in 1811 with deal box-pews, raised at each end 2ft. above the floor level. Some of the joists supporting the floor of the pews were formed from the top rails of old oak benches of good pattern. The whole area had been raised 6in. with rubbish from the rebuilding of the spire (after its fall in 1804), the fragments including crockets and other worked stones. 45 burials were found here, and were reinterred in the churchyard, fresh soil being substituted for the old, and covered with concrete, causing a great improvement in the atmosphere of the church. There appeared to have been no paved floor in the S. aisle or transept prior to the construction of the pews in 1811 (but only in the now destroyed chapel). Along the middle of the passage in the transept the floor had been sunk by wear 6 to 9in. Nearly the whole of the surface was covered by a thin layer of what appeared to be rushes (or straw). A thick layer of ashes and fragments of charred wood was found along the wall from the chancel arch to the roodloft stairs, tending to confirm Mr. J. O. Scott's opinion that the 14th century roof had been burnt and replaced by the very poor existing one.

At the west end of the aisle a brick grave covered with timber, was found, which had never been used; it probably belonged to the family recorded on a mural tablet slightly to the east of it. Many burials appear to have taken place subsequently to the demolition of the chapel on this side, as floor tiles had been thrown in when filling-in graves. The whole area under consideration contained many bodies, some being in 2 or 3 layers, and from 4ft. 6in. deep to within less than one foot below the surface.

The stone coffins found in the aisle have been already described in THE RECORDS (ix. 302, 1907).

A. H. C. (Condensed from Mr. Whitbread's Notes).