



# The Berks, Bucks & Oxon Archæological Journal.

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## An Architectural Account of the Churches of North Moreton, Brightwell, Little Wittenham and Long Wittenham.

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*Read before the Berks Archæological Society, March 25th, 1909.*

*(Continued from page 39).*

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Continuing our journey we arrive, after a drive of about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles, passing close to the well known camp on Sinodun Hill and the Wittenham clumps, a prominent landmark for many miles around, at Little or Abbots Wittenham. The Manor belonged to Abingdon Abbey, and after the dissolution came into the possession of the Barnes and Dunche families. The last named became of great importance in the County, and various members held leading positions and were allied with the chief County families. One Sir William married a sister-in-law of John Hampden and aunt of Oliver Cromwell. He was member for Wallingford, and his son Edmund is said to have been made Governor of Wallingford Castle by his cousin, the Protector, who also called him to the Upper House by the title of Lord Burnell, of which he was divested at the Restoration. The site of the residence of the Dunches' remains on the north side of the Church, with the grass terraces sloping down towards the lower ground abutting on the river Thames.

The Church, dedicated to St. Faith and All Saints, consists of a west tower, nave and chancel, and vestry and organ chamber on the north side of the Chancel. With the exception of the tower it was rebuilt in 1863. There was at that time a Chapel on the south side of the nave, filled with monuments and brasses to the Barnes and Dunche families. This was pulled down, the monuments broken up, and the brasses removed, some being thrown into the neighbouring horse pond, from which they have recently been recovered, while the canopies of the splendid tomb of Sir William Dunche, broken up into hundreds of fragments, are now preserved in a barn close by. It is stated that every effort was made to discover some representative of the Dunche family, the direct line of which died out in 1717, before this vandalism was perpetrated, but this will hardly serve as an excuse for what was done, and one cannot but feel surprise at the want of sentiment displayed in this contemptuous treatment of the memorials of those distinguished personages, who had, no doubt, as their epitaphs demonstrate, once been liberal benefactors to the Parish and its inhabitants.

As has been stated the Church was mainly rebuilt in 1863. It was a structure of the Decorated period, and the present Chancel and nave are poor modern examples of that style. The tower (Fig. 24) is lofty with a turret for the staircase carried up to the top and with a conical termination. The lower part is of 14th century date with a nice two-light west window, above on north, west and south face is a small loop or oillette opening, and above is a lancet light. The upper stage is embattled of 15th century date, with two-light perpendicular belfry windows. The turret is slightly later, as it has been built against, and partly blocks the belfry window on the south side. The upper part of the oillette opening on the south side has been broken, and now resembles a spade (Fig. 25). This has given rise to the ridiculous tradition that the tower was built as the result of a gambling transaction at cards, it being asserted that the club, heart and diamond are exhibited on the other three faces, which is certainly not the case. The south doorway within a modern porch is a plain example of 14th century work. Before describing the interior of the Church, we must mention a small stone now laid in the ground on the north side outside the Chancel. On it is the matrix of a brass of rather uncommon type. Within a circle having a fleur-de-lis above and on each side has been the head and shoulders of a priest, and below has been a plate for the inscription to the deceased. It is of small size and probably earlier

LITTLE WITTENHAM CHURCH.

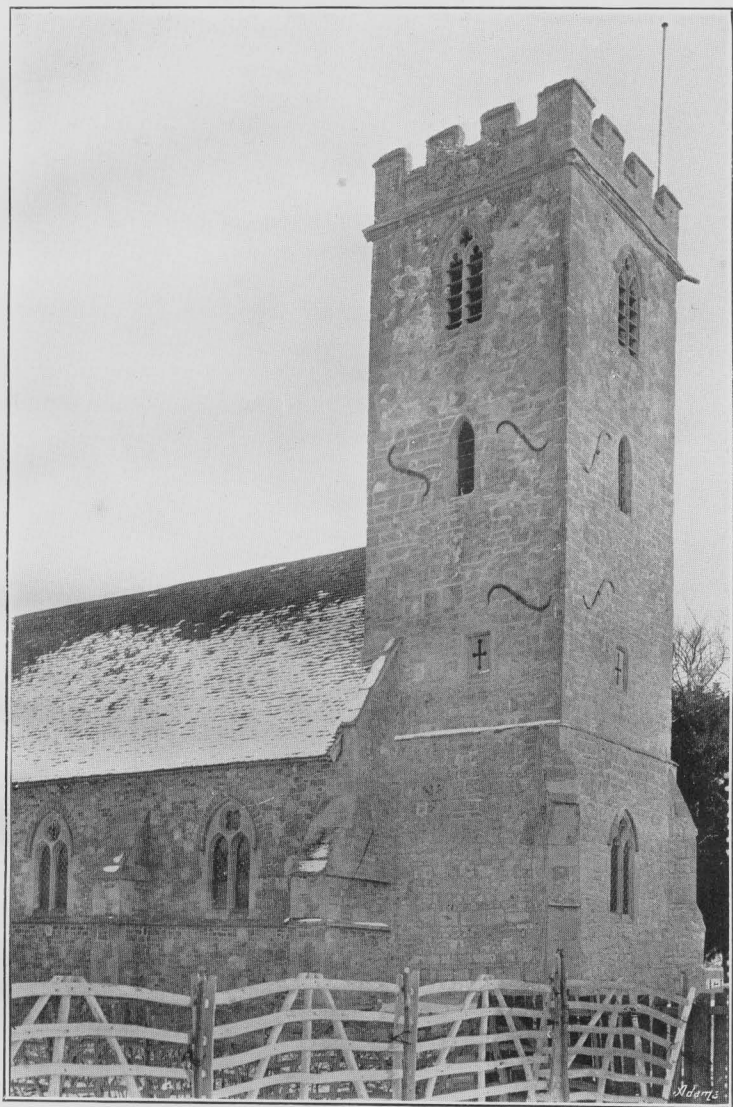


Fig. 24. THE TOWER FROM THE NORTH WEST.

LITTLE WITTENHAM CHURCH.

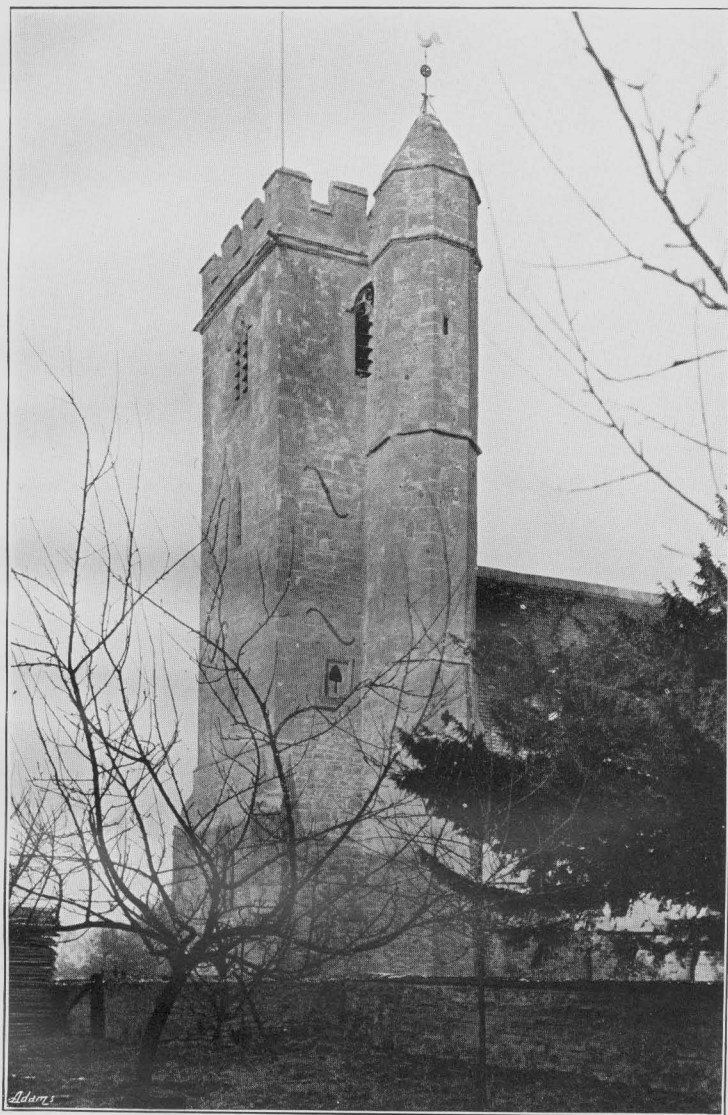


Fig. 25. SOUTH SIDE OF TOWER.

LITTLE WITTENHAM CHURCH.

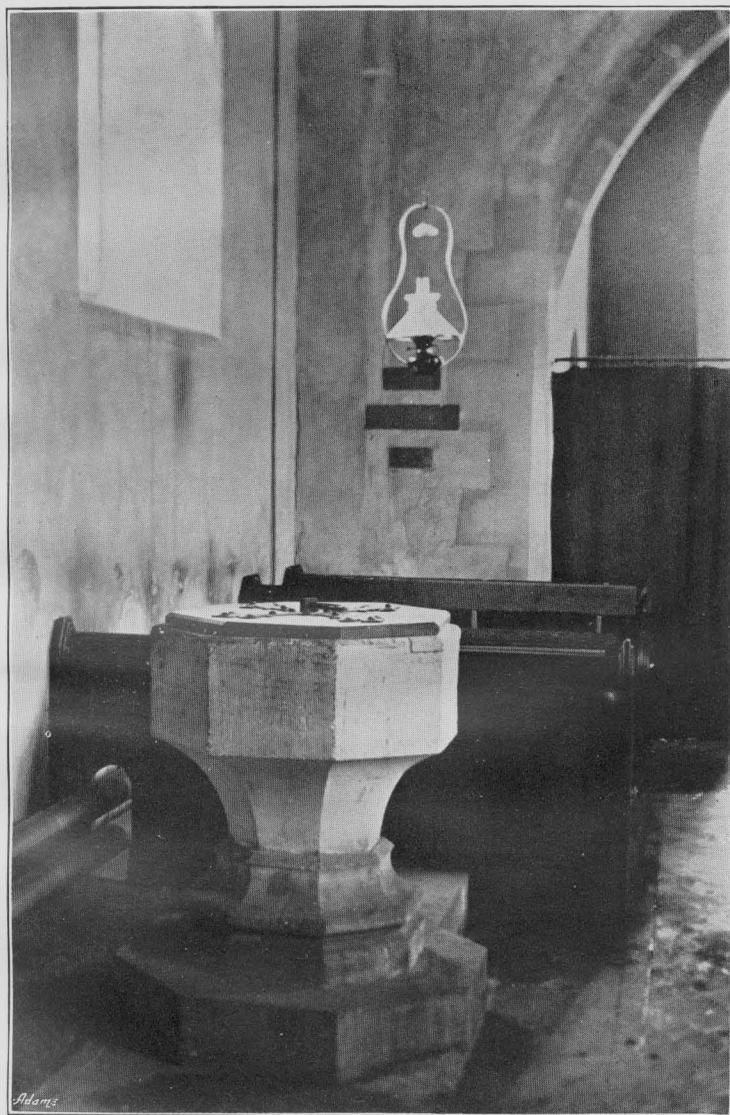


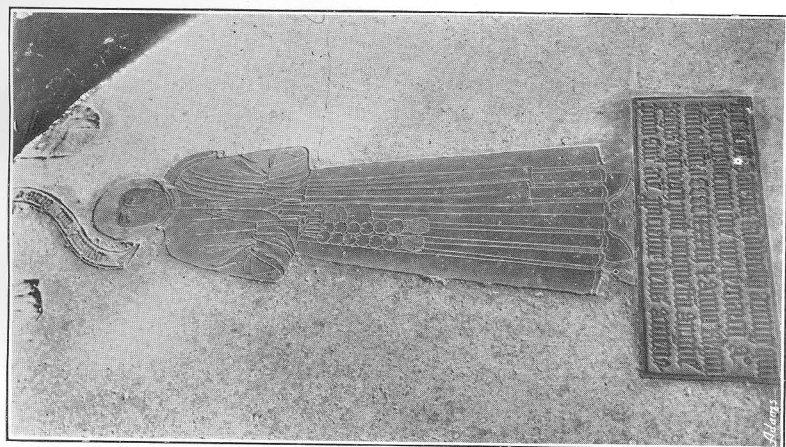
Fig. 26.

THE FONT.

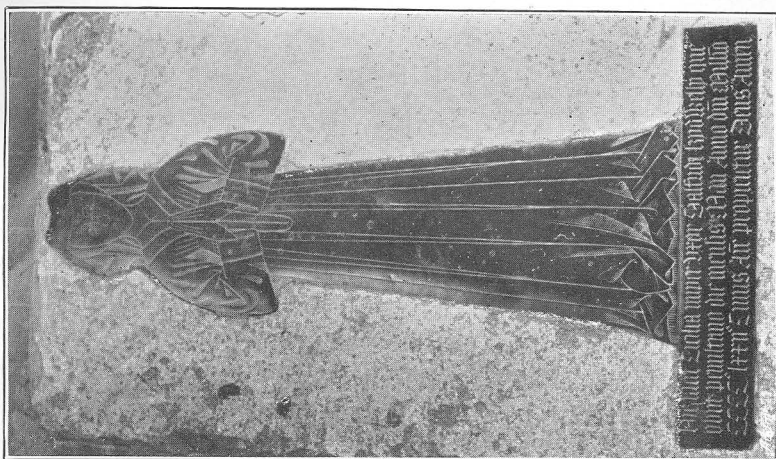
LITTLE WITTENHAM CHURCH.



Fig. 27. FOUNDER'S TOMB, NORTH SIDE OF CHANCEL.



(A) BRASS OF GEOFFREY KIDWELLY.



(B) BRASS OF CICILIA KYDWELLY.



LITTLE WITTENHAM CHURCH.



Fig. 29.

BRASS OF DAVID KIDWELLY.



than any of the brasses now remaining in the Church.

The font (Fig. 26) is of late 15th century date with plain octagonal bowl receding towards the banded stem, which broadens out again at the base. On the north side of the Chancel is a late 15th century monument (Fig. 27), probably erected to serve the double purpose of a founder's tomb and Easter Sepulchre. It has four quatrefoils enclosing shields at the back, a flat canopy with cusped fringe and pilaster shaft with battlements at the top, and the iron spike for the candle still remaining, on either side. On the front of the table are four shields, on each of which is a fox rampant guardant, facing west and east alternately. Above the tomb and between the pilaster shafts is a stone scroll on which was formerly painted an inscription.

On the table or altar stone is the first to be described of the wonderful series of brasses still remaining in the Church, perhaps, with the exception of Childrey, the most remarkable in the County. Here (Fig. 28A) we have the effigy of a civilian with long robe, purse at his side, rosary hanging from his wrist, and hands folded on his breast. There is a scroll from his mouth with the inscription "miserere mei deus," and a shield charged with a fox rampant guardant on either side above. Below the effigy is the following inscription on a plate, which has been reversed, no doubt when it was replaced after the rebuilding of the Church :

Hic jacet Galfrus Kidwelly armig' qui  
obiit triodecimo die mens Marcii A<sup>o</sup>  
dni millimo CCCC<sup>o</sup>LXXXIII<sup>o</sup> & Anno Regni  
Regis Rici tercii post conquestu Anglie  
pmo, cui aie ppicietur deus amen.

Which may be translated thus : Here lies Geoffrey Kidwelly, Esquire, who died on the thirteenth day of the month of March in the year of Our Lord 1483, and in the first year of the reign of King Richard the third after the conquest of England, on whose soul God have mercy, Amen.

On the floor of the Chancel are four brasses, all moved from their original positions as defined by Ashmole, when he visited the Church in the 17th century. On the north side is the small effigy of a civilian, (Fig. 29) about eleven inches high, in plain habit and with hands clasped on his breast. Below is the following inscription in two lines :

Hic jacet David Kidwelly qudm Hostiari' Aule Regis Henrici VI<sup>u</sup> qui obiit  
VI<sup>o</sup> die januarii anno dni millimo CCCC<sup>o</sup>LIIII<sup>o</sup> Cui aie ppicietur deus amen.

There is a shield with the outline of the fox rampant guardant below.

It may be translated thus : Here lies David Kidwelly, late groom of the chambers to King Henry the Sixth, who died on the sixth day of January, 1454, on whose soul God have mercy, Amen. According to Ashmole this brass was formerly in the south Chapel.

Next to it, but formerly in the centre of the Chancel, is the effigy of a priest, (Fig. 30) fully vested with hands clasped on his breast, about 18 inches high, and the following inscription below :

Hic jacet dns Johes Thurmound quoda Rector isti ecclie qui obiit  
XII die mes maii a<sup>o</sup> dni M<sup>o</sup>CCCC<sup>o</sup>XXXIII<sup>o</sup> cuius Aie ppiciet ds Ame.

On the south side of the Chancel, but formerly in the body of the Church is the effigy of a lady, (Fig. 28B) two feet eleven inches high, with long single garment, kerchief over her head, hands clasped on her breast, and the following inscription below :

Hic jacet Cicilia nuper Uxor Galfridi Kydwelly que  
obiit penultimo die mensis Maii Anno dni Millio  
CCCC<sup>o</sup>LXXII<sup>o</sup> Cuius Aie propicietur Deus Amen.

On the south side is another brass with the figure of a lady in the costume of a grown-up person, (Fig. 31) and the following inscriptions, viz., above :

Here lys Anne Dunch y<sup>e</sup> daugh<sup>r</sup> of Henry Dunch  
& of Anne Dunch his wife, who being born y<sup>e</sup> 13  
of Nov : 1682 departed this life Aug : 29 1683.  
Fiat Voluntas Dei.

Below is a rhyming inscription, one of many remaining in the Church, and suggesting the constant employment of some local poet to commemorate the virtues of the deceased and the moral lessons to be taken to heart by the survivors.

Behold an Innocent without spott  
Other then from its Parents gott.  
Let none these little ones Despise  
Since they're soe Precious in Christs eyes  
But Guilty Parents humbly Pray  
to become Innocent as they.  
th' old man cannot 'tis y<sup>e</sup> new babe must please  
Heavens only promised to such as these.

It is a singular anomaly, which occurs in many other instances, that a child who died at the age of nine months, is here represented in the costume of a full grown adult. The figure is about nine inches high. This brass is not mentioned by Ashmole.

LITTLE WITTENHAM CHURCH.

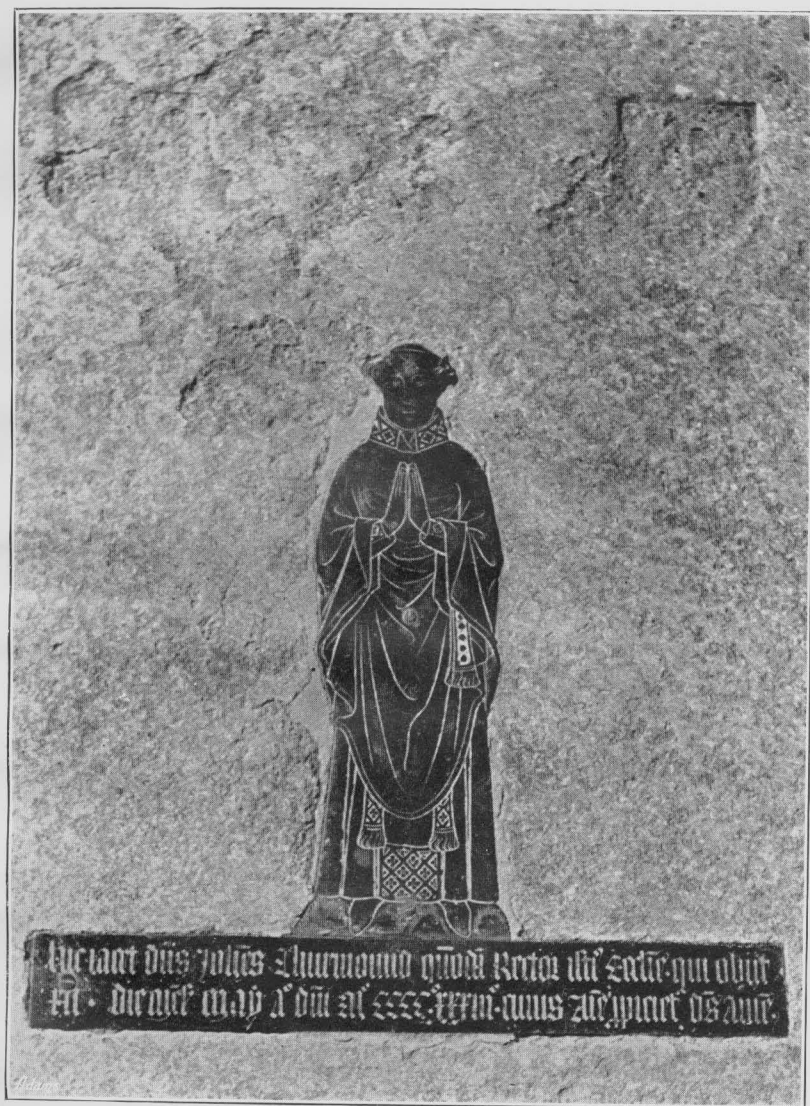


Fig. 30.

BRASS OF JOHN THURMOUND.

LITTLE WITTENHAM CHURCH.

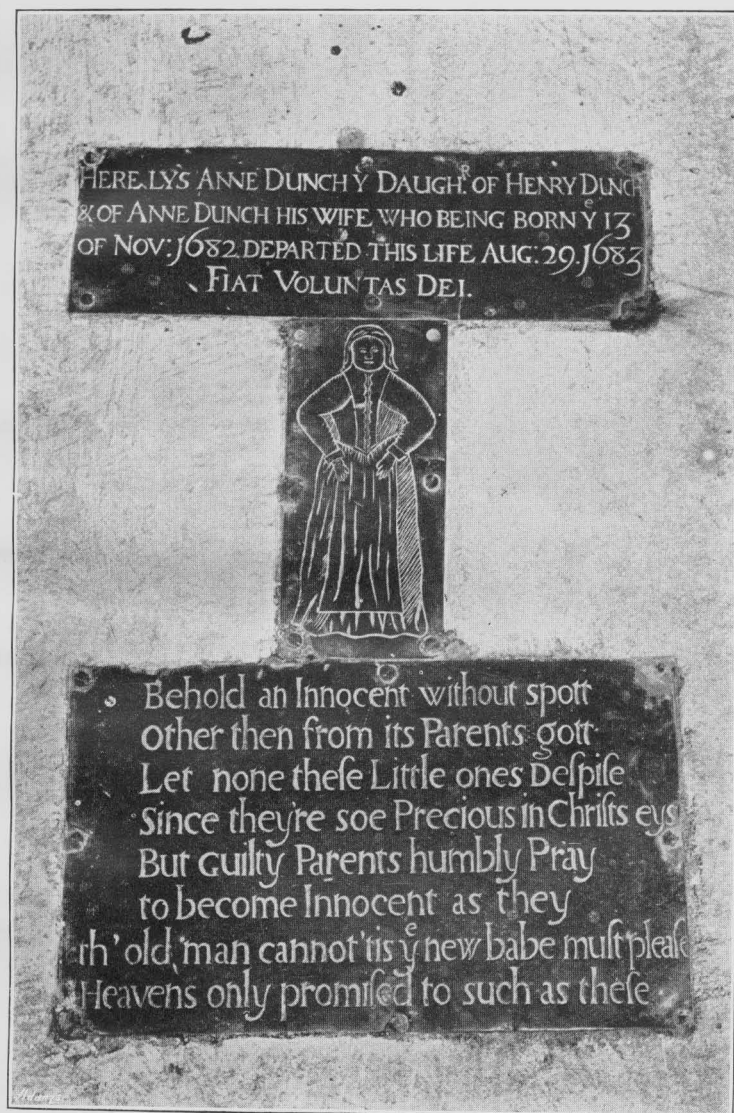


Fig. 31.

BRASS OF ANNE DUNCH.

On the west wall of the nave are fixed up some brass plates, which were recently found in the neighbouring horse pond and restored to the Church. On the north side of the tower arch are two inscriptions, viz :

- (1) The Honble  
Mrs. Elizabeth Dunch  
died Nov<sup>r</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup>  
1761  
in the 80<sup>th</sup> year  
of her age.
- (2) In honor of good Mrs Anne Dunch y<sup>e</sup> charitable  
wife to good Mr. Edmund Dunch y<sup>e</sup> hospitable  
Both surely paradised in æternitie  
Reader praise God and pray for her posteritie.  
1627.

On the south side of the tower arch we find :

- (r) As god hath well determined  
even so ower life is limited  
He measureth the daies of man  
Of som bi ell of some bi span  
as pleaseth God lett this suffice  
and hope from death too life too rise.

This was formerly in connection with the figure of a child and inscription to John Dunch, son of Edmund and Anne Dunch, who died May 12th, 1589, aged one year. The plates were on a stone under the Communion Table, at the time Ashmole took his notes.

- (2) Formerly appended to another inscription to Edmund Dunch, son of Edmund Dunch, who died in April, 1595, aged thirteen years :

Vita Deus Deus est vitam qui terminat omnes  
Arbitrio summi stantq caduntq Dei :  
Certa Deus nostræ mensurat tempora vitæ  
Hic citius moritur vivit et ille diu.  
Vita sit illa satis tibi quam Deus esse volebat  
Quæ sequitur mortem vita perennis erit.

Ashmole gives the following rather free translation of the above verses :

God who is Life, Mans Life doth terminate,  
And on his sovereign Will depends our Fate.  
God sets a certain Limit to our Days,  
This dies a Youth, and that by Age decays.

Pleas'd with the length of Life, which God allows,  
 Be thou for Death, Eternal Life ensues.  
 This stone was originally on the north side of the Chancel.  
 (3) Small brass with shield, and inscription :

MDCCCXXXIII

Juxta cineris

Materteræ suæ

Conditur depositum

Gul Palmer MD

Ætatis suæ XXXVII.

Under the tower is a brass plate on the floor, which was formerly on the south side of the Chancel, with the following inscription :

In memory of her loving Husband William Winchcombe  
 Sonne and Heire to Francis Winchcombe Esquier of  
 Bucklebury who died the 38<sup>th</sup> yeare of his age on  
 the 29<sup>th</sup> of July 1614. Mary the eldest Daughter  
 of Edmund Dunch bestowed this monument.

I loved thee living and lament thee dead

But in what manner cannot be exprest

Yet love and sorrowe both will needes be read

Even in this marble (deare) they do<sup>e</sup> theire best  
 and tis for others too I put this stone

To me thy tombe shalbe my heart alone.

Twise eighteene yeares he viewed heavens day

Sixteen he spent in happy Wedlocks Bands

The graces muses and the fates did lay

Untimeey on his webb their hastening hands

of heire his house of all there hopes his freinds

of progenie his Wife bereft he ends.

There is a shield above with the arms of Winchcombe impaling  
 Dunch. On a ledger stone now as originally close to the above,  
 is the following inscription :

Mary

Eldest daughter of Edmund  
 Dunch of Witnam Esq Maryed  
 to Will Winchcomb of Buckle-  
 bury in Barksheir Esq. Aft-  
 er to S<sup>r</sup> Edward Clarke of  
 Ardington in y<sup>e</sup> same county  
 K<sup>t</sup> haveing lived XVI yeares  
 in widowehood piously tow-



Fig. 32. LITTLE WITTENHAM CHURCH. BRASS OF WILLIAM DUNCHE AND MARIE BARNES HIS WIFE.



arde God & conscientiously  
to man departed this life

October XVIII<sup>th</sup> 1646.

Let in to the north wall of the tower are three brasses.

(1) with a knight kneeling at a faldstool, shield above and inscription below :

Blessed are the dead which hereafter dye in the  
Lord, even so saith y<sup>e</sup> spirit for they rest from their  
labours and ther workes follow them. Revelacion  
the xliii<sup>th</sup> chapter the xliii<sup>th</sup> vears. John Barnes.

(2) Immediately adjoining, the following long inscription :

Epitaphium Mary barns.

The touch stone of our life is death as I decerne  
For by the present passing hence the former life we lerne  
And so through worlds report they live that lie full lowe  
Ye grave can claime no more of right than flesh & blud ye knowe  
The people steies the same behinde for causes good.  
By which devise y<sup>e</sup> honest name is knowne and understode  
then to this widow here a ffarington by Birth  
Must have y<sup>e</sup> praise that she hath wonne while here she was on earth  
Her sober maners milde and upright dealings just  
In minde of men shall chrmcd be though Barns returned to dust  
by mariage barns she hight by life a madrone calld  
and so among the gravest sort in seate she shalbe stalld  
well liked of poore and riche her works so vertuous were  
that much good will & neighbours love therefor hence dyd she beare  
of right theis verses sure she claims. I saye no more  
and you that reades them after must, for she is goon before  
the heavens doo holde her ghost the earth accompt must make  
of every thing it hath received when god shall reconing take  
then to the wormes shall yelde her bodie whole againe  
and she with us and we with her in endles joy remaine.

(3) Below this within a frame a large brass plate with figures of  
a soldier kneeling at a faldstool and two sons behind him, and  
facing him is his wife also kneeling at a faldstool, and with a pillar  
between them (Fig. 32). There is a shield above him with the arms  
of Dunch, and above her with the arms of Barnes, the tinctures being  
shown in enamel. On either side of each shield is the crest of the  
deceased, his being an antelope, and hers an unicorn. The follow-  
ing inscription is set out below :

Here lyeth buried William Dunche Esquier Auditor of the Mynte to our  
soveraigne lordes King Henrie the eight and King Edward the sixte  
and Esquier sworne extraordinarie for the bodye of our soveraigne ladie  
Elizabeth. He maryed Marie Barnes they had yssue between them two  
sonnes Edmond the eldest and Walter the younger which William deceased  
the XI<sup>th</sup> daie of May in the yere of our Lord God 1597.

Against the west wall is a portion of the fine tomb of Sir William Dunch with very richly carved effigies in alabaster of Sir William on his side and the recumbent figure of his wife below, and on the side of the tomb are kneeling figures of four sons and three daughters, and two more children who pre-deceased their parents. The canopy and other remains of this once grand monument are preserved in a barn close by. On the wall above is a brass plate with the following inscription :

Gulielmo Dunchio equiti aurato viro  
Famæ integerrimæ fidei spectatissimæ  
Spei expectatissimæ cum magno suorū  
Damno et dolore defuncto Janua-  
rii 22 1611. ætatis vero suæ 33°.   
Parentes mœstissimi posuerunt.

(Ashmole gives this line as follows :

Uxor Maria mœstissima pie posuit.

There are distinct traces that it has been altered.)

Hic qui dormit eques rem spe superavit et annos  
Consilio juvenis tempore mente senex  
Conjuge qui fœlix numerosa prole beatus  
Qui lumen patriæ qui columenq domus.  
Hunc pietas virtus gravitas celebravit honore  
Quas animi dotes fama fuisse refert.  
Berchia te luget te gens Cromwellia luget  
Illam consilio hanc juvat amore frui  
Cum nondum patriæ naturæ nec sat amicis  
Vixerat at domino vixerat ille satis.

There is a very elaborate shield with numerous quarterings below. A free translation of the above inscription will be found in Ashmole's History and Antiquities of Berkshire.

On the west wall to the north of the west window, is another brass plate with the following inscription in plain capital letters :

Hic in Domino obdormit Gualterus Dunch  
Armiger filius Gulielmi Dunch armigeri  
Ex Maria uxore, qui in jure Angliæ munici-  
Pali diu multumq versatus, & in numerum  
Seniorum hospitii de Graies inne cooptatus  
Libentissime pauperum causas promovit  
& charissimus omnibus vixit in uxorem  
Accepit Deborham paterno genere ex  
Pilkingtoniis materno ex Kingsmillis

Oriundam, quæ illi peperit filiorum et  
Quatuor filias. obiit anno ætatis suæ 42  
Anno Christi 1594 die 4 Junii  
Maria mater mœstissima filio chariss<sup>o</sup>  
Hoc posuit.  
Te putat æternum tumulto posuisse sub isto  
Mors inimica bonis, fallitur illa tamen.  
Te tua firma fides Christo pietasq probata  
Inseruit cœlis hinc tibi vita Deo.  
Te virtus candor probitas prudentia juris  
Concelebrant terris vivis & inde viris.

There is a shield with numerous quarterings below. Ashmole gives a poetical translation of this inscription. It is all that remains of a monument which stood against the east wall of the Chapel on the south side of the nave.

There are several other inscriptions set out by Ashmole, which have entirely disappeared.

*(To be continued.)*

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SOUTH MORETON.—In the Victoria History I see the Castle Mound is described as “Unfinished.” The fact is the brook has been dammed back, and the mound dug away towards the brook side—to form the present mill-dam. An aged man told me that some of the mound was also dug away to fill up a pond, formerly at the back of the mill. If you will allow I will make a sketch to scale of the Castle Mound, the site of the paved ford, embankments for 50 yards to the west, now nearly ploughed away, and the raised embankment or causeway—before the rectory—which was dug down about 1880. I have a letter from Mr. Barff, who restored North Moreton Church. He says the stonework at foot of Moreton Tower was given by the new vicar of North Moreton to the Rector of South Moreton, but was afterwards returned to North Moreton.—WM. J. BETTS.

ANTIQUARIAN “FIND” AT WALLINGFORD.—The large picture of a Jewish High Priest found in the old “lock-up” at the back of the Town Hall at Wallingford, as described p. 59, is well remembered by those who knew St. Mary’s Church in the town before its renovation in 1854. It is the picture of Aaron which adorned the east end of that church. Possibly the corresponding picture of Moses may turn up in some equally unlikely place. Man’s description of the Church in 1818 (cited in Hedges, *History of Wallingford*, II. 390), states that “The figures are well executed and are the gift of Edward Polhampton and dated in the year 1770.” But experts say that the picture of Aaron now discovered is not worthy of preservation.—J. E. FIELD.