

The tower (Fig. 44) has plain parapet with large gargoyle in the centre of each face. In the upper stage is a two-light Decorated window with fluted containing arch and cusped tracery. In the middle stage is a small oblong light, not in the centre, on west side, and there is another on a higher level on the south. The west window on the lower stage has well-moulded hoodmould. A base course of 15th century date is carried round the tower and south aisle and porch. The tower seems to be coeval with the main portion of the Church, that is, circ 1330—1350, though Mr. Parker, in the "Ecclesiastical Topography," describes it as "Perpendicular" with a Decorated window built in."

The walls of the Church are covered with roughcast.

(To be continued.)

Hurley Church.

AN OLD PARISH CLERK.

THE Rev. P. H. Ditchfield gives us to understand in his entertaining book on "The Parish Clerk," that a remarkable feature in the conduct of our Church Services is the disappearance of that ancient worthy. I can well remember as a boy the old three-decker in Hurley Church, surmounted by a large sounding board. First came the pulpit, then the reading desk, and then the Clerk's desk, arranged in echelon—one below the other. This ugly obstruction was upreared against the south wall of the nave, exactly at the spot where a black and white marble memorial tablet is now affixed. High pews, with doors, were ranged on each side of the aisle. Then, at the chancel step, a high wooden screen divided the chancel from the rest of the sacred edifice.

The Sacarium was enclosed by a rounded set of wooden Altar rails. The Altar was very small. Above it, on either side of the eastern wall, were figures of Moses and Aaron painted on wood, with the Ten Commandments between them. The whole was sur-

mounted by the gilded figure of a dove, to represent the Holy Spirit. There were many memorial tablets on the Church walls, the large Lovelace monument being the most conspicuous of all. There were also a large number of hatchments, including no fewer than six of the Lovelace family. The present Vestry was added in 1852-3, and was probably built on the site of the East end of the Saxon Church, the remainder of Hurley Church, as it stands, being partly Saxon and partly Norman.

Until the year 1847 there was no organ in Hurley Church. Before that date a double bass, flute and violin were the only accompaniment of "Sternhold and Hopkins," or "Tate and Brady." The three performers sat in a short gallery along the north wall adjoining the belfry at the west end of the Church. In 1847, however, a barrel organ took the place of the unmusical trio, which again gave place a little later—in the fifties—to a finger organ; and this was a very great improvement, adding much to the life and earnestness of our Services. Since its introduction amongst us, the organ has always stood in the West Gallery (belfry).

Under the northern of these galleries stood formerly the Christening Pew, on the northern side of the nave, in which was the very handsome sandstone font, which dates probably from the end of the fourteenth or commencement of the fifteenth century. It is mentioned in Van Voorst's book of celebrated fonts of England. In 1852-3 it was moved from the north side of the nave to a spot quite close to the southern door.

Such was the Church in Hurley when John Briggs was Parish Clerk for no fewer than forty-eight years. A most remarkable man! He lived in the Church Cottages, which still form one of the most picturesque groups of buildings in Hurley village. These cottages are built upon ground originally given to certain Parishioners of Hurley in the reign of Henry VII. (on March 20th, 1493-4) by the Prior and Convent of Hurley Monastery, which was suppressed by Henry VIII. in 1536.

On March 26th, 1764, John Briggs was married in Hurley Church to Anne Gardner of Hurley Parish by James Smith, Vicar, and our Registers further record the baptisms of two daughters of his, Elizabeth and Sarah, on August 26th, 1764, and June 22nd, 1766, respectively.

This quaint old man was buried in Hurley Churchyard on November 20th, 1814, aged 78 years. Besides fulfilling his duties as Parish Clerk for close upon half-a-century, Briggs appears to have

been a general *factotum* in Hurley. Through the kindness of a parishioner, I have lately been supplied with some very quaint particulars of John Briggs' accomplishments. These are fully detailed in the following remarkable notice which was (we may reasonably gather) posted by him in a conspicuous position on the outside door (or wall) of his house, viz. :—

“ John Briggs, Parish Clerk, Draws all Sorts of teeth in humour plays the violin shaves and cuts hair grinds razors scissors and Penknives Takes anything out of Eyes measures land and cures the itch out of hand and many other articles too tedious to mention. N.B. likewise Makes Womans Shoes and Boots and High Shoes and Mens shoes and Translator 1783.”

I have rendered this very remarkable advertisement exactly as it has been handed down to me.

The meaning of the word “Translator” is explained as follows : “A cobbler of a low class, who manufactures boots and shoes from the materials of old ones, selling them at low prices to second-hand dealers. The Cobbler is affronted if you do not call him Mr. Translator.” We are further told that “A costermonger will part with everything rather than his boots, and to wear a pair of second-hand ones (or *translators* as they are called) is felt as a bitter degradation by them all.”

F. T. WETHERED,

Vicar of Hurley, Berks.

HURLEY VICARAGE,
July 23rd, 1918.

