



***HISTORIC
CHURCHES***



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HISTORIC CHURCHES

FIRST SERIES

Notes by

IVOR BULMER-THOMAS

Chairman, Executive Committee,
Historic Churches Preservation Trust

with a preface by His Grace

THE LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

(The Most Rev. and Rt. Hon. Dr. G. F. Fisher)

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too many cathedral dignitaries, incumbents, architects and photographers have helped in the preparation of this booklet for me to be able to name them individually, but I should like to express a warm collective "Thank you." The photograph of St. Helen's, Bishopsgate, is taken from the Inventory of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England) for the City of London, that of St. Cybi's, Holyhead, from the Inventory of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (Wales) for Anglesey, and they are published with the permission of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office. The photograph of Earls Barton Church has previously appeared in 'English Parish Churches,' by Graham Hutton and Edwin Smith, and is re-published with permission. I am grateful to the publishers, not only for undertaking the publication of this book, but for making a contribution to the Historic Churches Preservation Trust for every copy sold; for that reason perhaps I may be permitted to hope that it will meet with a large sale.

I. B.-T.

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A Goodly Heritage



Photo: Elliott and Fry

His Grace the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury
(the Most Rev. and Rt. Hon. G. F. Fisher)

THERE are 42 cathedrals in England and another six in Wales, every one of them distinctive and many of them of transcendent beauty and historic interest. In England there are nearly 16,000 parish churches and other churches of a parochial nature, and a proportionate number in Wales. More than half of them were built over four hundred years ago, and some have come down from the dawn of Christianity in this island. There are at least 10,000 such churches of which we can say that their loss would be irreparable.

The score of churches illustrated and described in this volume can give only a small indication of this great heritage. Such a selection must be invidious, and many a reader will miss his favourite cathedral or church. That is inevitable. But the selection is representative. The cathedrals are represented by Canterbury, York and St. David's, the greater churches by Tewkesbury, Hexham and Margam Abbeys and Cartmel Priory, the parish churches by such gems as Burford and Patrington—a family in which mother churches, elder sisters and daughters all have a singular grace. Though we should probably all agree in assigning to East Anglia the greatest number of fine churches, the second place would be hotly disputed, and there is no part of the country that cannot boast of some exquisite church in which worship has been continuously offered to God for centuries. All the main styles of architecture are represented from the massive

By His Grace the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury

Saxon tower at Earls Barton to the noble product of the Gothic revival in St. Mary Abbots. When the medieval Gothic had exhausted itself in the Perpendicular, a style uniquely English, as at Saffron Walden, Wren and Gibbs drew new inspiration from classical Greece and Rome. In size the churches here illustrated range from the splendid jewel of Compton to the vast proportions of Long Melford and Boston. They are found in great cities, market towns and remote villages. Vast movements of population have taken place since they were built. St. Helen's, Bishopsgate, with its unique arrangement of a conventual and a parish church side by side, is now engulfed in the metropolis, but Boston prayed as far back as 1607 to be placed among "the decayed towns." The diversity of our churches is part of their attraction.

Not only are the fabrics superb architectural creations, but they house innumerable masterpieces of the craftsman's arts. The painted rood screen at Hexham, the stalls, canopies and screen at Cartmel and the font at Ewelme show woodwork at its best; though much of our ancient glass has been lost, that which survives at Canterbury and York, Malvern and Fairford, rivals in beauty and interest any in the world; such tombs as those at Burford, Ewelme and Tewkesbury may be equalled elsewhere but are hardly surpassed; and the ancient bells still speak to us as they spoke to our distant ancestors.

These churches and their contents are part of

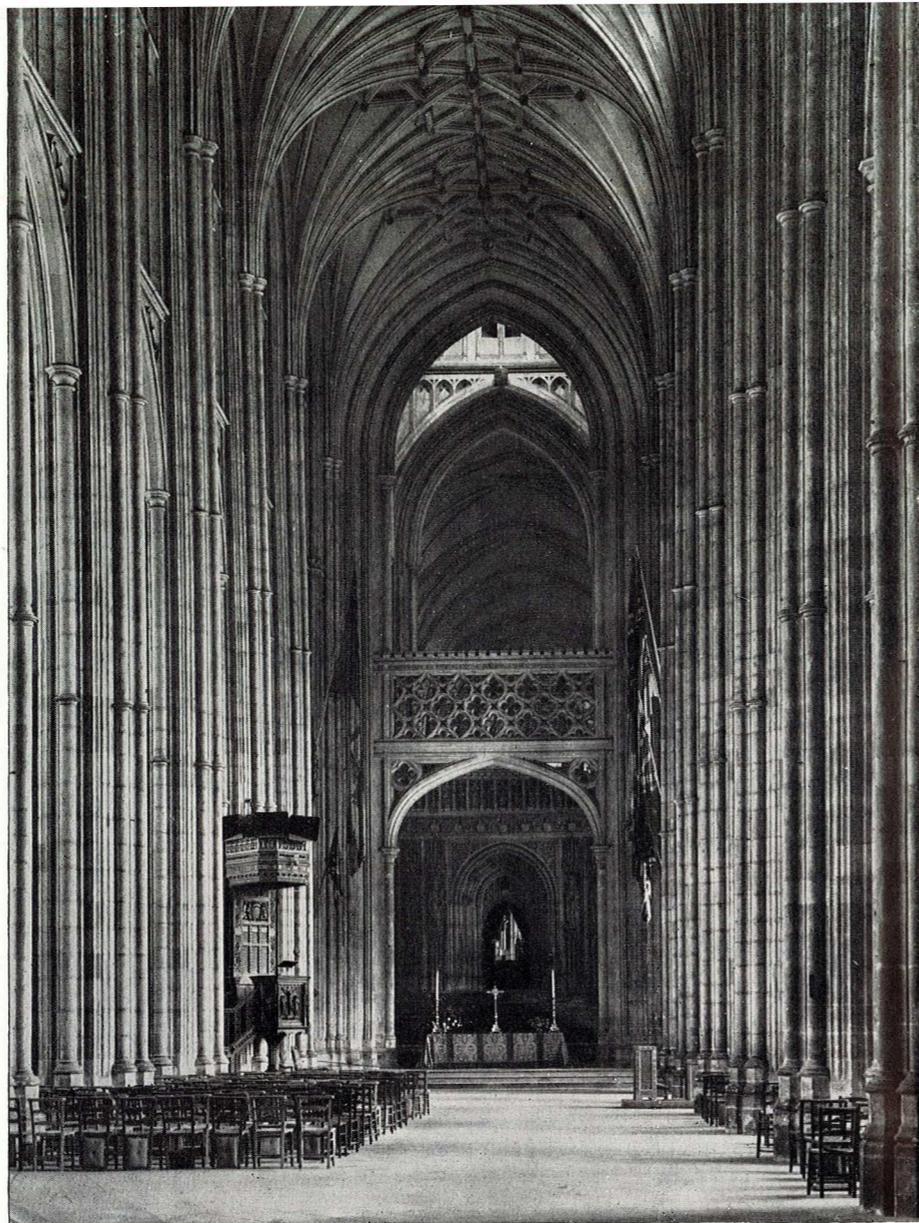
the history of the country. They are historical documents in their way as important as the written charters. Some of our cathedrals and churches have witnessed scenes that have altered the course of our national history, such as the murder of Becket at Canterbury or Edward IV's pursuit of his victims at Tewkesbury; almost all have helped to shape the history of the towns and villages around them.

This is an incomparable heritage, and we have a duty to hand it down unimpaired to our descendants. The war and social changes have brought immense problems, but there are signs of a new awakening of interest in the maintenance of our parish churches. The Historic Churches Preservation Trust has been formed to focus that interest. This booklet will help its work in two ways. In the first place, it will help to bring home to our people the nature of the heritage for which our generation are trustees; and in the second place, thanks to the generosity of the publishers, every copy sold will benefit the Trust financially. For both reasons I hope the book will have a wide sale, and that many readers will be moved to make their own contribution to the Trust. Donations or requests for forms of covenant (enabling the Trust to recover the income tax) or applications for forms of bequest should be sent to The Secretary, Historic Churches Preservation Trust, Fulham Palace, London, S.W.6.

GEOFFREY CANTUAR:

The nave as built in the years spanning 1400, facing east, 'one of the most stupendous creations of the Perpendicular style.'

Photo: A. F. Kersting



Canterbury Cathedral

NO Englishman should die without having made the pilgrimage to Canterbury. It has been the focus of English Christianity since St. Augustine established his seat in an old Roman-British building in A.D. 597; and today it is the centre of the world-wide Anglican communion.

Nothing remains of St. Augustine's church, nor of Archbishop Odo's Saxon cathedral (built 950, destroyed by fire 1067), and little of the Romanesque church that Archbishop Lanfranc, friend of William the Conqueror, built in imitation

of his master's abbey church at Caen. In the time of Archbishop Anselm the eastern end was magnificently remodelled, still in the Romanesque style of course, first by Prior Ernulph and then by Prior Conrad. This church was dedicated in 1130; and the present cathedral has developed out of it.

The new eastern limb was longer than the nave, and the monks' stalls (Canterbury was the church of a Benedictine monastery) were transferred to its western bays from the crossing and the nave. This gave a decisive turn to English church

planning, for it led to a general fashion of placing the choir east of the crossing instead of in the older western position, which it still occupies today at Westminster; and it has led to the eastern limbs of English cathedrals being much longer than those on the Continent.

It was in this church in 1170, near the steps that pass from the north choir aisle into the transept, that Archbishop Becket fell a victim to four of King Henry II's knights, and in a martyr's death expunged worldly ambitions and personal motives. Canonized as St. Thomas of Canterbury he became the centre of a cult which drew a vast concourse of pilgrims to the cathedral, as described in Chaucer's 'Canterbury Tales.' Their faith demanded, and their offerings made possible, a great enrichment of the cathedral.

"Conrad's glorious choir" was destroyed by fire in 1174, and in the following year William of Sens began to rebuild the choir in the Gothic style. At Canterbury better than anywhere else we can see the Norman style marrying with the Gothic; in the arcades of the eastern transept we see round and pointed arches side by side.

William of Sens had the stone shipped across the Channel from Caen, and his work is wholly French in conception and reminiscent of his native town. In 1178 he was injured in a fall from scaffolding, and was succeeded by William the Englishman (1178-84). To the English William fell the task of rebuilding Conrad's easternmost chapel, dedicated to the Holy Trinity, which had contained Becket's favourite altar, in a manner worthy to house the martyr's shrine; and still farther to the east he built a new chapel, "Becket's Crown," probably to house a relic of the archbishop's head chipped off by a knight's sword. Becket's body was removed from the crypt to the new shrine in 1220.

Becket's shrine quickly became ornate with jewels which were plundered in 1538 when the monastery was dissolved. But far lovelier than any jewels could have been, and still in situ today, are the windows with which the 13th cent. artists described the miracles of the saint and biblical types and anti-types. In one of them we can still see what the shrine looked like when it was built. In artistic quality this glass is not inferior to that of Chartres, and is in some respects finer; as a sequence of pictures it is rivalled only by the glass of York Minster and King's College, Cambridge.

For nearly two centuries Lanfranc's humble nave and the magnificent eastern limb of the two Williams met under a central tower. Stirred into

action perhaps by the pilgrims' offerings, the monks then rebuilt the Norman nave and transept in the years spanning 1400 in the form in which we have them today. Though the nave failed to satisfy Francis Bond, most critics regard it as one of the most stupendous creations of the Perpendicular style. The rich stone choir screen with canopied figures was built about 1400.

There is no division of opinion about the sublime central tower. There had been a central tower surmounted by an angel (hence the name "Angel Steeple") since Norman days, and in the last decade of the 15th cent. it was raised to a height of 235 feet. It is also known as "Bell Harry." The fan vaulting over the crossing is a superb example of a peculiarly English art.

Canterbury has two other towers, flanking the west front. The north-west tower of Lanfranc's church was still standing when Prior Woodnesbrough (1411-27) began the south-west tower in the style of his own day. It was finished about 1450, or perhaps a little later. The clash of styles displeased a later generation, and in 1834 a twin of the south-west tower was put up in place of Lanfranc's.

There have been no other substantial alterations to the cathedral since the Middle Ages, but the Christ Church gateway, by which it is normally approached, was completed in 1517, and the Cathedral's fine Jacobean font, originally made in 1639 and damaged in the Civil War, was re-erected after the Restoration of 1660.

The Canterbury monuments are second only to those of Westminster in historical and artistic importance. Pre-eminent among them is the recumbent effigy of Edward the Black Prince (d. 1376) in full armour.

The crypt was largely built by Prior Ernulph (1096-1107) and was the largest vaulted building in England when it was built. In the days of Elizabeth I, when thousands of Huguenots arrived at Canterbury to escape persecution abroad, the crypt was lent to them for services; and although the number of their descendants is small this Christian hospitality survives and a service is held in French each Sunday.

It seemed on 1st June, 1942, when a "Baedeker" air-raid left the city in flames, that the primatial shrine would suffer the fate of Odo's cathedral and Conrad's choir. But as though by a miracle the cathedral survived intact except for some damage to windows—the precious glass had been removed—and we may hope that it will give inspiration to generations of Englishmen yet unborn.

The 'Five Sisters' window in the north transept, with its original 13th cent. grisaille glass.

York Minster

EDWIN, King of the Northumbrians, having married a daughter of Ethelbert, King of Kent, agreed to receive Christian missionaries, and was himself baptized at York by Paulinus in 627. On the spot he caused to be raised the first of some six cathedrals dedicated to St. Peter that have stood there. This first cathedral was built of timber and was soon succeeded by one in stone. A far larger "minster" followed in the 8th cent. (The term "minster," Canon Addleshaw has explained, arose in the beginnings of the parish church system and was applied to the residential as opposed to the wandering missionary type of pastorate. The Saxons called such a settled church a "minster," which was perhaps Latinized into 'Monasterium.' The term does not imply that York Minster was ever a monastery, and throughout the Middle Ages its clergy were secular canons, not monks.) Nothing remains of the three Saxon buildings save two walls of herring-bone masonry in the crypt; and little of the Norman cathedral begun by Archbishop Thomas of Bayeux in 1080 except in the western portion of the crypt. Archbishop Roger (1154-1181) built a new cathedral in the Transitional style, and of this the substructure of the choir can be seen in the centre of the crypt.

A new cathedral was begun in the Gothic style about 1230, and is probably to be connected with the canonization three years earlier of William, formerly Archbishop. Generous offerings were brought to his shrine, and the canons planned a new minster on a scale not previously contemplated. The ground-plan is larger than that

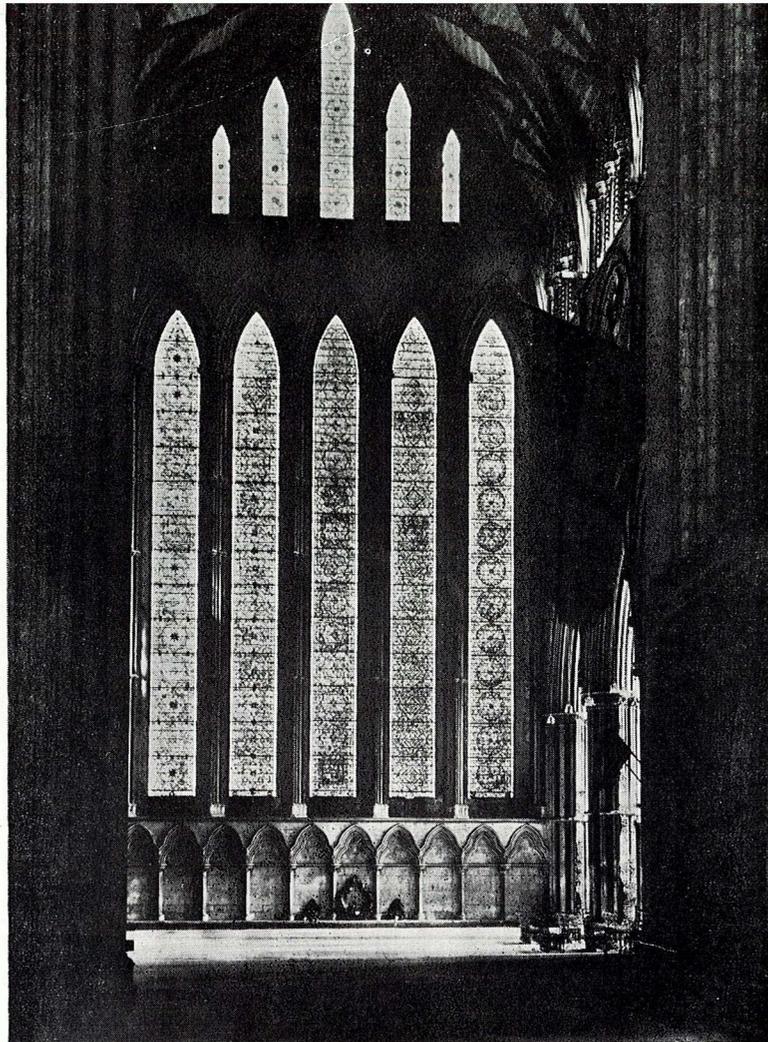


Photo: Walter Scott

of any other medieval church in England and the interior heights are exceptional. The work was done in three stages and was not completed for nearly 250 years. In the end the canons left nothing of the earlier building above ground, but what they put in its place has been justly called "A Hallelujah Chorus in stone."

The spacious transept was begun first, the south transept being built between 1230 and 1241 and the north between 1241 and 1260. The transept was unusual in having aisles on the western as well as the eastern side—a feature unknown in the English Gothic cathedrals except at Wells and Old St. Paul's, but copied in Beverley Minster and the parish church of Patrington. The triforium is the most complex in the country; it consists of a series of almost semi-circular arches each enclosing two acute lancet arches, each of which in turn encloses two

acute lancets. It gains its great height, however, at the expense of a diminished clerestory. In the south transept is the fine tomb of Archbishop Gray who initiated the work. But the great glory is the "Five Sisters" window in the north transept, consisting of five lofty narrow lancets. They are filled with their original mellow grisaille glass, which in quantity exceeds any other grisaille work that has survived from the 13th cent. and in quality is unsurpassed.

In 1291 the foundation stone of a new nave was laid. The new nave in the Decorated style was so broad and lofty that it may well have been built round and over the old Norman nave, thus leaving the shrine of St. William undisturbed. It is the broadest and loftiest nave in England. Here, in contrast with the transept, the clerestory is emphasized at the expense of the triforium. The nave was completed in 1324. Unfortunately the canons' hearts—or their funds—failed when they came to the roof, and in 1354 it was given, like the transept and other parts of the minster, a wooden vault instead of the intended stone ceiling. (This wooden vault was burnt through a plumber's carelessness in 1841 and rebuilt.) In this same period (c. 1320) the exquisite octagonal chapter house was built and was later connected with the minster by a vestibule. The ceiling or roof has recently been discovered to be in construction the only Gothic "dome" in existence, the true precursor of the domes of St. Peter's, Rome, and St. Paul's, London.

In 1361 the chapter took in hand the rebuilding of their old 12th cent. choir. Four new eastern bays were built between 1361 and 1370 and five new western bays between 1380 and 1400 approximately. The eastern limb of the cathedral had one more bay than the nave, and the fifth bay formed an eastern transept with the windows carried up on high, throwing a flood of light on the high altar. As originally constructed the high altar was in line with the transeptal bays, and the shrine of St. William was moved from the nave to a place immediately behind it; but the shrine was destroyed in the 16th cent. and the high altar has since been moved one bay east. The two easternmost bays of the retro-choir constituted the Lady Chapel. The high roof of the nave was continued right to the east end, giving a majestic impression. It was given a wooden vault, which was burnt in 1829, together with the organ and medieval choir stalls, by the deliberate action of a lunatic and was rebuilt. Next the three towers were constructed—the central tower c.1400-1427, the south-west 1433-1447 and the north-west

1470-1474. The central tower is vaulted 180 feet above the ground. In 1472 the minster was regarded as completed, and a service of consecration was held. But one more substantial piece of work remained to be done—the building of the screen, richly decorated with figures of English kings, between 1475 and 1505.

The west front of the minster, completed up to the roof of the nave in 1338 and very richly ornamented, is the finest in the country; and the great west window, with its free-flowing tracery, is unsurpassed in the Decorated style. The east front is also notable.

But the chief pride of York Minster is its glass. It seems, indeed, to have been deliberately built as a glass-house, and most of the original glass has survived from the Middle Ages. Dean Purey-Cust calculated that in the 103 windows there was over half an acre of medieval glass—perhaps more than in any church in Christendom. The art of English glass-making can here be followed over a period of seven centuries. Mrs. Van Rensselaer has written: "More delicate, clear and exquisite fields of simple colour can never have been wrought than those which fill the Five Sisters with their sea-green purity. The west window, glazed [nearly] a century later (1338), is a gorgeous mosaic of ruddy and purple hues, shining in the intricate stone pattern which shows black against the light, like a million amethysts and rubies set in ebony lace. The multicoloured eastern window, and its two mates in the minor transept [of the 15th cent.], seem vast and fair enough for the walls of the New Jerusalem. And wherever we look in the lightly constructed eastern limb, it seems, not as though walls had been pierced for windows, but as though radiant translucent screens—fragile, yet vital and well equal to their task—had been used to build a church, and merely bound together with a network of solid stone." Yet today the glass is even lovelier and more full of meaning than when she wrote these words; for the opportunity presented by its removal in the second world war was seized by the Dean, the Very Reverend E. Milner-White, to have the pieces cleaned and put back in their correct order. In the course of centuries many pieces had strayed far from their original home, but thanks to the expert care of the present Dean and his staff we can today see the glass almost as the men of the Middle Ages looked on it in its pristine beauty; indeed, although there have been some irremediable losses, age has in some ways enhanced the quality of that which remains.

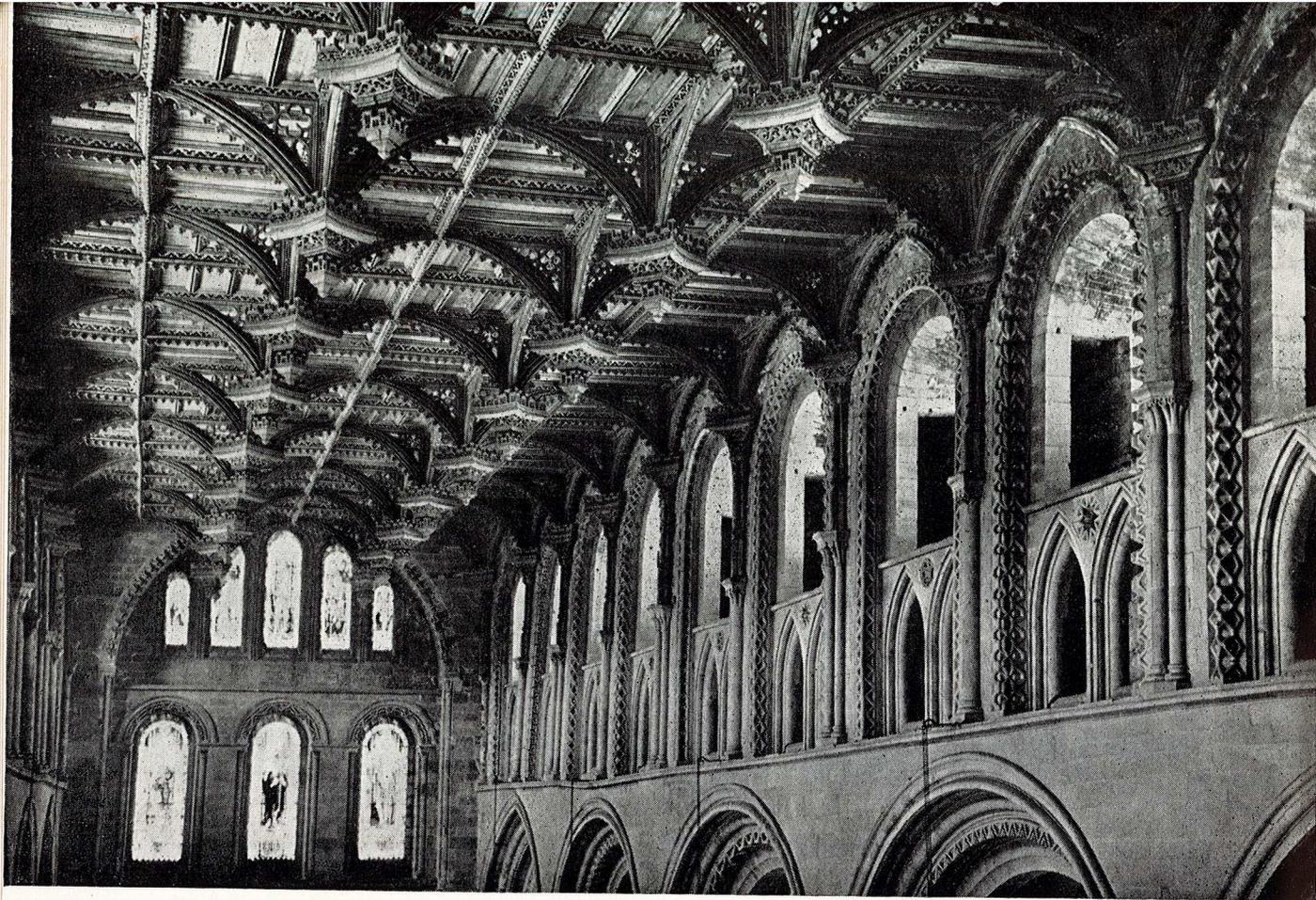


Photo: Vivian of Hereford

The nave, facing north-west and showing the Romanesque arcade, triforium and clerestory (late 12th cent.) and the beautiful wooden roof (c. 1500).

St. David's Cathedral

ST. DAVID'S, unlike Canterbury and York, had no need of re-conversion by missionaries from across the seas. The Church in Wales has had a continuous history from the days when Christianity was first planted in these islands in the Roman Empire. At some time in the 6th cent. the great Bishop David, perhaps fearing an Anglo-Saxon invasion and anxious to maintain

close communication with the sister Church in Ireland, removed his seat to the marshy valley of the Alan a few miles from the sea in what is now Pembrokeshire. The site was then known as Menevia, but henceforth was called St. David's. It was independent alike of Canterbury and of Rome until 1115. It was in the province of Canterbury from 1115 to the disestablishment of

the Welsh Church in 1920. Its remoteness has so far prevented it from being fixed as the metropolitan see of the Church in Wales, but in the Middle Ages it was on the highway to Ireland, and the shrine of St. David—he was canonized in 1131—drew multitudes of pilgrims, including kings and queens. Two pilgrimages to St. David's were esteemed equal to one to Rome, and according to a less well-authenticated tradition three pilgrimages to St. David's equalled one to Jerusalem.

The cathedral is dedicated to St. Andrew and St. David. Nothing remains of the earlier buildings, and the present cathedral, the fourth on the site, built for secular canons, was begun under Bishop Peter de Leia (1176-98). At this date the Gothic style was beginning to prevail in England, but St. David's adhered on the whole to the Romanesque tradition, though with Transitional features, especially some beautiful capitals that testify to the late date of the work. Though so conservative in general, St. David's must have been one of the earliest centres for the "pollarded willow" type of capital, which is the favourite capital employed. The whole of the nave survives from this church, except that the south porch and the exterior of the south aisle were built between 1328 and 1347 and the exterior of the west front is due to Sir George Gilbert Scott; parts of the presbytery, the western walls of the transept and the western piers and arch of the tower also belonged to de Leia's church.

In 1220 the central tower fell. The presbytery and the transepts were then rebuilt, but as much of the older work as possible was kept. The old tower was taken down, except for the western arch, and rebuilt, but only for one stage above the roof; the three new arches are all pointed. In the presbytery also the new pointed arches of the pier-arcade and clerestory can easily be distinguished. About the same time a shrine to St. David was built at the north side of the presbytery; the pedestal remains, and seems to have been designed so that three sick persons at a

time could lie in holes within it. The Lady Chapel was completed by Bishop Martin (died 1328) and used as his chantry.

Bishop Gower (1328-47) was a great building prelate and remodelled much of the church. He it was who transformed the south aisle of the nave into the contemporary style, and raised the tower by one stage; it was probably he who set up the oak screen between the presbytery and the choir, the only one in Great Britain; and he gave the cathedral its stone choir screen in three compartments, one of the finest achievements of medieval art. In the fifteenth century most of the timber work was done—including fine stalls (1460-80) and the lovely nave roof (1472-1509). Bishop Vaughan (1509-23) was the last of the great building prelates. Among many other works he raised the tower by yet another stage to its present height and roofed the last of the eastern chapels, hitherto an open courtyard.

In the centre of the presbytery is a table tomb containing the bodily remains of Edmund Tudor, father of Henry VII. He had died in 1456 and had been buried in the priory of the Grey Friars at Carmarthen; when this was dissolved his remains and the tomb were removed to St. David's. For this reason Henry VIII is said to have refused Bishop Barlow's petition to move the see to Carmarthen.

The cathedral is unusual in that, lying in a hollow, it is not seen until the visitor is close to it. Its external appearance is plain, in keeping with the bleak landscape. But the purple colour of the local Cambrian stones is striking, and prepares the visitor for the riches that he sees inside. The cathedral, which began so simply under de Leia, has grown to be one of the most complex and fascinating in the whole country.

Tewkesbury Abbey

TEWKESBURY, at the junction of the Avon and the Severn, has been an important site since Roman times. A Benedictine abbey was founded there in 715 by Odo and Dodo, Dukes of Mercia. It was re-founded and enlarged in 1087 by Robert Fitz-Hamon, later Earl of Gloucester, to whom King Rufus gave the manor. At the dissolution the abbey had a revenue of nearly £1,800 a year, an immense sum in those days. Of the monastic buildings only the gateway, the abbey house and a few fragments remain, but the abbey church, which survived to meet the spiritual needs of the parish, is breathtaking in its splendour and beauty.

The church was consecrated in 1123 and is cruciform in plan. The most glorious external features are the massive and richly arcaded central tower, 132 feet high, and the great west arch, the highest Norman arch in existence (65 feet); originally the arch was filled with Norman windows, but at a later date an ill-fitting Perpendicular window was inserted.

The basic impression left by the interior is still that of the Norman church, but the building went through a substantial restoration in the 14th cent. in the Decorated style. The windows in the nave were adapted to the new style, and a stone-groined vault was substituted for the wooden ceiling. The transepts were similarly treated. The Norman columns were left in the choir, but were heightened without a removal of the capitals and an elegant Decorated superstructure raised above them. The clerestory windows have their original glass, dating from 1320. The ambulatory was rebuilt farther out, and an exquisite series of chapels was built projecting from it. The spaces between the columns at the east end of the choir are occupied by chantries of singular beauty. One

Photo: Vivian of Hereford

Exterior from the north-east, showing the massive central tower (early 12th cent.), 132 feet high.

contains the tomb of Fitz-Hamon, the founder; another the remains of Sir Hugh de Spencer, Edward II's favourite, and his wife; and the loveliest of them all commemorates Isabel la Despencer, who married Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, and died in 1349. The last of the abbots, Wakeman, built a noble tomb for himself, but as he became the first Bishop of Gloucester at the dissolution and was buried there or elsewhere, it remains a cenotaph. The monuments in the church will bear comparison with any sculptures in Europe.

The 17th cent. organ was removed by Oliver Cromwell from Magdalen College Chapel to Hampton Court Palace and was bought by Tewkesbury in 1735.

The battle of Tewkesbury in 1471 was the last decisive fight between the houses of York and Lancaster. After the battle the Duke of Somerset, Lord St. John, six knights and seven squires sought asylum in the church. Edward IV attempted to pursue them but was opposed by a priest with the Host and was not admitted until he had promised to spare the lives of the fugitives. For two days he kept his promise, but on the third expediency prevailed over his plighted word and they were beheaded.

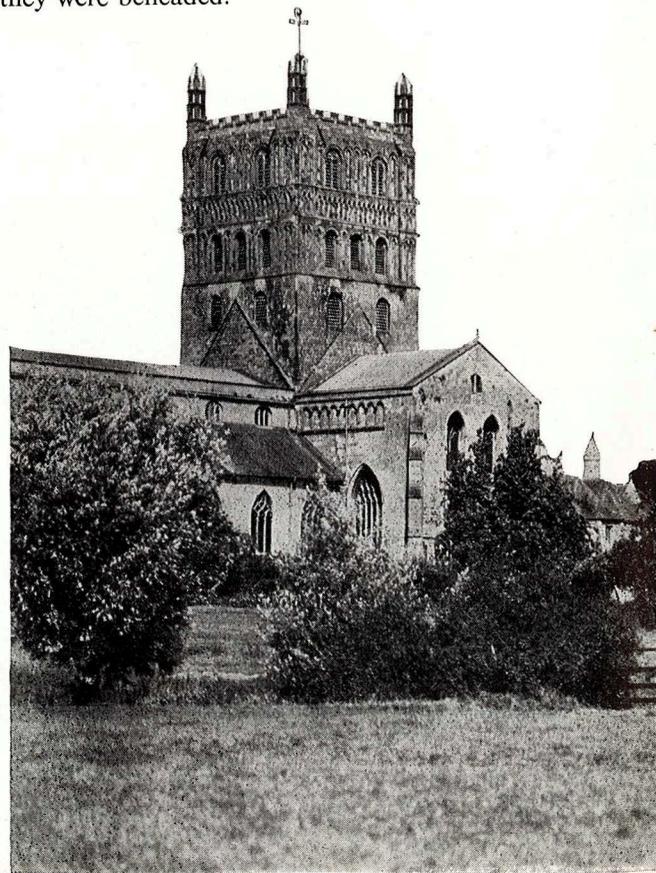


Photo: A. F. Kersting

Hexham Abbey

ST. WILFRID, apostle of the north, caused no fewer than three churches to be built at Hexham, near the confluence of the North and South Tyne. They were dedicated to St. Andrew, St. Peter and St. Mary. St. Andrew's, said to resemble the church of the same dedication on the Coelian Hill in Rome, which St. Wilfrid greatly admired, was chosen as the episcopal seat when Hexham was made a bishopric in 681. It remained a bishopric until 820 or thereabouts, when it was absorbed in the see of Lindisfarne. The Danes reduced the church to ruins in 875.

In 1113 Thomas, Archbishop of York, founded at Hexham a priory of Augustinian Canons. They repaired the great nave of the former cathedral church, and in 1153 began to add a Norman choir. St. Aelred, who was born at Hexham—where his father, grandfather and great-grandfather had all been hereditary married priests—records the transfer of the relics of the Hexham saints to a more worthy place in 1154. But the extensions were found to be inadequate, and about 1180 the canons began an entirely new choir on a bigger scale and in the Early English style, which was

The choir as rebuilt early in the 13th cent., a superb example of Early English work, showing the seat of sanctuary known as the Frith Stool.

then nearing perfection. The choir was finished early in the 13th cent. and is one of the most superb examples of Early English work in the country. The central tower, the south transept and the eastern range of the monks' buildings were next completed. A nave was begun in the 15th cent. but had not been completed when the monastery was dissolved in 1536. The work was resumed nearly three centuries later, in 1907. The nave then built is on the site of the ancient foundations. The site of the nave until 1907 was part of the burial ground, and underneath it the pre-conquest crypt was revealed in 1726. It is built entirely of stones from the abandoned Roman town of Corstopitum.

The choir arcade is in six bays and is surmounted by a stately triforium and clerestory. Five oak stalls probably date originally from the time of Prior Woodhorn (1409-27) but have lost some of their ancient features. The incomplete chantry of Sir Robert Ogle, who died in 1410, has unfortunately lost much of its original woodwork. The Leschman Chantry (1480-91) has some beautiful carved woodwork. The late 15th cent. wooden pulpit contains contemporary paintings of our Lord, the Blessed Virgin and the Apostles.

Four panels showing scenes from the "Dance of Death" are placed on the screen immediately behind the pulpit. Immediately above the panels are seven 15th cent. paintings of bishops of Hexham. Other medieval paintings depict scenes from the life of our Lord and Apostles, archbishops and bishops. The rood screen was built when Thomas Smithson was Prior (1491-1524). It is claimed to be the most complete wooden rood screen remaining in any monastic church in England. The screen retains its original delicate paintings on both sides.

The south transept, which is marked by its noble proportions and simplicity of ornament, retains the spacious night stair which gave access to the canons' dormitory. The north transept is later in date and its lower stages are the most richly decorated parts of the church.

There is preserved in the choir an ancient stone seat of sanctuary known as the Frith Stool. It was already known in St. Wilfrid's day. The right of sanctuary at Hexham was curtailed by Henry VIII but not abolished until the reign of James II. In the recess formed by the eastern processional doorway, now built up, stands an even older relic—the huge funeral monument of a Roman standard-bearer. It was doubtless brought from Corstopitum.

Cartmel

Priory

Lancs.

A PRIORY of Canons Regular of St. Augustine was founded at Cartmel in North Lancashire, a few miles from Morecambe Bay, in 1188 by William Marshall, Baron of Cartmel and later the 2nd Earl of Pembroke. In endowing it with lands in the district and also in Ireland, he decreed that it should be free from subjection to any other religious house, and also that an altar should be provided with a priest to minister to the people of the neighbourhood.

It is owing to this last provision that the priory and parish church of St. Mary still ministers to the people of Cartmel and attracts thousands of visitors annually from the seaside resort of Grange-over-Sands. For at the dissolution of the monasteries in 1537 those parts in which the people could establish a parochial right were spared. Normally this was the nave, but at Cartmel the south aisle of the choir, now known as the Town Choir, was allowed.

The remainder of the church was stripped of its roof for the sake of its valuable lead (we have seen the temptation in our own day), and might have sunk into ruin. But in 1618-20 George Preston, of Holker Hall, had the church re-roofed mainly at his own expense. He also gave a superb oak screen and canopies to surmount the fine choir stalls and misericords carved about 1450; the stalls and misericords are little the worse for their exposure throughout 80 years to every sort of weather and falling débris; among the figures depicted on the misericords are a mermaid with two tails and an ape doctor. The screen is Flemish work and richly wrought; each of its 28 pillars is decorated with emblems of the Passion.

The church as thus restored shows the work of three architectural periods. The chancel, transepts

and south doorway survive from the foundation of the priory in 1188, and are in the Transitional style, except for later windows. The south aisle or Town Choir was lengthened and widened about 1340, and its windows are a good example of the Decorated style. About 1400 the present large and magnificent Perpendicular window was substituted for six lancet windows at the east end. A little later a square tower was superimposed on the existing square tower but at a different angle. This is an exceptional treatment, but gives a pleasing effect. The nave was then rebuilt in the Perpendicular style. It has been suggested that the alteration of the tower must have depleted the funds as the nave has only three bays and every shape and size of stone were used in its building.

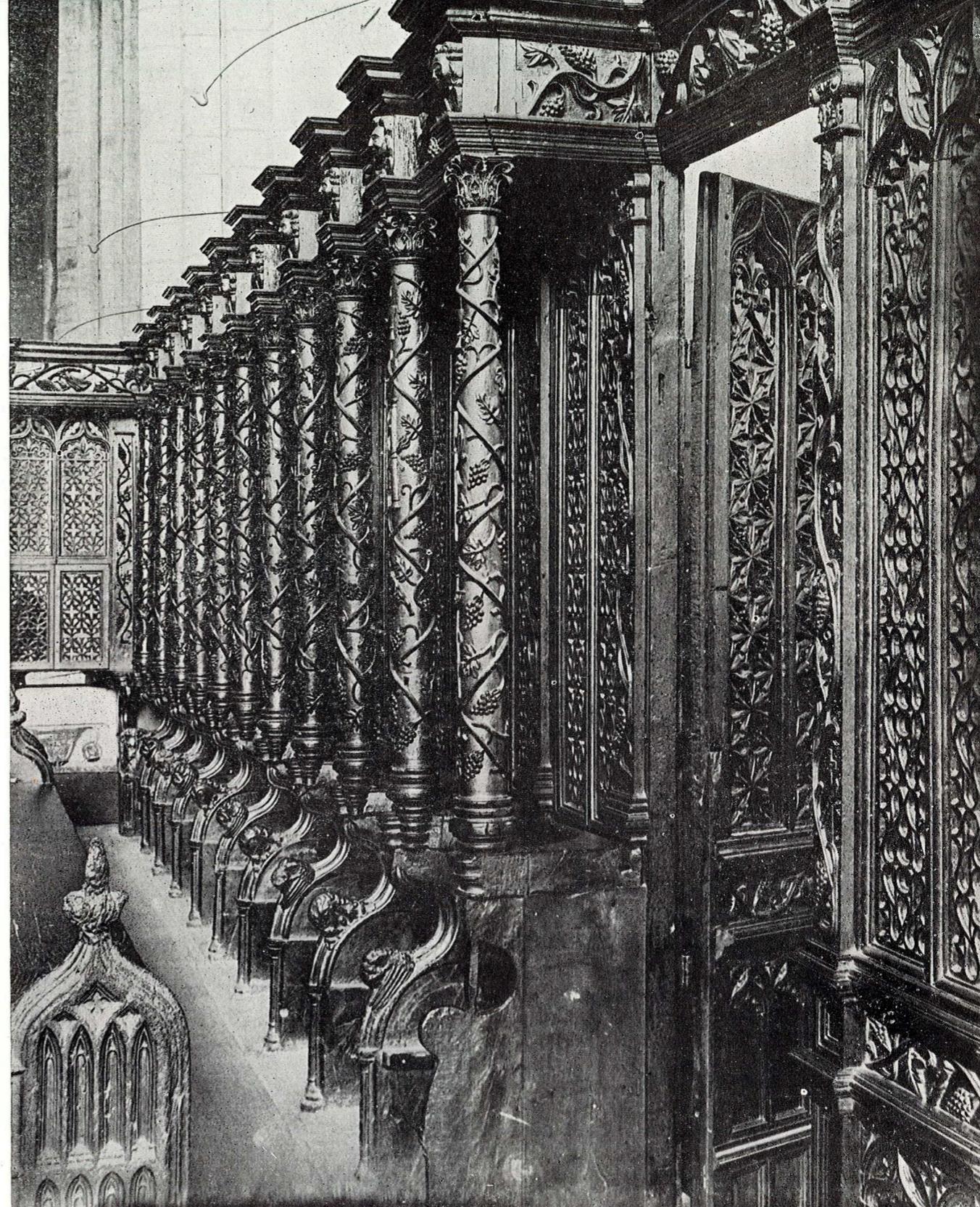
In the next 200 years the church was again neglected, but in 1859 the 7th Duke of Devonshire had the chancel re-roofed, and in 1870 the parishioners, stirred by his example, performed a similar service for the nave.

The Harrington canopied tomb, dating from about 1380, was moved after the dissolution into the thickness of the wall between the sanctuary and the Town Choir. It was thereby preserved, but at the expense of the sedilia and piscina.

Only a few fragments of the original glass now remain in the great east window. They are of Flemish origin, and the blue colour is specially noteworthy. There is some still earlier glass (? 14th cent.) in the Town Choir.

The vestry has many treasures, including one of the first umbrellas ever made, and a copy of the first edition of the 'Faerie Queene' stolen in 1929 and taken to New York but eventually returned to the church because it proved impossible to sell. The parish registers are complete from 1559 except for two breaks amounting to thirteen years. The vestry also contains an ancient library of books, about 300 in all, dated between 1500 and 1660, presented to the church by Thomas Preston at the end of the 17th cent.

MOORE COLLEGE
LIBRARY



Stalls and misericords (c. 1450), surmounted by George Preston's canopies (1620), and the same donor's richly carved oak screen (1620).

Photo: National Buildings Record, F. H. Crossley, F.S.A.

Remains of the Early English chapter house, intact until 1799.

Photo: Vivian of Hereford



Margam Abbey

THE Abbey Steel Works near Port Talbot in Glamorgan is the most modern steel plant in the country and may appear to have an incongruous name. It is derived from Margam Abbey, a Cistercian house founded in the neighbourhood in 1147 by Robert, Earl of Gloucester, who also re-founded Tewkesbury. The Cistercians, called the Grey Monks or White Monks from the colour of their habit, built many lovely houses in beautiful settings, and although Margam cannot rival Tintern, Fountains or Riveaulx, it has one advantage over them in that Divine Service is again offered to God in a parish church built on the site of the abbey nave and incorporating some of its features.

At the Dissolution the abbey was bought by the Mansel family, and in 1750 it passed to the Talbots. The church was put substantially in its present form by Thomas Mansel Talbot in 1807-8. The west doorway, with three banded shafts on each side, and the three lights in the west wall are part of the Norman building. The twin campaniles in the Italian style were placed on extensions of the original buttresses; the plain square bell-turret that formerly stood over the gable was no doubt

more congruous. The arcading separating the nave from the north and south aisles rests on the original Norman piers, five in number. The aisles and the east end are part of the restoration. The glass in the Norman windows at the west end is by William Morris.

Margam was probably a religious site long before the abbey was founded. The remarkable collection of Ogam and other carved stones (including many wheel crosses) found in the neighbourhood are now housed in a small museum near the church.

East of the present church the base of one of the piers of the crossing may be seen in the ground on its original site and well shows in section the elaborate moulding. The only substantial remains of the monastic buildings outside the church are those of the chapter house and its vestibule. The chapter house, which resembles that at the approximately contemporaneous Dore Abbey, had twelve exterior sides (though circular within). The twelve compartments of the vaulting were supported by a central pillar. The history of this chapter house may serve as a warning to all who have the care of ancient buildings. A drawing of the building as it existed in 1780 shows it as an exquisite example of Early English work. But the lead roof had been removed a little before that date, signs of deterioration were pointed out by several writers with no effect, and in 1799 the vaulting collapsed.

Earls Barton Northamptonshire

THE parish church of All Saints at Earls Barton has the most elaborate of all the surviving Saxon towers. It was probably built about 970, though some authorities place it as early as 935. It rises in four stages, all of Saxon workmanship, with an embattled parapet added in the 15th cent. It is unusually high and massive for a 10th cent. tower. Up each angle a broad and flat quoin or angle stone alternates with a narrow and tall stone. This is known as "long and short" work, and is a peculiarity of the Anglo-Saxon style. The mainly vertical ribs or pilasters are another distinguishing feature of the period. This has been called "carpentry in stone." The suggestion has been made that the

tower is a copy of an earlier wooden tower that stood on the spot. The five-light belfry windows in the topmost stage are specially worthy of note.

The present tower was probably built as a place of refuge from the Danes. It shows the influence of the Carolingian Rhineland. At some date a Saxon church was added, but the only surviving trace of this church is the doorway at the base of the western side of the tower. This church was probably built by Siward, Earl of Northumbria, whose son Waltheof was made Earl of Northampton and Huntingdon. Barton is Earls Barton because of its connexion with this family.

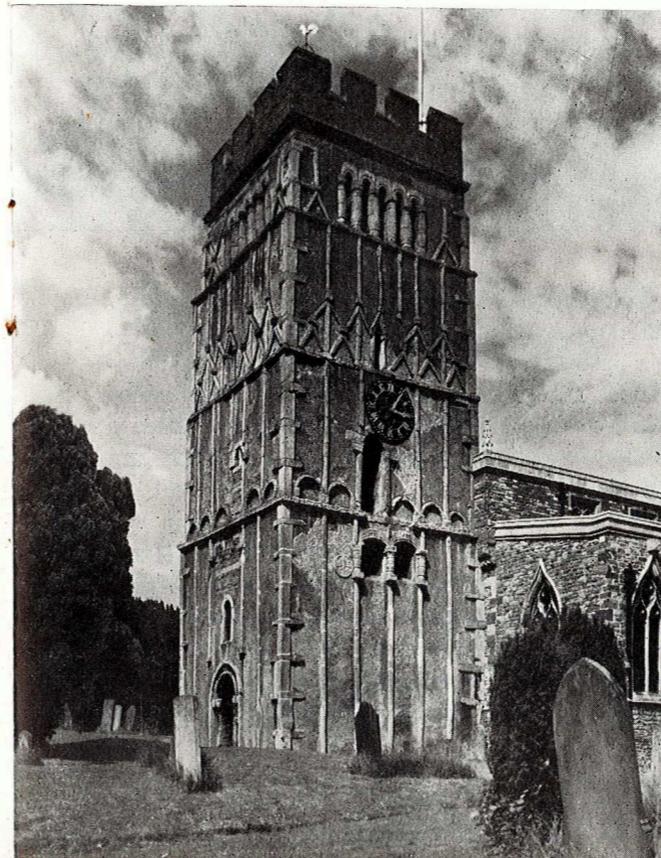
The Normans built a long aisleless church about 1100. Of this church there survives some fine work in the chancel and the south door, which was moved later to its present position when the south aisle was built. The arcading with chevron ornamentation on each side of the chancel is an outstanding example of Norman work. The sedilia are on descending levels and are a very early example of such sanctuary seats. The south doorway is notable for its size and richness.

The greater part of the chancel was rebuilt in the Early English style. The east window, consisting of three lofty lancets, is a good example of that style. There are low side windows from this period on each side of the chancel; they may have served originally for lepers to see the services and to be confessed and communicated, and the "mass dial" on the outside of the south aisle may have a connexion with them. The south aisle was probably built between 1230 and 1240 and the north aisle about twenty years later.

In the 14th cent. two new windows were added to the chancel on the south side and the north aisle was rebuilt in the Decorated style. A few Perpendicular windows were added in the 15th cent. and the nave clerestory was built in this period. Owing to the effect of thrusts the interior arches, both of the chancel and of the tower, were rebuilt in the 15th cent., and the fine wooden chancel screen also dates from this period.

The Saxon tower (c. 970 with an embattled parapet added in the 15th cent.), with the pilaster strips and 'long-and-short' work at the angles characteristic of the pre-Conquest style.

Photo: Edwin Smith



Long Melford

THE magnificent Perpendicular church of the Holy Trinity at Long Melford, on the River Stour, is one of the largest and finest of the English parish churches. It is not a "wool" church, but was built between 1420 and 1496 by the Clopton family, local gentry, helped by some wealthy clothiers. The first church on the site was built by Earl Alfric just before the Conquest, and it may have been succeeded by a second before the present building was begun.

The church is built of flint and stone in the manner known as "flush" work. It consists of a western tower, a nave with north and south aisles terminating in chapels, a south porch, a chancel and sanctuary with a priest's vestry (formerly a chantry priest's chamber) beyond, and a Lady Chapel which must have been almost entirely detached when it was built about 1496, though now linked with the main church by the choir vestry and priest's vestry. The length of the church, excluding the Lady Chapel, is 180 feet. Round the battlements inscriptions invite the visitor to pray for the souls of the Cloptons and other benefactors. The original tower was struck by lightning in 1710, and the present tower, designed by Bodley, was finished in 1903.

The nave is in seven bays separated from the aisles by boldly conceived arcades. The lofty, open timber roof runs in an unbroken line from the west end of the nave to the extreme east of the sanctuary. The aisles have open timber lean-to roofs. The Royal Arms, carved in the reign of George II, are now over the south-west door. The north aisle terminates in the Clopton chapel and chantry. Round the cornice of the chantry there runs a series of elaborately carved scrolls containing verse inscriptions in Gothic characters. The verses are by John Lydgate (?1370-?1451), the poet who was admitted to Bury St. Edmunds Abbey at the age of 15. Between the chantry and the sanctuary is the fine canopied tomb of John Clopton, a Lancastrian leader in the Wars of the Roses. There are good Clopton brasses, and a recessed tomb outside bears an effigy of Sir William Clopton (d. 1446).



Photo: A. F. Kersting

The Martyns are second in importance only to the Cloptons in their connexion with the church. The Jesus Chapel, in which the south aisle terminates, is also known as the Martyn Chapel. The altar tomb there is believed to be that of Laurence Martyn (d. 1460) and his two wives. There are fine brasses.

In the sanctuary is the canopied tomb of Sir William Cordell (d. 1580), Speaker of the House of Commons under Mary and Master of the Rolls in the reign of Elizabeth I. The "hospital" that he founded in 1573 for twelve poor men and two women still exists on the south side of the church.

The Lady Chapel is the most interesting part of the whole fabric. It was completed about 1496, some years after the rest of the building, but before the present choir vestry. Its half-detached character is perhaps due to the fact that Long Melford is on the Pilgrims' Way from London to Bury and Walsingham, and the earlier church had a Chapel of Our Lady where the pilgrims made their devotions. It consists of an inner chapel, surrounded by wide aisles forming an ambulatory. This has suggested that the chapel may have contained a relic. There are fourteen windows. From 1669-1870 the chapel was used as a school—the multiplication table can still be

General view from the south-east of the church as built in the second half of the 15th cent., with the unique Lady Chapel (c. 1496) at the eastern extremity.

seen on the east wall—but in 1881 it was restored to its former uses and daily services instituted.

The iconoclasts of the 16th and 17th cents. fortunately left much glass undamaged in the clerestory windows. This was collected about 100 years ago and placed in the east and west windows. A specially interesting piece of 15th cent. glass is the "lily crucifix" high up in the centre of the window over the north-west door. This manner of treating the subject is very rare.



Photo: Walter Scott

Burford Oxfordshire

THE church of St. John Baptist, Burford, nestling in the valley of the Windrush as it weaves its way through the Cotswolds, has grown with the centuries. Though there was no doubt an earlier church on the same site, the oldest parts of the present building—the west door, parts of the west wall of the nave and the lowest part of the tower—date from about 1150. It appears to have been a simple church consisting of a nave without aisles, a central tower and a short chancel. In the 13th cent. the chancel was lengthened to its present position, the north and south walls of the tower were pierced with arches and transeptal chapels built, a south aisle was added to the nave, and near the south-west corner a chapel separate from the church was built. At some time in the 14th cent. the chapel of St.

The nave, facing east, showing how the walls were raised and surmounted by a flat roof in the 14th or 15th cent.

Thomas of Canterbury was erected to the west of the south transept with a crypt beneath as a charnel house. At the end of the 14th cent. a big work of reconstruction was begun and probably went on through most of the 15th cent. A sacristy was built to the north of the sanctuary, the walls of the nave were raised and surmounted by a flat roof, a north aisle and a south porch were added, the tower was raised and a spire added, and a chapel was built to the south of the chancel. But as the Norman tower showed signs of collapsing under the extra weight, the north and south arches were filled in except that doorways were left; the north transept was shortened and strengthened by a buttress outside and thrusts on the wall within. Lastly, the separate chapel near the south-west corner was extended eastwards so as to join the porch and was opened to the south aisle by an arcade. (The fact that it was originally a separate chapel in the churchyard explains why it is oriented differently from the nave.) Burford Church is thus a thing of bits and pieces added as inclination led or necessity compelled. What was originally a simple structure has become very complex. In its illogical growth it is typically English, and more endearing than many a building erected within a generation to a single plan.

The font dates from the 14th cent. and on the lead is inscribed "Anthony Sedley, Prisner, 1649." He is believed to have been one of 340 mutineers—"Levellers"—imprisoned in the church by Cromwell for three days and nights. An entry in the registers runs: "Three soldiers shot to death in Burford Churchyard, buried May 17." Later Cromwell exhorted the mutineers from the pulpit, which is partly of 15th cent. work.

St. Catherine's Chapel, to the north of the chancel, contains the splendid canopied tomb of Sir Lawrence Tanfield and his Lady, 1628. Fragments of ancient glass were collected in 1826 from various parts of the church and fitted into the headlights of the east and west windows. In the tower is a ring of eight bells, the tenor, inscribed 'Sancta Maria,' dating from about 1350. The registers date from 1612. The plate includes a large silver paten dating from 1680.

The nave, showing the remarkable wooden font cover (c. 1485) and the 15th cent. roof.

Ewelme Oxfordshire

THE village of Ewelme is well-known to students of history. They are aware that Mr. Gladstone fell into great trouble in 1872 through presenting to the living a Cambridge man who, in order to comply with the requirement that the rector must be a member of the University of Oxford, was made an Oxford M.A. by incorporation. This was denounced by Mr. Gladstone's enemies as sharp practice and is said to have contributed to his defeat in 1874. Lying as it does between the Wycombe and Henley roads, the village is on a by-way rather than the highway, but those who make the journey are rewarded by a church of great beauty and historical interest.

The present church, dedicated to St. Mary, was built in the Perpendicular style shortly after the marriage of William De La Pole, 1st Duke of Suffolk, to Alice Chaucer, daughter of Thomas Chaucer, a kinsman of the poet, in 1432. The Duke, who had incurred unpopularity for his part in the French wars, was cruelly murdered in 1450; but the church, almshouse and school that he founded at Ewelme must be set against the unfavourable popular judgment of him as preserved by Shakespeare. The church stands on the site of a much older building dedicated to All Saints, of which some portions remain. The lower part of the tower was built in the early 14th cent. or even earlier. There are several indications that the church originally had only a north aisle, and that the south aisle and St. John's Chapel, in which it terminates to the east, were added later. But no long interval can have elapsed between the start of the building and its completion. Unlike so many of our churches, which have grown through the centuries, Ewelme is an artistic unity. The south aisle and chapel were probably added for the use of the almsmen when the beautiful almshouse adjoining the church was built in 1437. At a slightly later date the school—still a primary school—was built. The almshouse and school are built in brick in a style reminiscent of the Low Countries; the use of brickwork is unknown elsewhere in this part of the country at that date. The

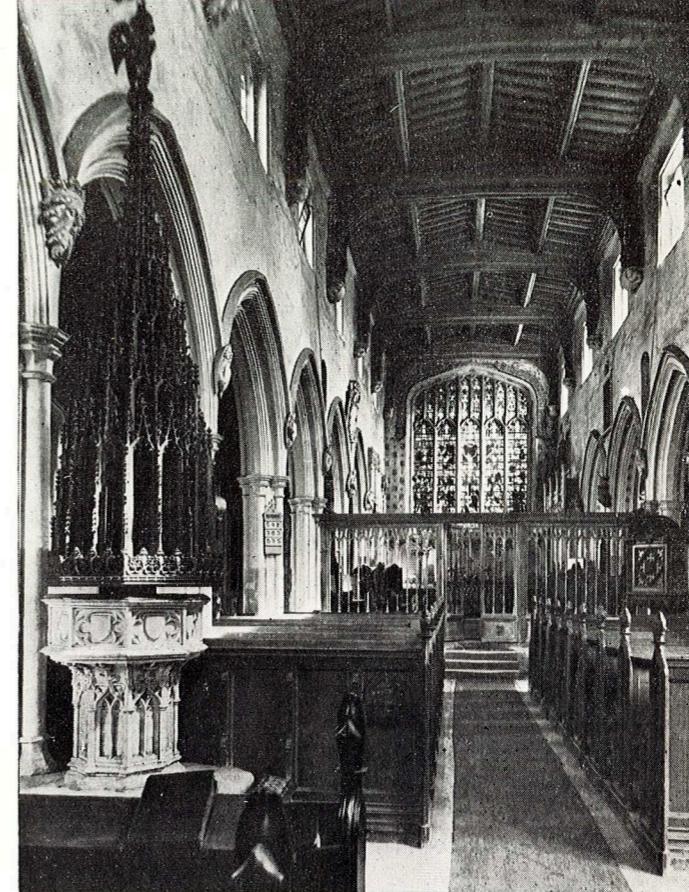


Photo: National Buildings Record, F. H. Crossley, F.S.A.

school stands below the almshouse and the almshouse below the church on the slope of the hill, a picturesque combination and all 15th cent. in date.

The tall, wooden font cover, octagonal in shape and richly carved, is considered by some authorities to be the finest of its type; it was probably placed in the church between 1485 and 1491. The flat, wooden roof of the St. John's Chapel is of singular beauty. At each intersection of the moulded ribs there are winged angels bearing scrolls or shields.

The ledger tomb of Thomas Chaucer (d. 1434) and his wife Matilda (d. 1436) in the chapel is a notable piece of craftsmanship and heraldic art, but is outshone by the canopied tomb of Alice, Duchess of Suffolk, lying between the chapel and the chancel. It was probably built soon after her death in 1475, but in another position, and though it resembles the tombs of the Dukes of Burgundy at Dijon, is in all likelihood the work of the Nottingham school of sculpture. Prior and Gardiner have said that it is "as fine in taste and as masterly in execution as any of our alabaster work."

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The south arcade of the nave as reconstructed c. 1450 and the south aisle, looking south-west.

Saffron Walden Essex

EVEN without its stately tower and spire, the church of St. Mary the Virgin would dominate the market town of Saffron Walden, for it is built on a ridge overlooking the town, and William Stukely observed in 1724 that its foundations are above the tops of many of the houses.

The King of the East Saxons was converted to Christianity by St. Cedd in 653, and it may be assumed that there have been churches at Saffron Walden since 700. It is known that the Norman church was rebuilt in the Decorated style between 1250 and 1258. From this church there survive the arcades of the chancel and the arches opening into the chapels from the aisles; a vaulted crypt once used as a chancel house; and some interesting carvings under the three eastern windows of the north aisle.

Stow records that the church was "sore shaken" by a storm in 1445, and about 1450 a general rebuilding was begun in the Perpendicular style then popular. At that time Saffron Walden was a centre of the wool trade, and could afford the best of everything. The chancel was first given a clerestory and a much higher roof, and under its east end there was constructed a burial vault in which later Lord Audley and ten Earls of Suffolk were buried. The tower at the west end was finished about 1470. The nave was next rebuilt with north and south arcades of seven bays which have elaborate carvings in the spandrels. This is one of the rare cases where the name of the medieval builder is known—John Wastell, who also built the nave of Great St. Mary's, Cambridge, and finished King's College Chapel, Cambridge. Among the muniments of King's College there is a reference to a contract between Simon Clark, master mason, and John Wastell,



Photo: Edwin Smith

his assistant, on the one hand and the churchwardens of Walden on the other. The north and south aisles were completed by the end of the 15th cent. and each was made as broad as the nave. This had the effect of completely altering the form of the Decorated church, which had been cruciform in plan; the old transepts were absorbed into the new aisles. The south porch with its upper chamber was also completed before the end of the century. The clerestory of the nave was built about 1510, and by this time the interior presented substantially the same appearance that it does today. The loftiness of the roof is enhanced by the carrying up of the shafts of the nave piers, and the walls are almost a sheet of glass—Perpendicular work at its finest. The two side chapels were virtually rebuilt in 1526, and further alterations were made in the south chapel in 1544. It is hard to believe that the spire, which so perfectly crowns the whole, was not built until 1832—by Thomas Rickman.

The arms of Charles II over the tower arch, set up in 1660, are a striking embellishment. Nine ancient brasses are now set on the north wall.

Patrington Yorkshire

THE village of Patrington is named after its glorious church, which is dedicated to St. Patrick and is known as "the Queen of Holderness." In its elegant proportions, the grace of its composition and the elaboration of its detail Patrington must be reckoned as near to perfection as any parish church in the country.

Most of the church was built between 1310 and 1349 in the Decorated style. The ground plan is identical with that of York Minster, except that

there are no western towers. The church consists of a nave with north and south aisles, transepts with east and west aisles (a most unusual luxury in a parish church), a chancel and a central tower surmounted by a tall, graceful spire. Robert of Patrington was master-mason at the minster from 1368–70 and perhaps he had gained his experience in the church of his native village. The great east window is in the Perpendicular style—possibly because the building of the chancel was interrupted by the Black Death and not resumed until a new style had become fashionable. The work was completed in 1410. The spire, which rises 189 feet above the ground, was struck by lightning, and was taken down and rebuilt out of the old stones in 1886–87. The corona surrounding the base of the spire is a particularly graceful element.

The nave and transepts are separated from their aisles by pleasing clustered columns with richly foliated capitals. The fine bases of the four massive piers supporting the central tower are outstanding. The Lady Chapel projects from the south transept; the central boss in the groining of this chapel is formed into a pendant, open on the eastern side, and probably contained a relic. The chancel is separated from the nave by a fine screen in the Decorated style largely made of the old wood. On the south side of the chancel are the original beautiful sedilia and piscina. The Easter Sepulchre on the north side of the chancel is in four compartments, one above the other, and is one of the best preserved in the country. In the lowest compartment are Roman soldiers asleep, dressed in medieval armour; in the second a cross and the Host reposed from Good Friday to Easter, when they were taken to the high altar; in the third our Lord rises from a coffin with an angel on each side censing; the fourth is bare. The font is made out of a single block of granite. The doorway in the north transept has some notable corbels in the form of a lion and an eagle and a striking figure of our Lord.

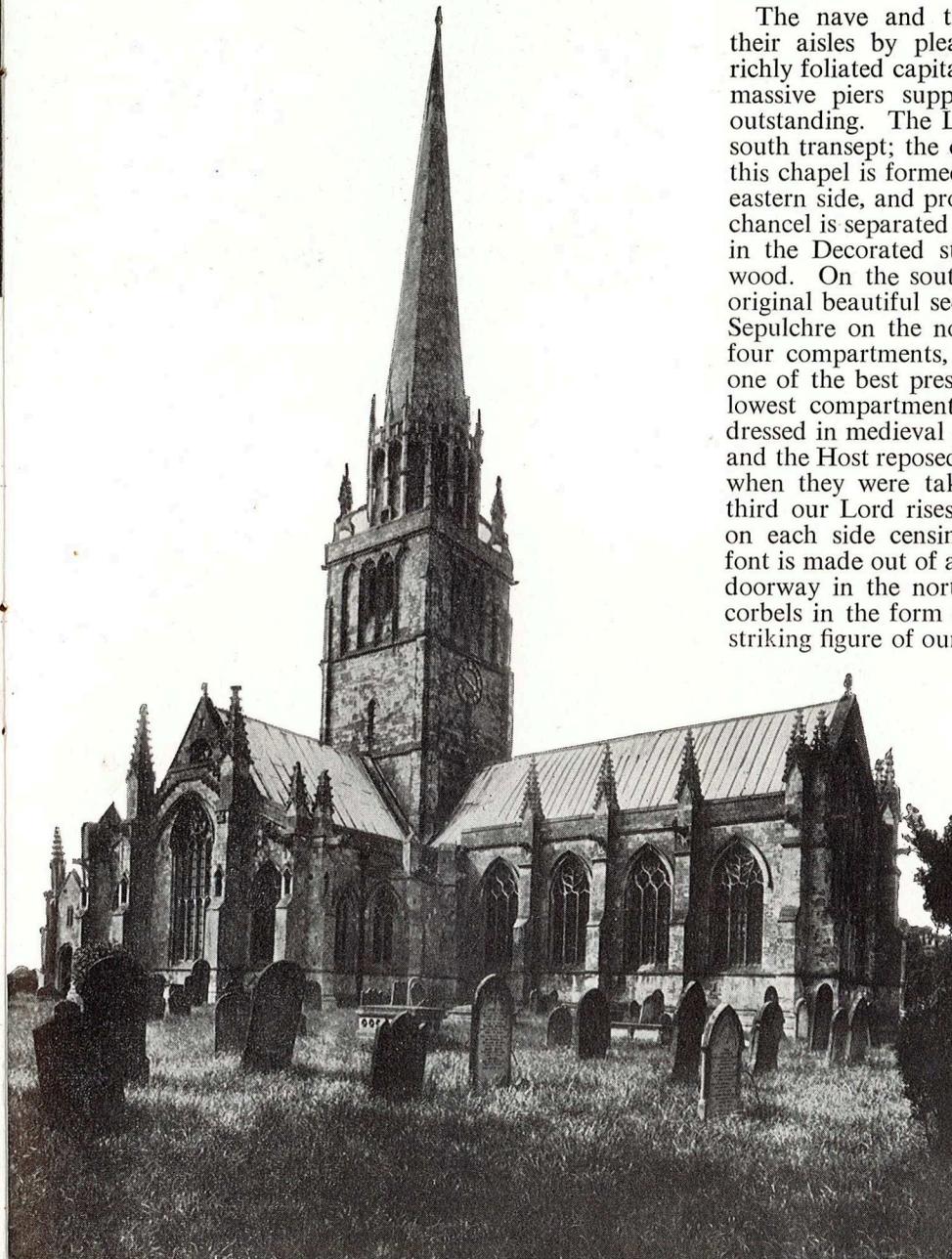


Photo: Walter Scott

General view from the south-east of the church as built c. 1330, showing the graceful spire 189 feet high.



Photo: A. F. Kersting

Compton

Surrey

The chancel arch (c. 1080) and the sanctuary arch, showing also the upper chapel in the sanctuary with its wooden balustrade (c. 1180) and in the east window a fragment of ancient glass.

IF a stranger to England wishes to study our parish churches he can hardly do better than begin with Compton in Surrey; for the church of St. Nicholas has everything that we expect of an English parish church even in our most exacting moments.

It has grown through the ages, and yet is a harmonious and graceful whole. The first church was Saxon, and of this there remain the tower, portions of the nave and perhaps part of the chancel walls. The tower is built of local Bargate

rubble and flints, without ashlar facings. A small aperture in the north wall of the chancel with a wide splay surrounding it on the outside was uncovered in 1929 and is thought to show the existence of a cell from which a Saxon anchorite kept his watch on the altar—then farther west than it is today.

Under the Normans the church was twice enlarged. About 1080 the chancel was lengthened, and from this period there survive the chancel arch and the sanctuary walls. The original

Norman chevron ornament on the round chancel arch was unfortunately cut away at a later date, but enough was left for the present plaster reconstruction to be made. In 1930 under a thin coat of plaster on the south pillar was found the incised figure of a Norman soldier with a nose-protector that dates him to the 11th cent. The single round-arched window in the east wall of the sanctuary now contains a precious fragment of ancient glass depicting the Virgin and Child. It is a beautiful piece of work akin to the Canterbury glass of the 12th cent., and has been moved to this more suitable place from the south window of the sanctuary.

The church was enlarged a second time by the Normans between 1160 and 1180, and it is from this second reconstruction that it receives its distinctive character. North and south aisles were added, and each was separated from the nave by an arcade of three bays. These arcades, like the chancel and sanctuary arches, are made of chalk, and give the interior a glistening white appearance. The arches are very slightly pointed, marking the transition from Late Norman to Early English. The plaster on the underside (or "soffit") of the arches is cut into patterns at the edges; this work is of the same date as the arches (c.1180) and is found elsewhere only at Godalming and the crypt of St. John, Clerkenwell. The capitals have square abaci and are carved with scallops, volutes and different types of foliage. The north and south doors date from this period, and so does the font, which is of unusual size and design; the bowl is shaped like a capital.

In this reconstruction the walls of the chancel were thickened internally by 1 foot and it was then vaulted and an upper chapel made over the sanctuary. This is unique in England. The balustrade to the upper chapel was made at the same time (c.1180) and is the oldest screen in England. It consists of nine semi-circular arches, cut out of a single plank of oak or chestnut, resting upon octagonal shafts. The sanctuary arch is of two orders and is richly ornamented with its original dog-tooth and horse-shoe

mouldings. In the south wall of the lower sanctuary are an aumbry and piscina of the same period. A pillar piscina has been uncovered beneath the plaster in the upper chapel; it is of early Norman design and was probably removed from some other place about 1180. (There is also a 14th cent. piscina in the south aisle.)

On the south side of the chancel is a chamber, having a "lean-to" appearance from the outside. It may have been a relic chamber but more probably it was an anchorite's cell built in place of the ruder Saxon cell on the north side. It was probably raised in height during the second Norman reconstruction to give access to the upper chapel. At a later date the upper sanctuary was used as a chantry, and the chamber, no longer used by an anchorite, may have given separate access to it. A cruciform squint piercing the chancel arch pier looks on to a 15th cent. tomb on the north side of the sanctuary beneath which five skeletons have been discovered, and it is thought that this may have been the burial place of successive anchorites. (The tomb later became the resting place of the Easter Sepulchre.)

Several new and large windows were added in the 17th cent., when glass was becoming more plentiful. Two canopied tombs in the north aisle date from the 13th and 14th cent. The shingled wooden spire that surmounts the Saxon tower was added in the 14th cent. A rood loft was built in the 15th cent., but does not survive; the entrance has been uncovered. An interesting brass of Thomas Jenyn and Margaret his wife survives from 1508 in the nave. About 1620 the church was enriched by the fine chancel screen, now at the west end—where it fits the entrance to the tower well—and by the carved pulpit and the communion rail.

The bells are dated 1634, 1660 and 1845. The plate includes a silver cup and cover of 1569, a paten of 1683 and a flagon of 1687. The register begins in 1639.

It seems unfair that one small church should contain so much of interest. Compton is indeed a "show piece" among parish churches.



Boston

Lincolnshire

BOSTON, which has given its name to the American city, is a contraction of "Botolph's Town." But in spite of later legendary biographies it is more than doubtful whether that saint, an early exponent of Benedictine monasticism, was ever in this part of England any more than in the other seventy places where churches were dedicated in his memory. By the time of the Danish occupation he had become a cult, for he had travelled and preached in Denmark and under our Danish kings his bones were translated from Grundisburgh in Suffolk to the great abbey at Bury St. Edmunds and shortly afterwards were in part distributed among the abbey of Thorney and four new churches in the growing city of London.

The great church at Boston owes its ambitious design to commercial causes rather than religious; in the Domesday survey of the Danish township of Skirbeck there is included a casual note of a second, unnamed church near a bridge higher up the River Witham at the one spot in the wide-spreading Lincolnshire fens where that river might be crossed. As the dark ages disappeared and international trade developed, as traders searching for ways of exploiting the growing importance of the wool trade discovered that ships sailing up the Witham to this bridge had found their way more nearly into the heart of England than by any other means, this little church and bridge became the nucleus of a busy, wealthy centre for the export of wool to all parts of Europe.

By the end of the 13th cent. the original church, altered, enlarged and given aisles like that of Yarmouth, was clearly no longer commensurate with the riches or emulative spirit of the merchants

of Boston, and all interests in the town combined to erect one immense new church, designed on a scale comparable with those of the Flemish ports to which the wool-ships used to go.

Like many of those churches just across the sea, this new church of St. Botolph, begun in 1309 and finished, after some interruption owing to the Black Death, about 1370, had height and breadth within but no tower to crown its external majesty. The tower at the west end appears to have been due to the leadership of Richard Fleming, vicar from 1408 to 1420, in which latter year he became Bishop of Lincoln.

Built in the new Perpendicular style it dominates the flat landscape for miles around; it rises in three gradually diminishing stages, the lowest pierced with huge windows, the intermediate with a pair of lights in each face, the uppermost with large, unglazed openings. There is abundant internal evidence that the first intention had been to surmount the whole with a spire, but by the time the summit was reached money ran short owing to the cessation of the wool trade through long years of war; the substitution of an octagonal lantern cost much less, but some genius of design resulted in a finish of incomparable grace and beauty.

In an unusually spacious chancel are sixty-four medieval stalls crowned with modern canopies, a large and fine series; they are well set off with an oak and partly coloured reredos built about fifty years ago. There are many fine monuments and a good Jacobean pulpit, dating from 1608, the year when those Lincolnshire Puritans, who twelve years later sailed across the Atlantic in the *Mayflower*, had just escaped to Holland, when John Cotton began an incumbency which led to his migration in 1630 with most of the leading members of his congregation, and when Prince Henry, darling of the Puritans, died—which accounts for the Prince of Wales feathers adorning it.

Under the tower are two wall tablets of interest, the one commemorating five of Cotton's fellow migrants from Boston to Massachusetts who became governors of the new American colony, the other to George Bass, Joseph Banks, Matthew Flinders and John Franklin—all men of this fen country, who bore a leading part in the early discoveries of Australia.

The huge tower begun by Richard Fleming (vicar, 1408-20), later surmounted by an octagonal lantern.

Photo: W. I. Croome

Marton

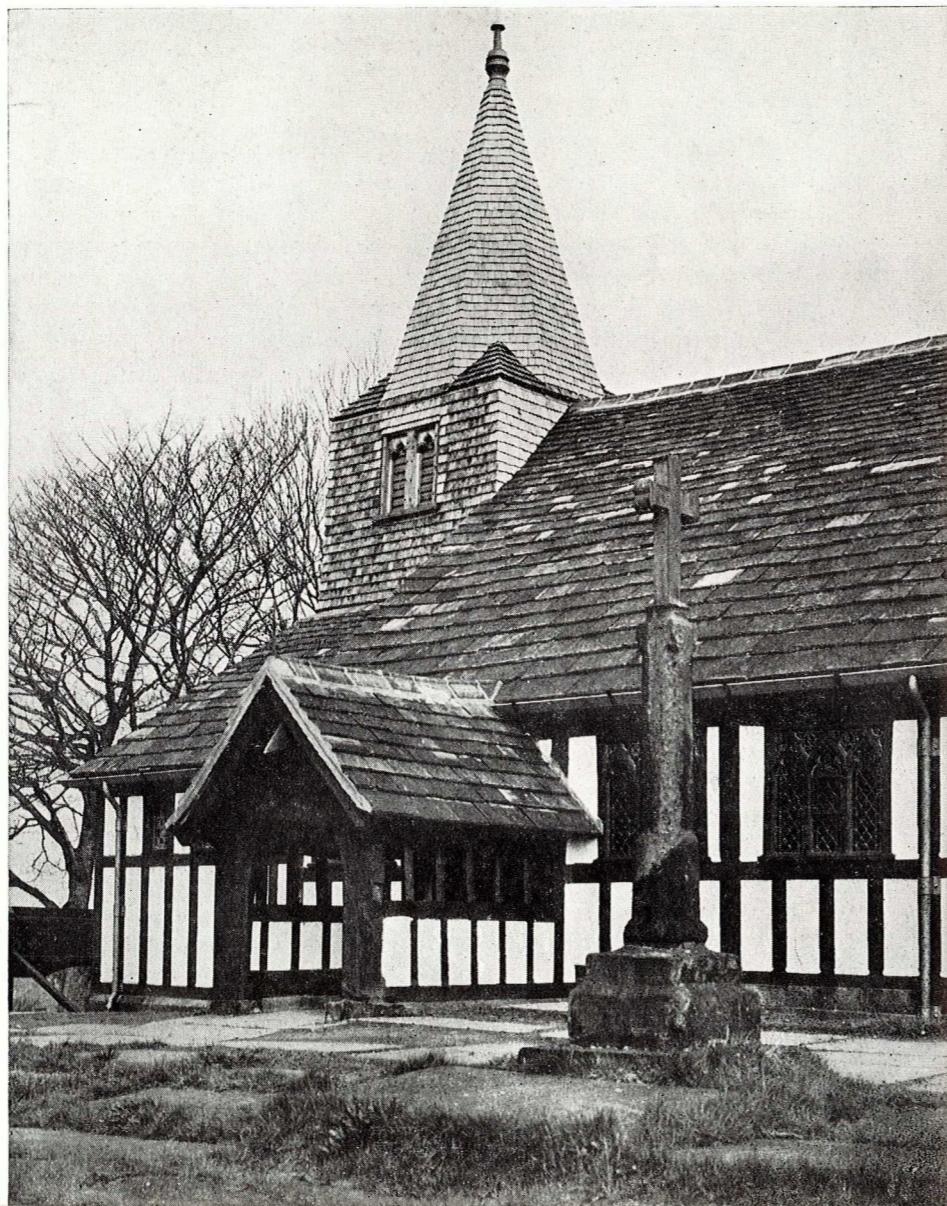
Cheshire

THE half-timbered, black-and-white church dedicated to St. James and St. Paul at Marton is considered by Mr. Raymond Richards to be "one of the most picturesque buildings of its kind in Cheshire" ('Old Cheshire Churches,' p. 229). This style of architecture is a distinctive feature of the counties on the Welsh border, though it may be matched abroad in South Germany. The present church was built as a chantry or free chapel out of funds provided in 1343 by Sir John Davenport. Together with its endowment it was confiscated by the Crown at the Dissolution, but the Davenports later regained the patronage. In a deed relating to the property executed in 1370 a clause was inserted that if any heir of the Davenports was to dispute the grant he should incur God's indignation.

The church consists of a nave with north and south aisles, chancel, south porch, and at the west end a low tower and spire. The squat base of the tower has a pyramidal roof and is surmounted by a square bell turret, the whole being crowned by a low wooden spire; its curious construction, both inside and out,

*Photo: Central Council for
the Care of Churches*

The half-timbered black-and-white south wall of the nave and south porch (mid-14th cent.) together with the bell turret and wooden spire surmounting the squat tower.



deserves study. The chancel and side chapels, having decayed, were unfortunately rebuilt in brick in the 18th cent. and some unsympathetic restoration was carried out in the 19th cent., but Marton remains a delightful specimen of this style of building.

Fragments of medieval glass are preserved in two windows. Two effigies, believed to represent Sir John Davenport and his son Vivian, have now been brought back into the church after lying exposed to the elements outside for several centuries. The registers begin in 1563 and there also survive from the reign of Elizabeth I a chalice and a parish chest. The pulpit was made in 1620 and is a good example of the carved woodwork of the period.

General view from the south of the church as enlarged in the 15th-16th cent. (porch built c. 1520, tower added in 17th cent.).

Holyhead

Anglesey

ST. CYBI was a 6th cent. Cornish saint, a cousin of St. David, who was made a bishop and eventually founded a monastery at Holyhead. The parish church of Holyhead, dedicated to him and lying just west of the harbour, is of great architectural interest.

Though there must have been earlier buildings on the site the oldest part of the present church is the chancel, which dates from the 13th cent. This church probably had only a nave and chancel. It was substantially enlarged in the 15th cent. North and south transepts were added about 1480, and about 1500 the north aisle was built; at this time also the chancel arch was reconstructed and the other three arches of the crossing built. The south aisle, the stair turret and the south porch, built about 1520, completed the church in all essentials. At this time the very interesting battlemented and decorated parapet of the south transept appears to have been built. The west tower was added in the 17th cent. and has a low, flat spire. The north vestry was built in the early 19th cent. The church was restored by Sir G. Gilbert Scott in 1877-79, when the north and south arches of the crossing were rebuilt and the north and south walls of the chancel were given new windows. The south chapel was added in 1896-97.

A stone set in the gable of the north transept has a Latin inscription in Gothic characters beseeching the prayers of St. Cybi; it dates from the late 15th cent. One of the bells was made in 1625.

In the south-west corner of the churchyard is



Photo: Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (Wales)

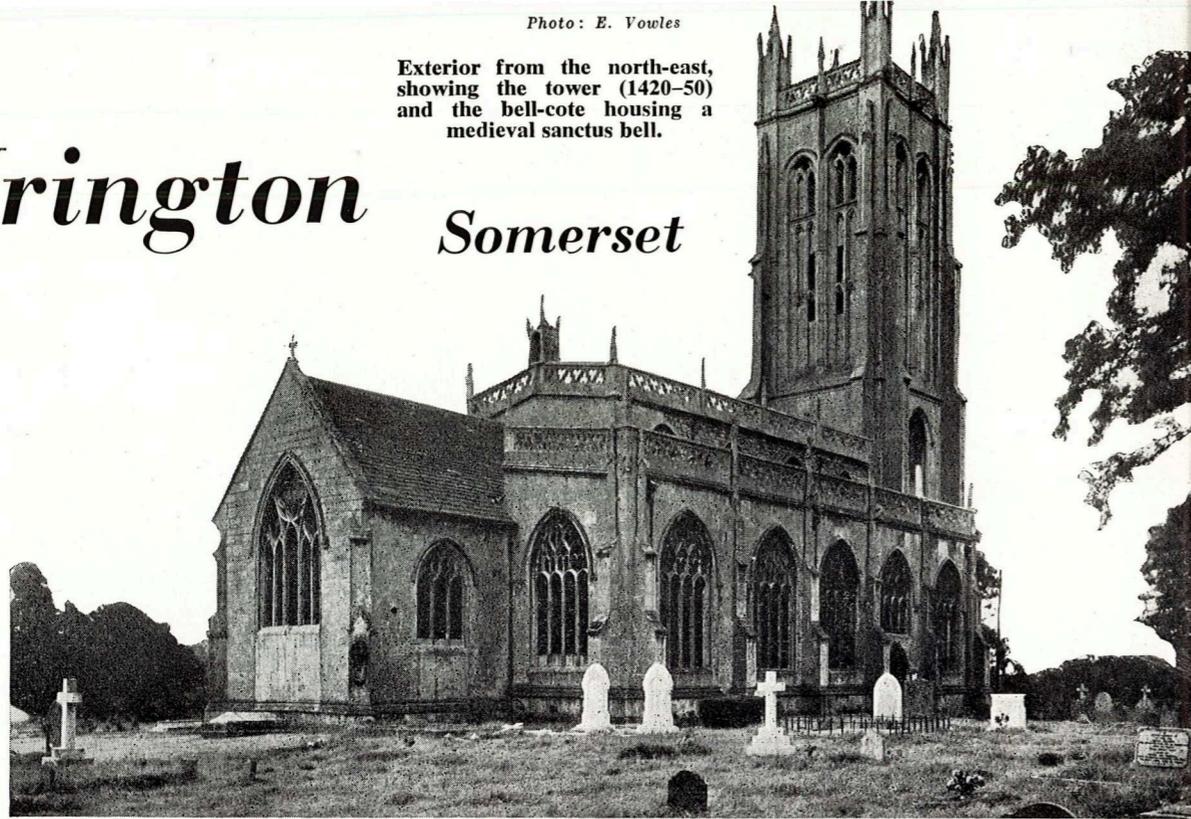
the nave of a church probably built in the early 14th cent. It is known as Eglwys-y-Bedd or Capel Llan-y-Gwyddel. In the 18th cent. it was converted into a school. The chancel may have been removed because it obstructed the view of the noble porch of the main church. This porch has large windows with fine tracery, a groined ceiling, and elaborate carving above the doorway—including a representation of the Holy Trinity in which the Father, crowned and with his right hand raised in blessing, holds a crucifix between the knees.

The church and churchyard are enclosed within Caer Gybi, a Roman fort—probably a small coast-guard fort built during the late Roman period. Three of the walls and parts of two towers are the original Roman work.

Photo: E. Fowles

Exterior from the north-east, showing the tower (1420-50) and the bell-cote housing a medieval sanctus bell.

Wrington Somerset



SOMERSET is the county of fine towers. There are nearly a hundred that are really important. Among them it is invidious to choose, but All Saints, Wrington, will bear comparison with most.

The church was built in the 15th cent. with nave, north and south aisles and chancel all in the Perpendicular style and surmounted by openwork parapets. On the eastern gable of the nave is a bell-cote housing a medieval sanctus bell.

The great tower at the west end was built between 1420 and 1450. It is one of a group influenced by the central tower of Wells Cathedral, built about 1320. St. Cuthbert's at Wells, Evercreech, Batcombe and Ilminster show the same influence. The tower of Wells was intended to carry a spire but was insufficiently strong; and when people came to like the tower without a spire the type was copied as the normal place for bells, which became popular about the same time.

Wrington tower is 140 feet high and is surmounted by perforated parapets and by pinnacles at each corner. The "fenestration" or arrangement of the windows in Somerset towers is a study of great interest. At Wrington there are two upper stories in the tower, the ringers' chamber

and the belfry, above the level of the nave, but the windows seem to run down without interruption from the upper stage to the lower. This is a characteristic of the cathedral group of towers. There are two compartments on each face of the tower with two lights in each. Wells and Batcombe have three compartments, St. Cuthbert's and Evercreech two.

The lofty nave, with its fine Perpendicular windows and clerestory, is worthy of the tower. A very fine carved oak screen of the North Somerset type separates the chancel from the nave. The chancel terminates in a five-light Decorated window of unusual design, but this is a replica of 1860. The richly carved and moulded roofs are very fine. The reredos, by Sir Charles Barry, is an unusual example of the very early Gothic revival.

The tenor bell in the tower, which weighs 37 cwt., is one of the noblest in the country.

Among those who have worshipped regularly in the church have been John Locke (1632-1704), the philosopher, born at Wrington, and Hannah More (1745-1833), the religious writer and philanthropist, who lived at Cowslip Green, in the neighbourhood.

St. Helen's Bishopsgate

ONE of the attractions of London is the way in which the old goes on side by side with the new. Just off the main thoroughfare of Bishopsgate is a large, medieval church that vies in interest with any in the country.

Originally it was two churches. A Benedictine nunnery of St. Helen was founded between 1204 and 1216 by William, son of William the Goldsmith, on a site adjoining the existing parish church of St. Helen. The south wall of the parish church nave may date from the 12th cent. The Nuns' Choir and the parish church nave ran alongside each other, separated by a partition. About the middle of the 13th cent. the chancel of the parish church appears to have been rebuilt and a south transept added. Early in the 14th cent. the west doorway was inserted in the parish nave. In 1374, or perhaps a little earlier, chapels dedicated to the Holy Ghost and St. Mary were built to the east of the south transept. About 1475 a magnificent lofty arcade of four arches was built between the Nuns' Choir and the nave, probably

by Sir John Crosby or his executors. (He was the alderman whose sumptuous house in Bishopsgate was the highest in London at the time.) The priory was dissolved in 1538 and the Nuns' Choir has since been the north aisle of the church.

All the other monastic buildings have disappeared, but the features surviving in the north wall of the Nuns' Choir are valuable evidence of the arrangements for their worship. A 15th cent. doorway opens on to a narrow flight of steps in the thickness of the wall; these are probably the night-stairs from the dormer or dormitory along which the nuns came to say the night offices. At the east end of the north wall is a monument, Easter Sepulchre and squint combined. There are two other squints.

The church is rich in fine monuments. Those to Sir John Crosby and his wife Agnes (1476), Sir William Pickering (1574) and Sir John Spencer and his wife Alice (1609) are outstanding.

The patrons were originally the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's, but when the church of St. Martin Outwich was demolished towards the end of the 19th cent. the Merchant Taylors' Company, who were patrons of that church, were given the patronage of the united benefice of St. Helen and St. Martin.

Photo: Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England)



Nun's choir, looking south-east, showing the 15th cent. arcade.



St. Martin- in-the-Fields

Westminster

ST. MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS, standing elegantly in a corner of Trafalgar Square, London, and perfectly flanked by the National Gallery, is the parish church of the Queen, for Buckingham Palace is within the parochial boundaries.

It is perhaps the best-known of all the parish churches of England. Every year it is seen and visited by many thousands of visitors to London, and its broadcast services are heard by millions in many lands. But what is most impressive is the way in which the workers in the offices and shops around slip in for the daily services or to gain a few minutes in quiet meditation amid "streaming London's central roar." Helped by the magnificent central site, a vicar of genius, "Dick" Sheppard, raised it to a unique place in the affections of the English-speaking world, and his successors have kept it there.

The present church is proof that the genius of English architects did not expire with the Middle Ages. It was begun in 1720 by James Gibbs, a pupil of Wren, and was completed in 1726. King George I was the first churchwarden—the only instance of a reigning monarch holding this office.

There had been several previous churches on the site. In those days only the palaces along the river connected the City with Westminster, and the church was described as being "in the Fields" to distinguish it from several churches in the City with the same dedication. The church immediately

Photo: Edwin Smith

West front as completed
in 1726.

before the present was consecrated in 1544 and was enlarged in 1607.

Gibbs, like his great master, derived his inspiration from classical antiquity. Mr. John Summerson has aptly said that its conception is Roman as that of St. Pancras church is Greek. The reconciliation of a Roman temple with Christian usage is in part effected by the fine steeple, which is worthy to be matched with those of Wren. The building terminates to the west in a noble portico with the Royal arms carved in stone on the pediment and a Latin inscription recording the circumstances of the erection. The White Ensign is flown on appropriate occasions from the flagpole over the portico as St. Martin's is the parish church of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty. The clock in the steeple was made in 1758. The old bells, cast in 1539 and supplemented in 1584, were re-cast in 1725 when the present church was built. Two cracked and were again re-cast in 1758, and a third in 1770. Since 1912 the bells, which are one of the best peals in London, have been hung on a self-contained steel frame to relieve the steeple of their weight.

The interior consists of a nave, flanked by north and south aisles, opening without interruption into the chancel and sanctuary. The most striking feature of the interior is the ceiling, which is elliptical in section and is divided into fretted panels. The ceiling, on which a representation of angels and clouds is painted, is the work of two Italian artists, Artari and Bagutti. There are galleries over the aisles, and over the galleries are circular domes. On either side of the chancel are the Royal "boxes" or pews, one intended for the use of the King and Queen, the other for members of the Royal Family.

The font and its canopy, bearing the date 1689, came from the previous church. A wise, unwritten rule has happily preserved the church from the large number of personal memorials that disfigure so many town churches.

The crypt, centre of so much social activity, is interesting architecturally. The vaulting is particularly striking. The crypt contains several memorials from the old church.

St. Mary Abbots Kensington

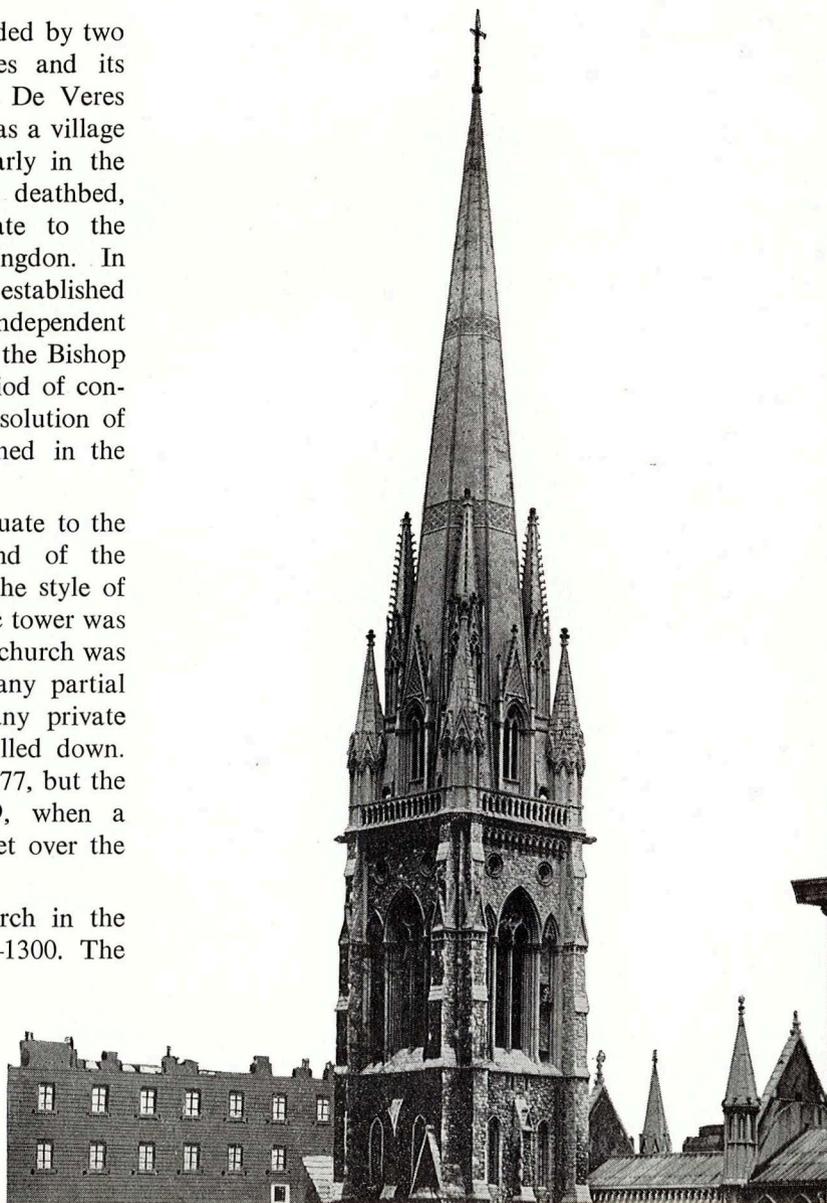
IT is not possible to be enthusiastic about every church built in the 19th cent., but St. Mary Abbots—Kensington Church to the omnibus conductors—is a magnificent legacy of the Gothic revival. Its spire, in particular, whether seen alone from the other side of the Round Pond in Kensington Gardens, or crowning Sir G. Gilbert Scott's great pile, is a truly lovely creation.

The present building has been preceded by two—and possibly three—earlier churches and its name comes about in this way. The De Veres held a manor at Kensington when it was a village in the great Middlesex forest, and early in the 12th cent. Godfrey De Vere, on his deathbed, bequeathed the church on the estate to the Benedictine Abbey of St. Mary at Abingdon. In the 13th cent. the Abbot of Abingdon established the church at Kensington as an independent vicarage. The patronage was given to the Bishop of London in 1260, and despite a period of confusion and litigation following the dissolution of the monastery in 1538, it has remained in the Bishop's hands to this day.

The medieval church proved inadequate to the growing population and at the end of the 17th cent. it was rebuilt in brick in the style of the Renaissance, except that the Gothic tower was allowed to stand until 1772. The new church was aesthetically pleasing, but suffered many partial collapses, perhaps caused by the many private burial vaults, and in 1869 it was pulled down. The new church was consecrated in 1877, but the spire was not completed until 1879, when a service of dedication was held 264 feet over the ground. The spire is 278 feet high.

Sir G. Gilbert Scott built the church in the "Geometric" style of the period 1250–1300. The

east end and the splendid west front and doorway appear to have been influenced by the exterior of Dunblane Cathedral in Scotland. The nave has north and south aisles and there are north and south transepts and choir aisles, but instead of the tower being placed over the crossing, as is usual, it stands at the north-east corner of the chancel. The design of the spire recalls St. Mary Redcliffe at Bristol. Some fine memorials from the Renaissance church are preserved in the new building; that to Thomas Henshaw, "French Secretary" to Charles II, may be particularly mentioned. The church was damaged by incendiary bombs in 1944, but not in such a manner as to destroy its character; the chief loss was the destruction of the main roof.



The spire, 278 feet high, completed in 1879 and reminiscent of St. Mary Redcliffe, Bristol.

Photo: Arthur L. Vague

