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CHURCH OF ST NICHOLAS AT WADE IN THANET — SOUTH SIDE OF THE NAVE, VIEWED FROM THE NORTH WEST.

THE CHURCH OF SAINT NICHOLAS AT WADE.

BY JOSEPH CLARKE, F.S.A.

THE churches in and near Thanet have all more or less a distinctive character. Norman work predominates, with much Early English work intermixed, though generally later aisles, windows, and other features have been inserted. The chapels and chancel aisles are generally Early English; this is found at Minster; in the ruins of the old church at Reculver; in the churches of St. Peter, St. Clement, and St. Mary at Sandwich, and in many other parishes. From time to time most interesting details are being discovered, and, when opportunity offers, the original plan of these churches may be traced out. St. Nicholas at Wade presents all these distinctive features, and contains some exceedingly interesting remains blending most curiously the Norman and Early English styles together.

It is said by Hasted that the name of the parish is derived from its situation "Ad Vadum," *i.e.* Wading Place, or ford across the river Wantsum, at or near the site of the existing bridge at Sarre. The parish lies at the N.E. corner of the Isle of Thanet, and contained over 600 inhabitants at the last census.

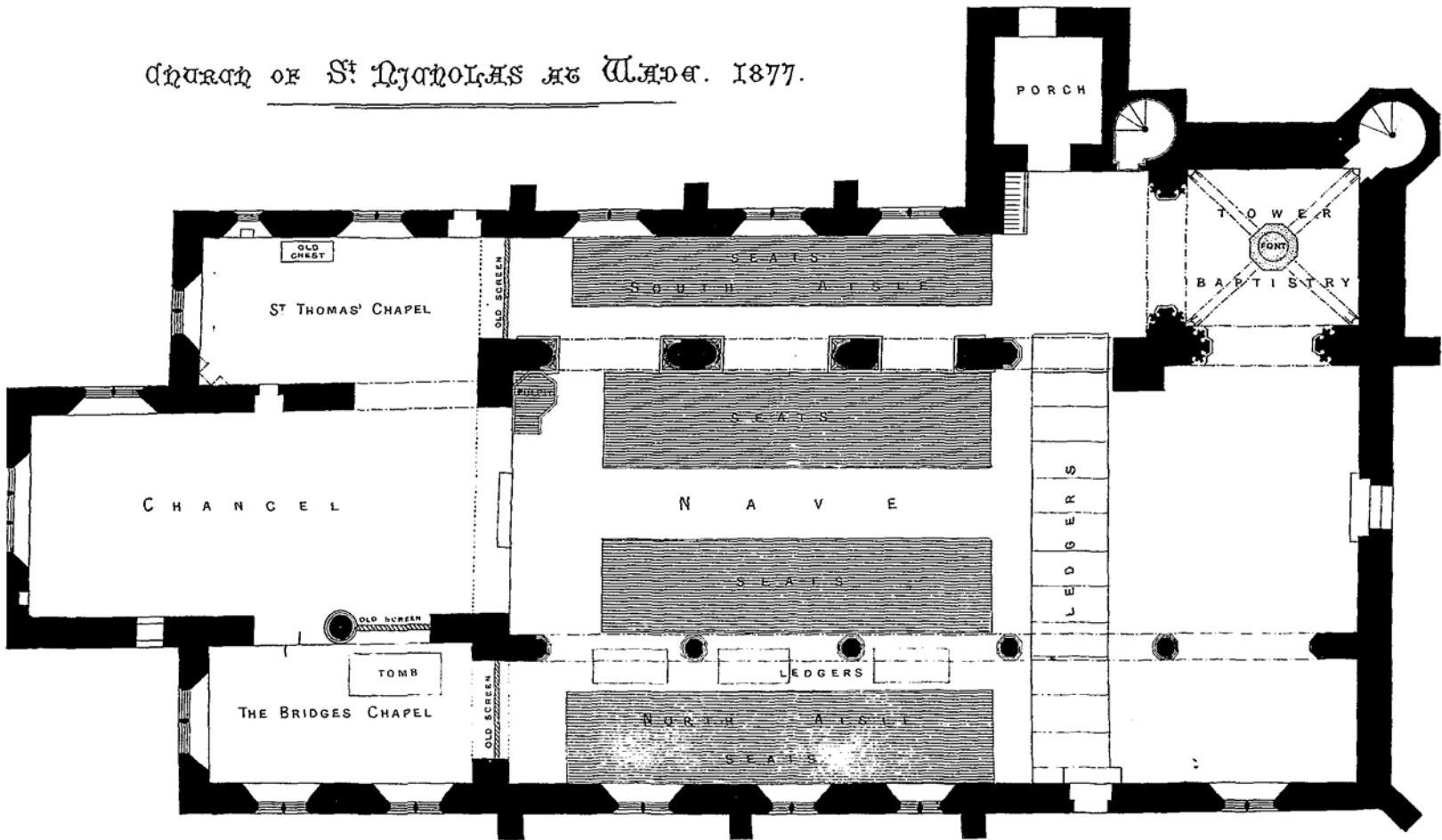
The church is built on rising ground, and its fine tower is a conspicuous mark for many miles

over the Isle of Thanet. The village, which surrounds the church, contains several good houses that have been in the families of the Gilmores, Palmers, and Bridges (inheriting through the Paramors), and others, for generations. There is a foundation School at the N.W. end of the village, founded by Thomas Paramor, who, in 1636, gave a house and land for the purpose, together with a rent charge of £6, which has since been further augmented.

Saint Nicholas was formerly a Chapel of the church of Reculver, and formed part of the ancient possessions of the see of Canterbury, until Archbishop Winchelsea, on account of the distance of this and the Chapelries of Herne and Hoath, about A.D. 1298, made Saint Nicholas parochial, and united to it the adjoining parishes of All Saints and Sarre. The latter church afterwards became desecrated, and it had disappeared in Leland's time, but it is seen in an ancient map belonging to Trinity College, Cambridge.

Archbishop Winchelsea, in A.D. 1310, endowed Saint Nicholas, with the consent of the Rector of the church at Reculver; but he required the parish to pay, in token of subjection, an annual pension of four marks to Reculver, and that the vicars with the priests, ministers and parishioners of the chapelries of Saint Nicholas, Hoath, and Herne, should go to Reculver Church once every year, in manner as described, and should be subject to the repairs of that mother church. This liability to repair was contested before Archbishop Stratford, who, after due inquiry into all causes, and having audience of the parties, made a decree, A.D. 1335, in favour of Reculver. Contests still remained till by a decree of Archbishop Warham, *temp.* Henry VIII, it was settled by consent of all

CHURCH OF ST. NICHOLAS AT WAVE. 1877.



Scale of Feet.
Feet 10 5 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 Feet

parties, that the several parishes interested should redeem the burden of such liability for repairs, by a moderate annual stipend or pension in money payable at a certain day; with the proviso that if default was made the full liability as before should remain. A present payment of 3s. 4d. to Reculver was still required from each parish. An endowment for the repair of the church of St. Nicholas was made by Robert Marshall, who by his will, proved A.D. 1482, ordered himself to be buried in the church, and devised the annual rents of twenty-nine acres of arable land, and fifteen acres of marsh land, in the parish of St. Giles, to be laid out yearly on the reparations of the church of St. Nicholas for ever: or else the said land was to be sold, and the purchase-money to remain to the reparations, at the discretion of the churchwardens for the time being, on condition that they and the vicars and parishioners should grant a release of all claim and demand in an annuity of $15\frac{1}{2}$ d. yearly due to this church out of a tenement "Bynez" and the garden belonging thereto in the said parish, so that the same be extinct for ever.

The church has a good chancel, 41 feet 6 in. by 18 feet. The North, now called the Bridges, Chapel, opens into the chancel by two arches. The South, or St. Thomas à Becket, Chapel opens by a single arch into the chancel. The nave is of five bays, and is 73 feet long by 23 feet wide; its north aisle 10 feet 6 in. wide, and its south aisle 9 feet 3 inches wide. At the west end of the south aisle is a grand tower, opening into the church, which was formerly groined. Incorporated with the tower is a south porch. The church was originally Norman, and probably extended westward to the present narrow arch, and Perpendicular

pier, of the south arcade next the tower. The aisles appear to occupy the former Norman plan, the south arcade being retained. The Norman chancel seems to have extended eastward to about the line of the present chapels; one Norman pier with the cap and base is seen on the north side. There was probably a Norman tower at the west end, as at Minster, and at St. Mary's, Sandwich.

The remains of the Early English work are clear and distinct, and much of the Norman work was no doubt pulled down in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries to make way for the enlargement of the church.

The walls of the chancel, which was restored by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in 1875, are no doubt Early English; an Early English arch remains on the south side, but all the original windows have been cut out and later insertions made, and the original floor-levels have been altered. On the north side of the chancel is a doorway, which opened externally, but is now closed, and led no doubt into a later sacristy, the remains being apparent on the outside. The arches and responds of the north chapel are Early English, with splayed angles, one side terminating with an elegant carved stop. The central pier, from which the Early English work springs, is Norman, and has the original base and cushion cap. This, though *in situ*, may have been renewed or rebuilt. The chancel arch is Early English, and very much like the original chancel arch of St. Peter's, in Thanet.

The north chapel is Early English, with an arch opening into the north aisle similar to those into the chancel; but all the original windows have been re-

moved, the openings are enlarged, and later windows inserted. The floor of this chapel is now twelve inches below the chancel, and seems to be the original level. A splayed recess for an altar exists under the east window, carried down to the ground; but repairs and alterations of late years have obliterated all remains of the ancient arrangement. The north pier of the arch into the aisle is partly built of tufa, but this seems the only place where that material was used. This chapel is attached to the manor of Frosts, and is now held by the Bridges, who bear for arms, *or* on a cross *sa.* a leopard's head. The manor and estates of Frosts came from the Paramors to the Bridges by marriage. John Bridges, who lies buried in the "Middle Isle" of the church, held it in 1667. There is a modern mural slab on the north wall copied from a former stone to Thomas Paramor, who had four wives. He died 19 October, 1595. In the floor of this chapel is a brass to Valentine Edvarod and his two wives, Agnes and Joan. He died 1559, and the following inscription occurs:—

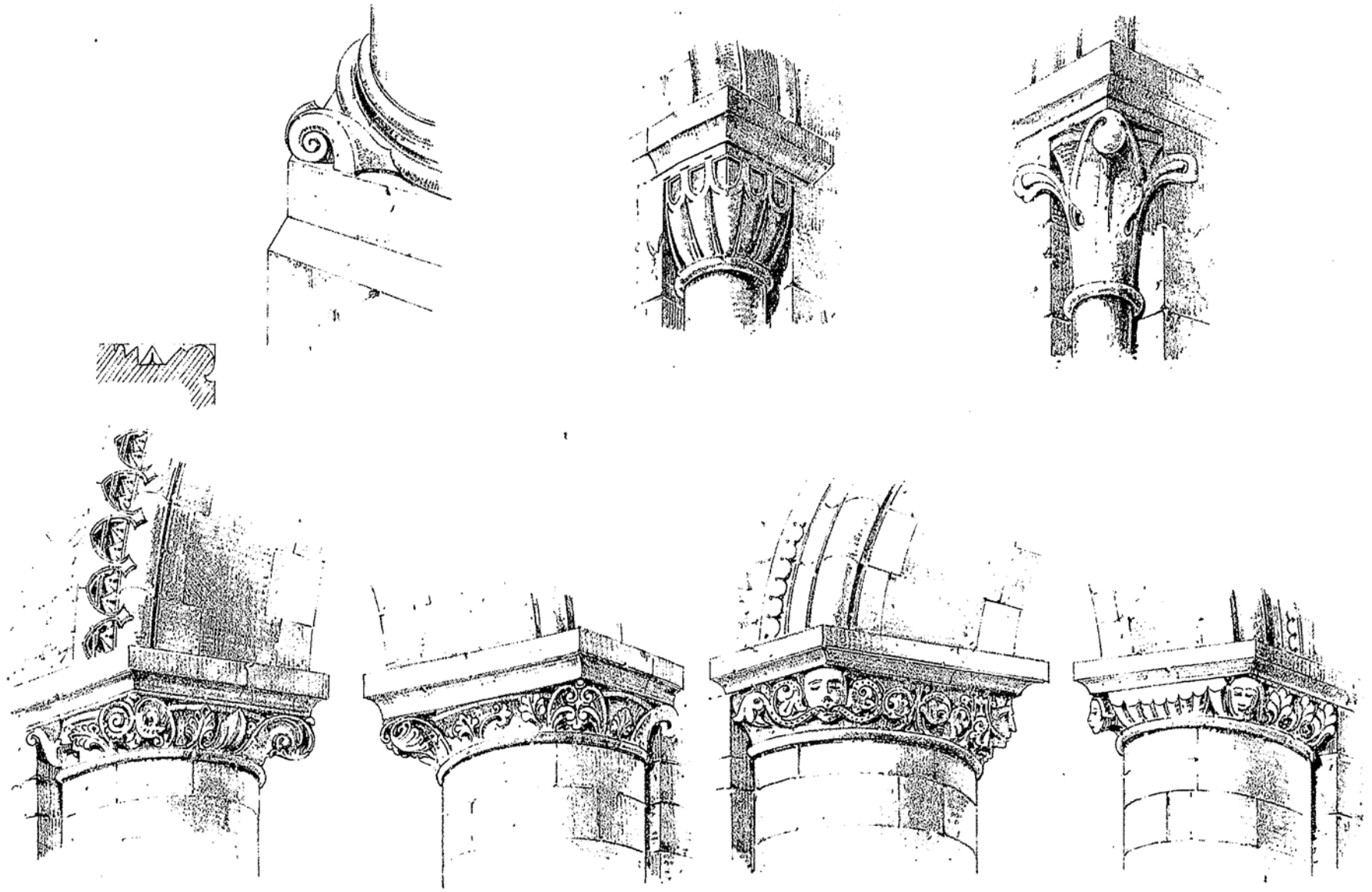
"Here lyeth buried ye bodyes of Valentyne Edvarod Gentleman who had two wyfes Agnes and Joane by Agnes he had iiii sonnes and two daughters and also by Joane his second wyfe iii sonnes and vi daughters which Valentyne decessed the xxv daye of February in the yere of our Lorde God mcccclix after whose decease the layde Joane married with Thomas Paramor and by him hade a sonne and a daughter and the layde Joane decessed the fyfthe day of Apryll in the yere of o' Lorde God mcccclxxiii: whose soules God hathe taken to his mercy."

The stone appears to have been altered, *i.e.*, the effigy of Joan, the second wife, was placed too far on the left hand of her husband, the original casement remains; it was then let in again nearer, and to fill up the space on the stone a second male effigy has

been introduced; the first figure being that of Valentyne Edvarod, the second probably represents Thomas Paramor. Some remains of Perpendicular screen work exist in one bay opening into the chancel, and also in the opening into the south aisle. It is said that the whole of these screens remained until very recently, but were allowed by the Churchwardens to be removed, and are now lost.

The south or St. Thomas Chapel opens by a doorway from the chancel, and is at a lower level. The whole of the walls are Early English, the arcades are splayed, the arch over the south side into aisle springs from a corbel, with indications of Norman work; a bold string runs internally round the south and east sides; one of the original windows remains with the piscina and the external doorway. Traces of the original Early English window, a triplet, are seen in the east wall on the outside. John Andrews of Thanet, by his will, proved 1480, ordered himself to be buried in this chapel of Saint Thomas the Martyr, on the south side, and he devised six marks to the making of a window in the east part of the said chapel. No doubt the Early English triplet was then removed. This chapel, which was formerly used as the parish school room, has been much disfigured, the fire-place remains, and not unlikely blocks up an original *hagioscope*, looking on to the high altar. The parclose screen remains in the arch to the aisle; the organ is placed in this chapel, occupying the arch into the chancel, in which no doubt there was formerly also a parclose.

In this chapel, which is used as a vestry, there is a discarded Jacobean altar-table, 5 ft. $2\frac{1}{2}$ in. by 2 ft. $8\frac{1}{2}$ in., with a movable top, ordered to supersede the for-



CHURCH OF ST NICHOLAS AT WADE IN THANET, — SIX CAPITALS AND ONE BASE, FROM THE SOUTH ARCADE OF THE NAVE.

mer fixed tops. The parish chest is here, but the original lid has been destroyed, and a flat cover between the circular ends exists. The actual altar-table in the chancel is good, and has a fixed top. Travelling into the nave, it appears there were formerly, besides the image of our Lord on the Cross set over the rood loft, images of St. Katherine, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the Holy Trinity, and altars and lights belonging to each of them.

The nave contains most interesting remains, and appears to have been part of the original Norman structure. The south arcade is of four bays, and the two arches to the east are equal in width, carried on Norman piers. The third arch is Early English; the next arch, abutting on the tower, is Perpendicular, and was probably reconstructed at the time when the upper stages of the tower were built. The south wall is Decorated, and breaks back in an unusual way to meet the inner face of the south wall of the tower. The nave seems to have been lengthened when the tower was commenced; but the added work is not nearly so beautiful. The whole of the north arcade is of the same date; the north wall of this aisle is Perpendicular, it seems built on the site of earlier foundations, and probably forms part of the fifteenth century additions. The south porch is late; over it is a very perfect parvise, approached by the original wood steps; its fireplace remains. This parvise is used for lumber, and as a plumber's shop for repairs; such use may some day lead to the destruction, not only of this interesting room, but of the whole church. The tower, a great feature of the fabric, stands in the west angle of the south aisle. It is a noble design, and though of different dates, harmonizes most beautifully. The lower

stage was groined to the church, but this groining has disappeared, although the springers and corbels remain. The floor is used as a baptistery. The Decorated portion is faced externally with small squared flint; the ashlar work of this part is most delicately wrought and moulded. The upper stages are later, but shew good work, and this tower must be regarded as one of the best to be seen in Kent. The original roofs partly remain; but, unfortunately, some years ago the eastern part of the nave roof was taken off, and very poorly replaced. The clerestory is Perpendicular. The striking feature, internally, is the treatment of the carving in the caps of the Norman arcade. On the Norman cushion caps, of two of the piers, Early English carving has been introduced, partly cut into the old work; but in places pieces of stone must have been let in, and the joints in the masonry seem to indicate this, to obtain the greater projection required. The carving of the arches is simply beautiful, and almost unique. The Early English treatment of the third arch is very fine, and assimilates entirely with a good deal to be found in some of the neighbouring churches of the same date. The chancel has recently been restored by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners; and in 1876 the nave was re-seated, the utmost care was taken to preserve the ancient features of the church, and all the ledgers were relaid as nearly as possible in their former places, where any record of the inscriptions could be found.

This church should be noted as one of much interest; it is well worthy of all the care which can be bestowed upon it, and should not be overlooked by visitors to the Isle of Thanet.