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# EARLY-NORMAN CHURCHES IN AND NEAR THE MEDWAY VALLEY.

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## II. PADLESWORTH-CUM-DODE.

THE early history of Padlesworth and Dode is obscure. Padlesworth has been identified with the *Pellesorde* of Domesday. At Pellesorde there was a church at the time of the survey. In the *Textus Roffensis*\* *Pædleswrtha* seems to be attached to Birling. At a later date it was certainly a distinct parish. According to Thorpe† the last presentation to the rectory is dated 1637. It was then a *sine-cure*. According to Mr. C. H. Fielding,‡ who has compiled a list of rectors from the episcopal registers, the last appointment was made in 1623. A previous appointment had been made in 1600 in spite of an entry in

\* Thorpe's ed., p. 229.

† *Antiquities in Kent* added to his *Customale Roffense*.

‡ *Memories of Malling and its Valley*. With regard to the first three names in Mr. Fielding's list it is not clear whether they were rectors of Padlesworth or Dode. Mr. Fielding has kindly sent me four additional names:—

Rectors of Padlesworth:—

1362. JOHN FLETCHER.

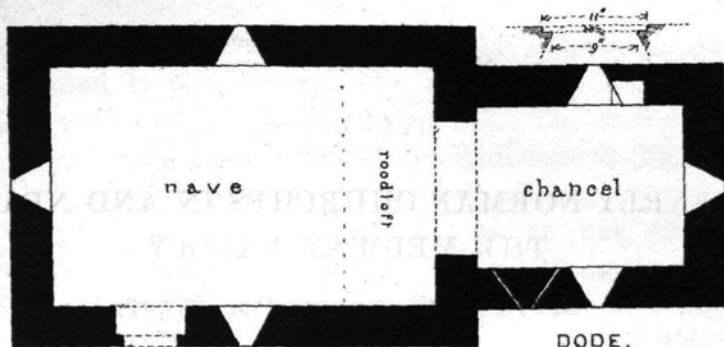
1363. JOHN DE CARDEN.

Rectors of Dode:—

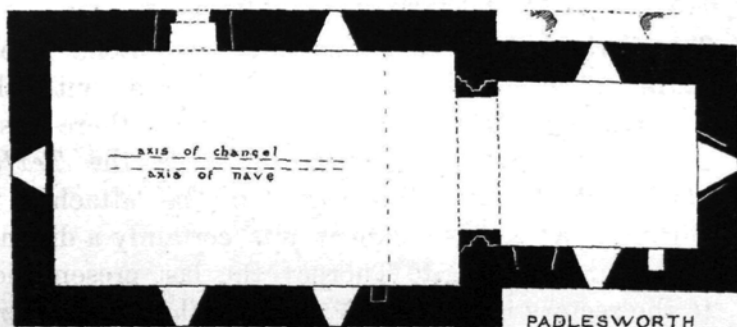
1349. THOMAS GLANVILLE.

1362. WILLIAM DE HOLBOROW.

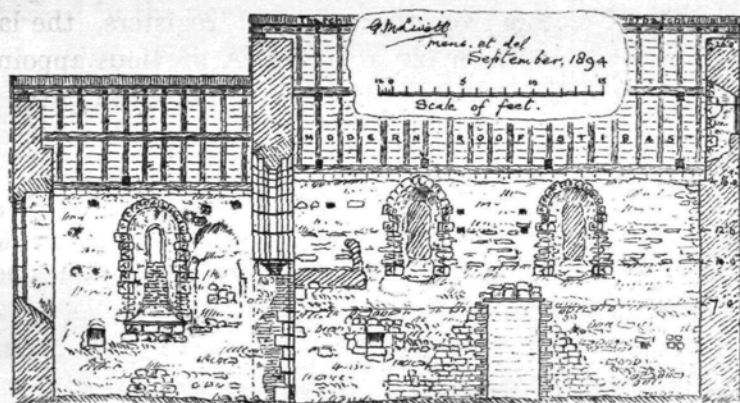
(Holboro is part of Snodland.)



DODE.



PADLESWORTH



the register under date 1599 that no one should be instituted to the rectory. An entry made in 1659 gives the value of the rectory as *nil*. The church is now used as a barn attached to Padlesworth Farm, which is included in the parish of Snodland.

Dode also was a distinct parish at one time. In the *Textus Roffensis Dodes circe* appears in the list of churches which made an annual payment of nine-pence for holy chrism received from the mother church at Rochester. According to the register of Bishop Trilleck the rectory of Dode was annexed to that of Padlesworth on the first of March 1366. From that date it appears in the episcopal registers under the title *Padlesworth cum capella Dode*. It is situated in Buckland Valley, about a mile and a quarter from Luddesdown, in a parcel of land which, in the reign of Elizabeth, was part of the manor of Padlesworth, and was called *Doude Chapell Crofte*. The church is now a roofless ruin. It is marked in the new one-inch survey by a cross without name, just beyond the border of Luddesdown parish. The great chalk escarpment runs between Padlesworth and Dode, which are a crow's flight of a mile and a half apart.

Both churches are represented (or *mis*represented) in Thorpe's Plates. They may, with confidence, be assigned to the early-Norman period. They present some points of difference both in masonry and arrangement, but, speaking generally, they bear a strong resemblance one to another. Perhaps, however, they are not more like to one another than to other early-Norman churches in the Medway district and elsewhere; and they may be regarded as typical examples of the period to which they belong. That they have

come down to us so little altered from their original state renders them invaluable objects of study, and that study is all the easier in that their walls are bare and unencumbered by internal fixtures. Most of our larger parish churches have grown up round a nucleus of the simple type of which these churches are specimens.

The accompanying plate shews the two ground-plans. The following table of dimensions will serve to bring out the mutual likeness :—

	PADLESWORTH.				DODE.			
Thickness of walls ...	2 feet 10 inches.				2 feet 10 inches.			
Total length (int.) ...	45	”	9	”	44	”	8	”
Length of nave .....	28	”	9	”	27	”	2	”
Breadth of nave .....	16	”	8	”	17	”	1	”
Length of chancel ...	14	”	2	”	14	”	8	”
Breadth of chancel...	11	”	9	”	11	”	6	”

In neither case is the nave a true rectangle. The sides are equal and parallel, but the angles are not right. Mediæval builders evidently trusted to the eye to square their buildings; they did not think of the expedient of measuring the diagonals and making them equal in length.

In both cases, too, the axis of the chancel diverges slightly from the axis of the nave. In other words, the chancel on plan leans a little to the one side or the other: the chancel of Padlesworth leans to the south, that of Dode to the north. A common result of this arrangement is the fact that the east or gable-wall of the chancel is not quite parallel to the gable-walls of the nave. Another common peculiarity of the plans may be illustrated from Padlesworth: the line of the outer face of the south wall of the chancel, if produced westwards with the necessary slight divergence,

coincides with the inner face of the nave-wall on the same side ; while the outer face of the north wall of the chancel, if produced, overlaps the inner face of the nave-wall. This leaves a portion of the face of the eastern gable-wall of the nave, between the south-east quoin or angle of the nave and the south face of the chancel, exactly corresponding to the thickness of the wall ; while on the north side the measurement is a little smaller.

Attention to these and similar details often enables the student of larger churches to recover signs of the plan of a Norman chancel which has been entirely absorbed by such later additions as the lengthening of the chancel and the addition of chapels on either side. The trend of the side-walls of such a lengthened chancel, pierced for arches of communication with the side chapels, generally shews a divergence sufficient to betray the eastern limit of the original chancel. Sittingbourne, originally a late-Norman church, supplies a good example of this slight divergence of lines caused by the lengthening of the chancel in the Early English period. Sometimes, however, as at Offham, a later chancel was built round the original one, which was then destroyed. In most cases the quoins of the original aisle-less nave may be seen, either in the end-walls of added aisles, or, if chapels also have been added, inside the church.

#### DODE.

Dode, being the simpler church to describe, may be taken first. It is bereft of its roof ; its chancel arch has entirely disappeared, leaving only a small portion of its southern jamb ; its eastern gable has vanished ; and all its openings have become wider, in

most cases ruinous, by the abstraction of their cut-stone jambs for use in other buildings. The quoins, too, all have been robbed of their cut-stone. There is no difficulty, however, in restoring the plan of the church exactly as it stood originally. The only alterations made at a later date were the insertion of a priest's window on the south side of the chancel, towards the west, and the erection of a rood-loft. These have been indicated in the plan. The only part about which there is any doubt is the doorway. It was standing entire in Thorpe's time, and its loss is a severe one to the student, for early-Norman doorways are scarce. A priest's door at Ditton has for imposts square blocks, of which the under-edge is chamfered. At West Farleigh there is an early (but perhaps not a very early) doorway which has a square order springing from rough cushion caps supported by shafts. At Dode all the cut-stone has disappeared, and all one can say is that the doorway must have been very plain, like the rest of the architectural details. There is no difficulty in recovering the span, but in other respects the plotting of the doorway in the plate is conjectural and negative.

The arrangement of the lights of the nave is awkward and uncommon. There was no fixed fashion in this matter in early-Norman times: two or three lights on each side occur in other churches of the period in this district. The arrangement in the chancel, on the other hand, is normal. In some churches, generally in slightly larger churches, there were three lights in the east wall, the middle light higher than the other two, as at Ryarsh. The aumbry, generally on the south side, is placed on the north side of the chancel at Dode. There is no piscina. The early-Normans

must have used a movable *infandibulum*, for structural piscinæ do not occur at so early a date. They seem to have been introduced about the middle of the 12th century, when a shafted piscina was the form commonly adopted. A remarkable example of that date may be seen at Ryarsh.

Part of the ashlar of the southern jamb of the chancel-arch remains *in situ*. There is only one stone of the lowest course, but it is sufficient to indicate the character of the arch. It shews that the jamb had no base; from which one may infer that, like the early-Norman chancel-arch at West Farleigh, there was no impost moulding. The span of the arch is fairly wide for the period; this may account for the retention of the arch at the time when the rood-loft was built—of which more anon.

The masonry is an excellent example of Norman flintwork. The flints are roughly coursed. The courses, including the mortar spaces, average a fraction more than five inches. The smaller stones are set aslant. The mortar is grey in colour and, unlike the common early-Norman mortar of the district, contains a large proportion of small flint-pebbles. The inner face of the walls still retains much of the original plaster, which contains similar small pebbles. The plaster has disappeared from the outer face of the walls.

The courses of the walling follow the slope of the ground on which the church stands. This brings vividly before the mind's eye the rough and ready methods of these early builders. They cleared the ground, dug ditches for the shallow foundations, and raised the walls regardless of levels until they reached the top, when they must have levelled the walls in preparation for the roof. Later and more finished



buildings shew the same disregard of little points of unevenness and inequality which modern builders carefully avoid. There was no flooring. Probably the ground inside was covered with rushes or the most available substitute. Only in larger and more important buildings than parish churches did the Normans put down a plaster floor on a rough concrete.

Cut-stone or ashlar was used only for the external quoins and for the jambs and arches of all the openings. A little of this cut-stone remains *in situ*: it is *tufa*, the common early-Norman material of the district. A little more is seen lying about the ground, but most of it has been purposely wrenched from its proper place and carried off for use elsewhere. There is no sign of any other material that could have been used together with the *tufa*. The eastern splay of the window-opening on the south side of the chancel retains its *tufa* quoin. The corresponding opening on the north side is in a better state of preservation than any other: the semi-circular head of the light, cut out of a single block of *tufa*, remains in position. From this the horizontal section of the opening given in the plate has been deduced. It is provided with a rebate on the outside, shewing that the openings were fitted with an external shutter. This is a method that was commonly adopted, but in some churches, as Padlesworth, the openings were finished with a slight chamfer instead of the rebate, and were no doubt provided with a shutter swinging inwards instead of outwards. The width of the light is 9 inches, and this opening splays to a width, on the inner face, of 3 feet 10 inches. The height of the light from sill to springing must have been about 2 feet 6 inches, perhaps as

much as 3 feet, but it cannot be accurately measured because the sill has disappeared.

This completes the description of the early-Norman church. The insertion at a later date of a priest's window, the jambs of which are indicated by white lines in the plan, calls for no special remark. Only its western jamb remains. The splay of the jamb, in which there is no ashlar of any kind, is greater than that of the early-Norman windows, and looks as if it belonged to an Early English lancet light.

It only remains to say something about the holes in the side-walls, both of the nave and of the chancel. Those in the chancel are 4 feet above the ground, and close to the east wall. They may be accounted for by supposing a beam to have rested in them. The beam would run across the east end, against the wall, just above the altar and below the window. It probably formed a retable, and carried altar-lights and images. Its date would be post-Norman.

There are two large holes in the nave, one in each side-wall and opposite to one another. They are  $6\frac{1}{2}$  feet from the ground and the western edge of each is about 8 feet from the face of the chancel-arch wall. They doubtless indicate the position and size of the rood-loft. This rood-loft, too, would be post-Norman. It must have been reached, as in many other small churches, by a ladder, for there are no signs of stone stairs in the walls.

#### PADLESWORTH.

In making the plan of Padlesworth the same method has been followed as in that of Dode: the ground-plan of the early-Norman church has been restored, later alterations that are not absolutely modern being shewn by white lines. The uncertainty

which cropped up at Dode in reference to the doorway exists here also. A modern doorway in the south wall does not appear in the plan; nor does a fire-place which was inserted in the east wall some years ago for the use of hop-pickers who were lodged in the ruin. The span of the original chancel-arch is conjectural: it may have been narrower than is shewn in the plan. The inserted priest's window, which, like that at Dode, occupies the normal position, has been blocked, and the external face of the wall has been so repaired as to leave no sign of the opening. The aumbry in the south wall of the chancel is original, but that in the south wall of the nave is post-Norman.

The chief interest of Padlesworth, apart from its ground-plan, lies in the study of its masonry. Three clearly-marked lines run round the walls, dividing the work into four stages. Once at least, it may be twice or thrice, the struggling builders were stopped in their work by lack of funds or materials, or both. They began with only flint and mortar, and raised the walls to the height of 7 feet from the ground. Then occurred the stoppage. They recommenced with a fresh supply of flints (much smaller than those they were using before) and a certain amount of tufa, and carried the walls 3 feet higher. At this juncture they obtained a load or two of thin Kentish Ragstones which they used with a small admixture of flints. The Kentish Rag marks the third stage of the work. At the close of this stage the builders had begun to turn the arch of the window-opening in the north wall of the nave, but they had not got higher than about a foot below the springing of the openings on the south side of the nave. Then luck evidently favoured them, for somehow or other they managed to procure some

Caen-stone with which to finish the heads of the window-openings. How did they get it? These were early days for the use of Caen-stone, especially in a country church. It is possible that they begged a load from the bishop of Rochester's builders, who may very likely just then have been carrying it to Trottesclive for the enlargement of the bishop's palace there. Padlesworth lies on the direct road leading from the river Medway to Trottesclive.

The best way to study these changes of masonry is to go to the church itself—it lies less than  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles distant from Snodland station: but, failing this, the reader may obtain a fair notion of the differences by glancing at the elevation of the south wall of the church given in the plate. The doorway and the brick-work on each side of it are modern. All the squared ashlar (chalk) is post-Norman, some of it modern. The heights of the divisions of the original masonry are marked in round numbers in the section of the west wall on the right-hand side. The principal line of division is at the height of 7 feet. Below this line the flints used are decidedly large; many of them fill the narrow courses of the walling, while the smaller flints are set aslant in the characteristic early-Norman manner. The mortar also is characteristically early-Norman: the colour is light-brown, and on a close inspection many little bits of chalk or imperfectly burnt lime are evident to the eye. Above the 7-foot line the mortar loses its brown colour and becomes grey, but it still retains the small bits of chalk, thus shewing that it was mixed in much the same manner as that of the lower part of the wall. It is a better mortar, however, for it has not worn away so much. Below the 7-foot line the large flints stand out boldly;

above it the mortar still covers many of the stones, and renders the manner of coursing less apparent.

The difference of material in the upper stages is best seen, perhaps, in the jambs and arches of the windows of the nave. At the bottom of each jamb there is one block of faced tufa (marked "T")—this comes within the second stage. The third stage begins just above the faced tufa, and in it the jambs are made up of rough Kentish Rag. About one foot below the springing begins the fourth stage, and with it the use of Caen-stone (marked "C"). The whole of the voussoirs of the arch of the western of the two windows on the south side and two courses below the springing are Caen-stone. The arch is slightly tilted. The eastern window is precisely similar, excepting that the greater part of the arch has been rebuilt with chalk voussoirs and has assumed a slightly pointed form. In the chancel windows tufa was used instead of Kentish Rag; otherwise they are like the nave windows. The external quoins, from the 7-foot line up to the top, are built of tufa. This proves that the builders had tufa throughout the later stages, and one wonders why, after having begun the nave windows with that suitable material, they went on with Kentish Rag. Probably they had not enough of the tufa, and therefore used the Rag until the Caen-stone made its appearance. Towards the completion of the whole work they found they had sufficient tufa left with which to build a window-opening high up in the western gable. Below the window and on a level with the top of the side-walls there is a 4-inch set-off, which decreases the thickness of the gable-wall by that amount. Below the 7-foot line all the external quoins, originally made up of flints, have been rebuilt with

brick—except the north-east quoin of the nave. Externally the masonry may be studied to best advantage on the south side, to which a lean-to has been attached for use as a cart-shed.

The use of Caen-stone in the window-openings, finely faced with the axe and finely jointed, combined with the usual characteristics of early-Norman work elsewhere, points to a date close upon the middle-Norman period, which may be said to begin in the second decade of the 12th century. It was about that time, probably, that the digging of tufa in the district was to a great extent given up.

A considerable change in the internal arrangement and appearance of the church was made in the middle of the 14th century. The original chancel-arch was destroyed and a corbelled arch (? of Ashdown Forest sandstone) of wider span and greater height inserted. This gave ample space for the new rood. The marks of the rood-loft remain in the walls. At the same time a new east window of one light, of which signs still remain (restored in the elevation), was inserted in place of the original smaller one. It was probably at this time that the priest's window, too, was inserted, and the sill of the early-Norman light near it was lowered. There is no sign of a piscina. There is an early-Norman aumbry on the south side of the chancel. A later aumbry on the same side of the nave indicates the existence of an altar under the rood-loft. The walls of the chancel were replastered in the 14th century, and the plaster was curiously decorated with small circles, irregularly placed and varying in size, many of them enclosing arcs of circles forming a cross. This kind of decoration may have been common, but it would naturally disappear from the walls of churches which have remained in use.

The present roof was built in 1845. The older roof had a bell-turret, rising from the west gable. There never was a tower. The original Norman roof pitched at an angle of  $45^{\circ}$ . Some Norman roofs seem to have been steeper, like that at Ditton.

The more closely one becomes acquainted with these early-Norman parish churches the more clearly their character and their true place in the history of architecture stand out. If they express the strength and zeal of the early-Normans they as certainly prove the rudimentary nature of their artistic powers. The greater churches of Caen and Canterbury and Rochester, raised by builders of the school of Lanfranc and Gundulf, were so rude in appearance, so absolutely devoid of ornament, that they were all remodelled during the 12th century, when plastered walls and arches were clothed anew with finely wrought stone. The early-Norman style in Normandy and England was identical, varying in expression in different districts under the influence of different materials. It is best studied in these quiet old churches which have known little change.