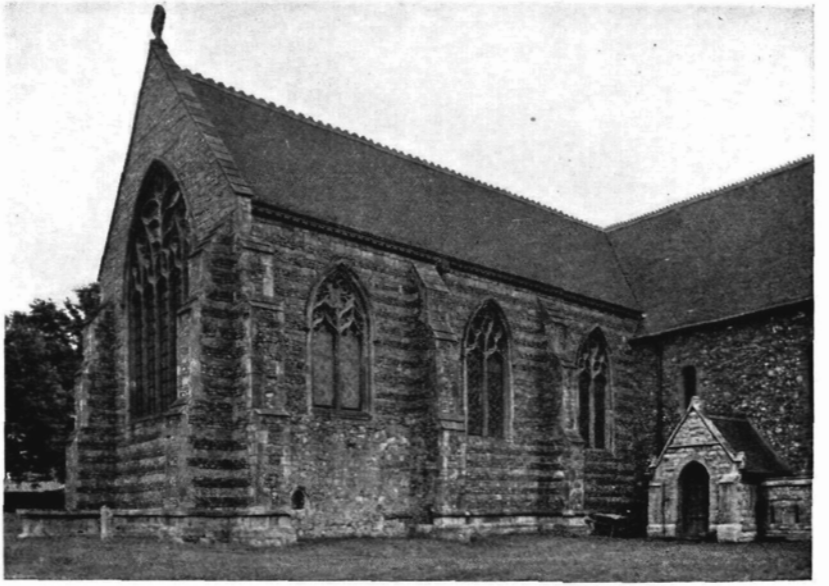
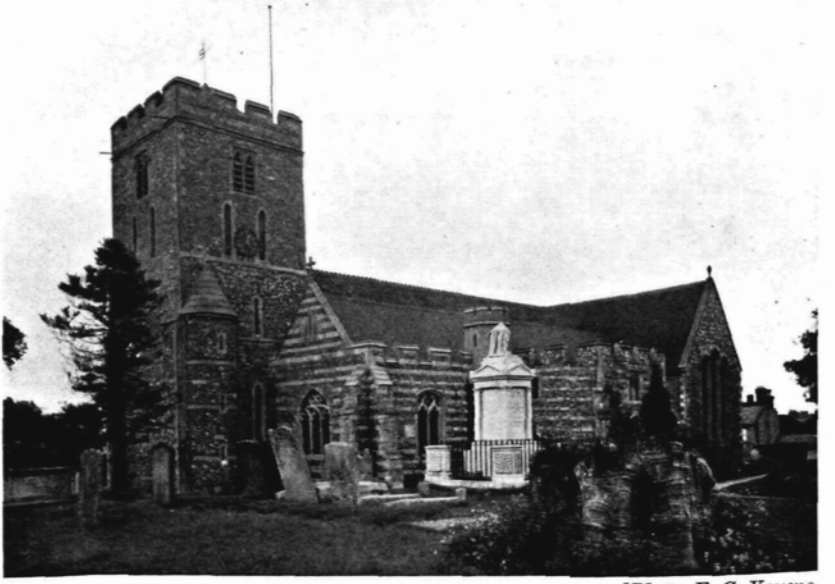


CLIFFE-AT-HOO CHURCH.
Chancel from the North-East.



CLIFFE-AT-HOO CHURCH. [*Photo. E. C. Youens.*
From South-West.

THE CHURCH OF CLIFFE-AT-HOO.

By Alan R. Martin.

The Church at Cliffe is dedicated to St. Helen and bears the distinction of being the only church in Kent dedicated to that Saint. It stands in a prominent position at the edge of the Hoo peninsula overlooking the extensive marshes which at this point stretch some two miles to the Thames.

The village seems at one time to have been of greater importance than it is to-day. Lambarde describes it as a large town in his day in spite of a disastrous fire which had destroyed many of the houses about 1520, a fire from the effects of which it appears never to have recovered.

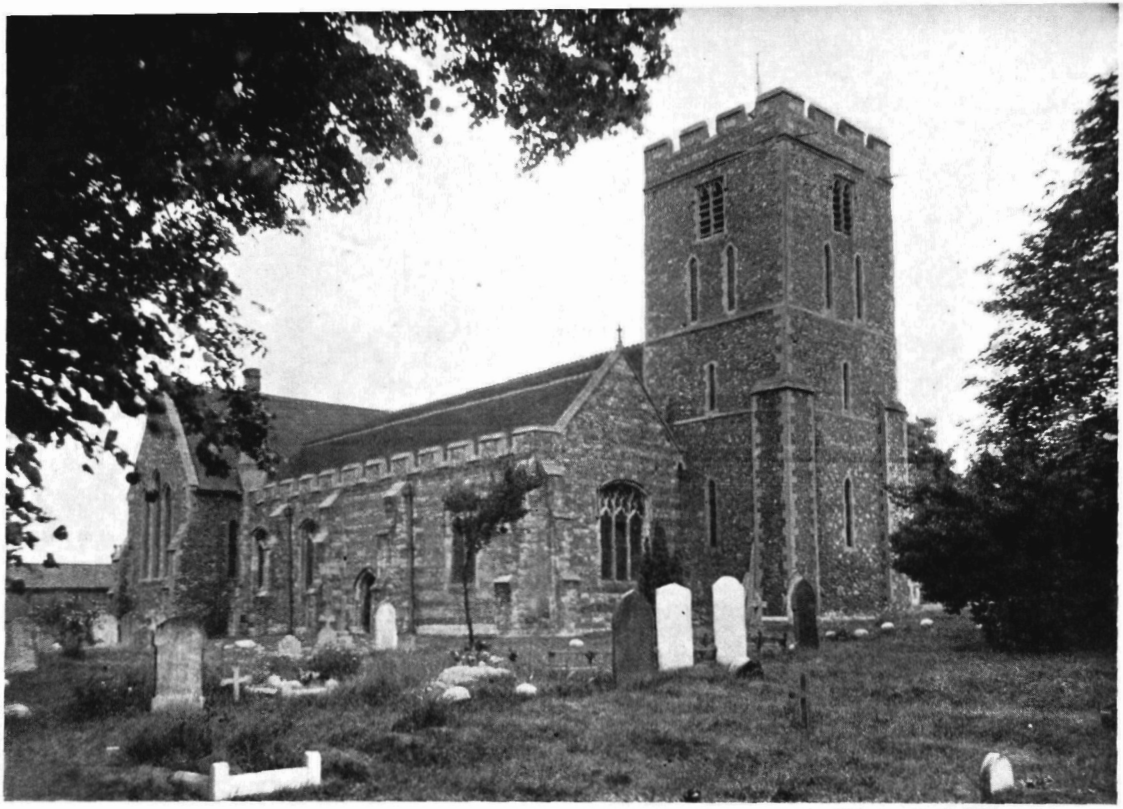
The Manor of Cliffe belonged from very early times to the Prior and Convent of Christ Church, Canterbury, who were also the owners of the advowson, and thus became concerned with the upkeep of the church. At the Dissolution the Manor passed to George Brooke, Lord Cobham, though the Archbishop of Canterbury is still the patron of the living. Among the Rectors of Cliffe were several men of distinction, some of whom probably never visited the parish. From an early date there seems to have been a perpetual vicarage attached to the church, but when it became merged in the Rectory is uncertain.

Of the first church at Cliffe there is no definite record. It is sometimes said to have been founded by Offa, king of Mercia, in the latter part of the eighth century, though the only evidence for this appears to be the presumed identification of the place with the Cloveshoo of the Saxon Chronicle, where various synods of the Saxon Church were held in the eighth and ninth centuries. Without attempting to suggest a solution of this very debatable point, it can only be said that the evidence in favour of Cliffe appears to rest on at least as good authority as that of the rival claimants—Abingdon in Berkshire, and Clifton Hoo in Bedfordshire. There is

moreover good reason to think that Cliffe was less inaccessible than might be supposed in mediæval times. There still remain traces of a causeway across Higham Marsh, which must at one time have led to a ferry, thus affording an easy means of approach from Essex and the Midlands.

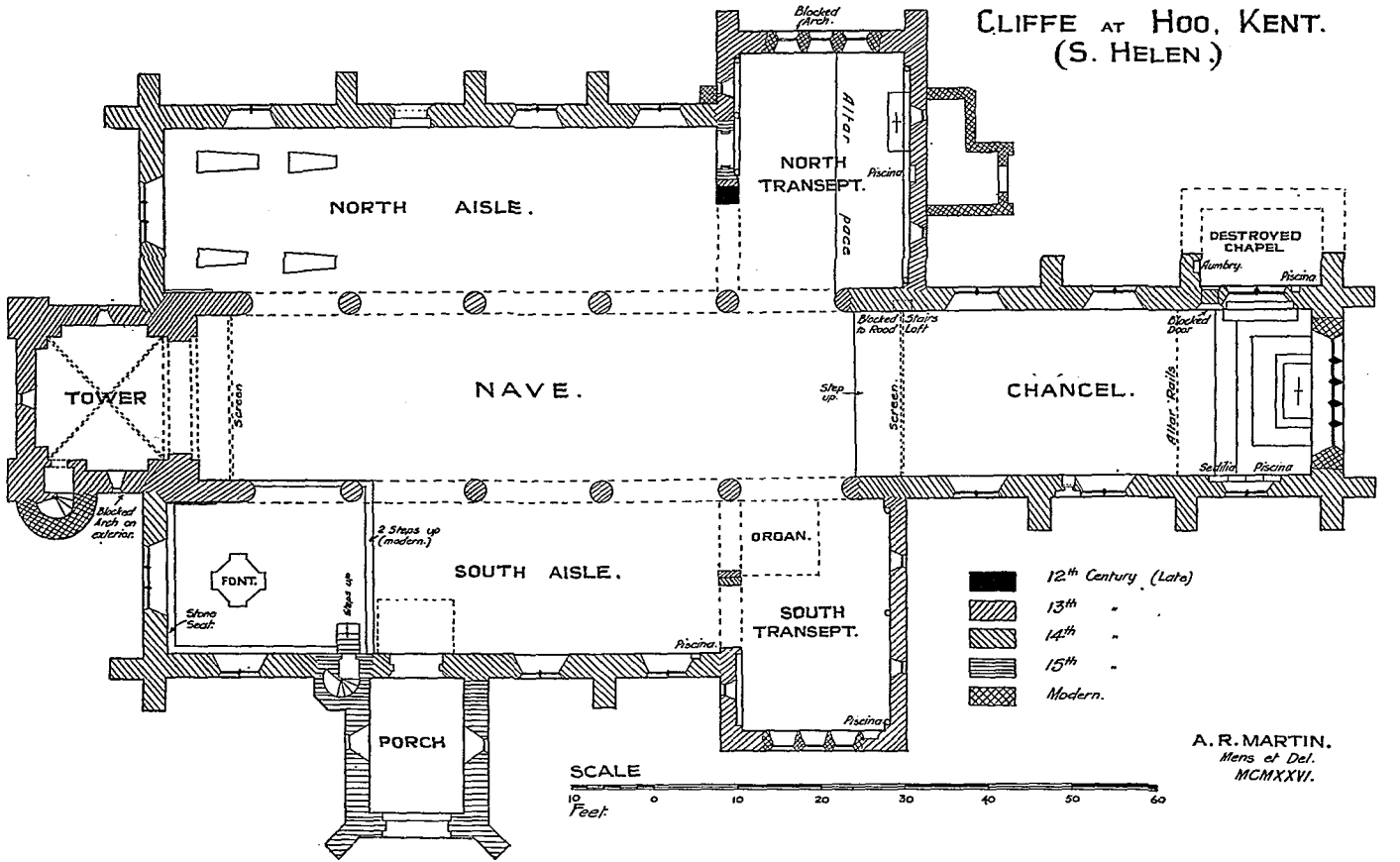
The earliest undisputed documentary reference to a church at Cliffe is in the Domesday Survey. It was evidently a building of more than usual importance for it is expressly stated that two ministers were in charge. Of this building, however, not a vestige remains, though there can be little doubt that from it the present plan has, on more or less recognised lines, been developed.

The plan as it exists to-day is complete, and consists of a nave with wide aisles, north and south transepts, chancel, western tower and south porch. The church is one of the largest in Kent, and is a striking example of a parish church whose size and splendour could have borne but little relation to the actual needs of the locality. It was the product of an age whose zeal for church building was limited only by the funds available. The total internal length from east to west is 182 feet, while the width across the transept is 82 feet. The exterior has been the subject of somewhat extensive restoration, which has robbed it of much of its ancient appearance. The south aisle differs from that on the north in having an embattled parapet, similar to that of the porch. The walls of the tower and transepts are faced with flint rubble with little attempt at regular coursing. The later work of the nave and chancel, though extensively refaced, is composed of alternate courses of dressed flints and stone ; the latter, a soft ragstone from the lower green sand formation which, quarried probably from the outcrop a few miles to the south, has weathered badly in many places. A variety of other materials is noticeable, some of which appear to have been reused from the earlier church. A block of Caen stone in the east wall of the chancel, and several pieces in the north wall, have obviously been reused, while a single piece of calcareous tufa can be seen in the north wall of the transept ; Reigate stone is also fairly abundant.



CLIFFE-AT-HOO CHURCH.
From the North-West.

[*Photo. F. C. Elliston Erwood.*

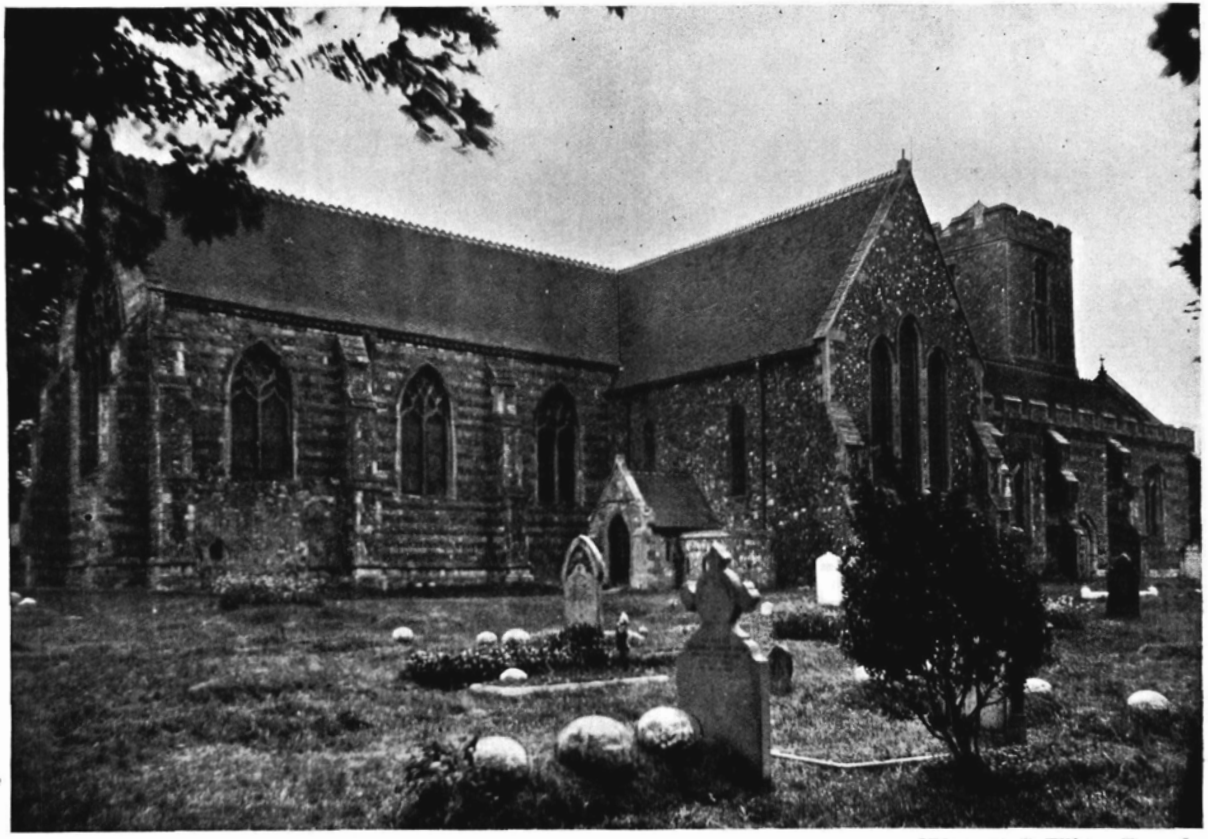

CLIFFE AT HOO, KENT.
(S. HELEN.)
Blocked arch.
NORTH AISLE.
NORTH TRANSEPT.
Piscina
Altar
Pace
DESTROYED CHAPEL
Aumbry.
Piscina
Blocked Stairs to Rood Loft
Blocked Door
TOWER
Screen
NAVE.
Step up.
Screen.
CHANCEL.
Altar Rails
Sedilia
Piscina
Blocked Arch on exterior.
2 Steps up (modern.)
ORGAN.
FONT.
Stone Seat.
Steps up
SOUTH AISLE.
SOUTH TRANSEPT.
Piscina.
Piscina.
PORCH
12th Century (Late)
13th "
14th "
15th "
Modern.
SCALE
10 Feet.
0 10 20 30 40 50 60
A. R. MARTIN.
Mens et Del.
MCMXXVI.

It is not till one enters the church that its size is fully realised. The absence of pews over a large part of the nave, with the fact that the nave arcade is carried past the crossing without a break, and the absence of a chancel arch, all combine to emphasise its spaciousness. The impression gathered from a superficial survey of the interior is that of a thirteenth century church with considerable additions in the fourteenth century, but a more careful inspection shows at least one trace of an earlier building. The arch from the north aisle into the transept, which has been partially cut away when the thirteenth century nave arcade was constructed, is certainly of late twelfth century date and must therefore have survived from an earlier church. Before, however, considering the development of the ground plan, it is necessary to refer briefly to the chief features of architectural interest which call for notice.

The porch is of a fairly common type, with an upper room, approached by a stair turret from the south aisle. It measures internally 11 feet 5 inches from east to west by 16 feet from north to south, and is apparently of late fifteenth century date. On the right of the inner doorway are the remains of a holy water stoup. The room above has been considerably modernised, and there is nothing to indicate its original use. Occasionally an altar is found in the porch chamber, which, however, in this case would seem more likely to have been used for storing the church goods.

The north and south aisles of the nave are 19 feet 10 inches and 18 feet wide respectively, and are thus considerably wider than the nave itself. They contain a fine series of Decorated windows, those at the end of either aisle being particularly interesting examples of three lights. The church as a whole is very rich in windows of this period, which form in themselves an interesting study in design. The south aisle has a stone bench running along its south and west walls.

The tower is entered from the nave by a plain thirteenth century arch, and measures approximately 15 feet 6 inches from east to west by 17 feet 6 inches from north to south (interior measurements). The lower stage, which is shut off



CLIFFE-AT-HOO CHURCH.
From the North-East.

[*Photo. F. C. Elliston Erwood.*

from the church by a screen, and is now used as a vestry, is lit by three narrow lancets, one in each of the disengaged walls. The roof is a simple quadripartite vault, without any boss at the intersection of the ribs, which are carried on shafts supported on corbels set in the four angles. The lower part of the tower is apparently thirteenth century work, and somewhat earlier than the transepts. The flat, clasping buttresses appear to be original, though now entirely re-faced, and might in themselves suggest a transitional date for the base of the tower. The upper part has been rebuilt at a much later date, and contains a Perpendicular window. Like most towers of the period, it is probable that there was originally no structural stairway leading to the upper stages, access to which had to be obtained by means of a ladder, though the existing doorway to the modern stair turret appears to be of fairly early date.

The transepts deserve special consideration on account of the very interesting work which they contain. Their date cannot be later than about 1260 and there are some grounds for thinking that the south transept may be slightly the earlier of the two. The east wall of the south transept is divided into two bays by blind arches, supported on slender banded shafts, with a narrow lancet window in the centre of each arch. A somewhat similar arrangement exists on the east wall of the north transept, though in this case the central shaft is not carried to the ground, but rests midway on a moulded bracket, below which is a piscina with a trefoil head of the same date. The treatment of the west wall of the north transept is very similar to that of the east, but the arches are much narrower, and the arrangement has been somewhat interfered with by a later widening of the nave aisle. In the south transept the arcading on the west wall is somewhat plainer, and the banded shafts have been dispensed with. Although similar in general design, certain details point to the south transept being slightly the earlier. The string course below the windows, which is continued round the shafts of the mural arcading, is a plain scroll moulding, while in the north transept a fillet is substituted, and the central

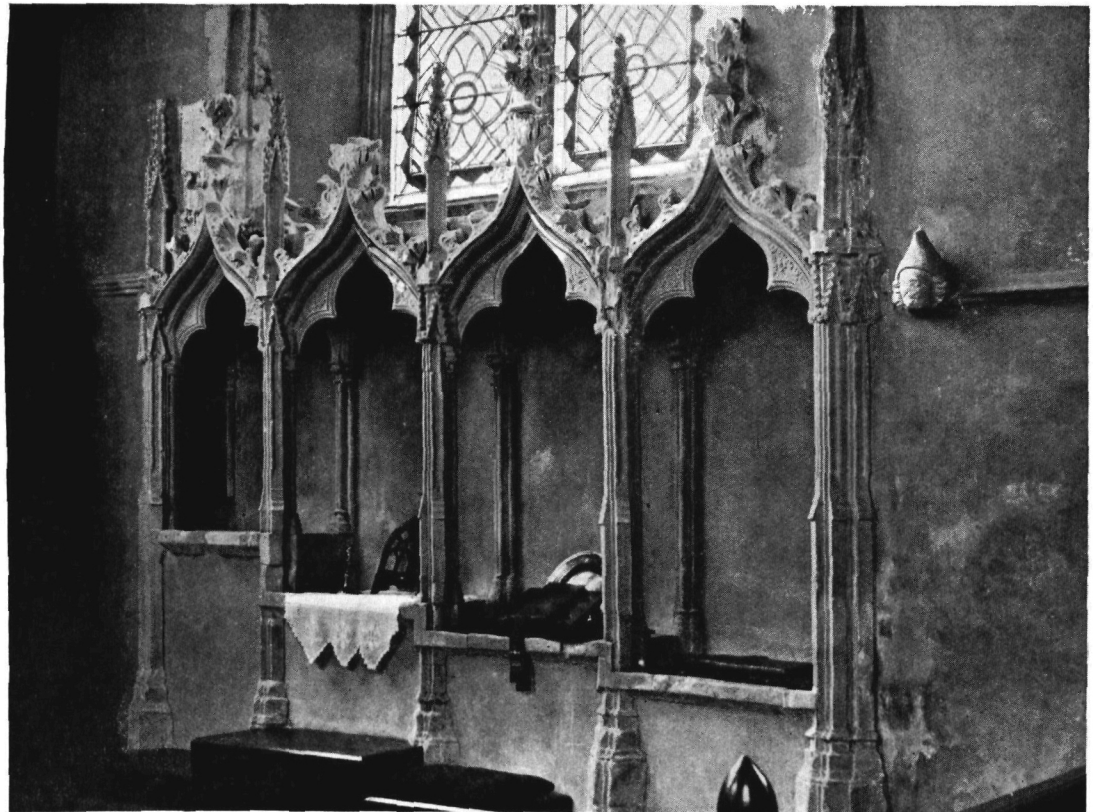
bands on the shafts of the arcading are of a more elaborate character. The triple lancet windows at the ends of either transept are modern, and replaced two large fifteenth-century windows, which are shown in several early views.

The north transept was formerly shut off from the rest of the church by a screen, and used for holding the Rector's Court. In mediæval times, and down to 1845, the Rector of Cliffe had a peculiar jurisdiction within his parish. He was exempt from all ecclesiastical authority other than personal visitation from the Archbishop of Canterbury. The wills of parishioners were proved in the local court, and the official seal of the Peculiar is still preserved in the Rochester Museum.

The chancel, which appears to have been rebuilt entirely in the middle of the fourteenth century, is complete, save for the insertion of a modern east window, which replaced an extraordinarily ugly eighteenth-century aperture of brick. The remaining windows are all fine examples of Decorated work, the tracery of which shows a distinctly Flamboyant tendency. The eastern pair affords interesting examples of Kentish tracery. All have good hood-mouldings with grotesques at the ends. Beneath the windows is a string-course, which terminates at the altar rails with a grotesque head on either side. That on the north has been renewed, but the southern one represents the battered head of a monk.

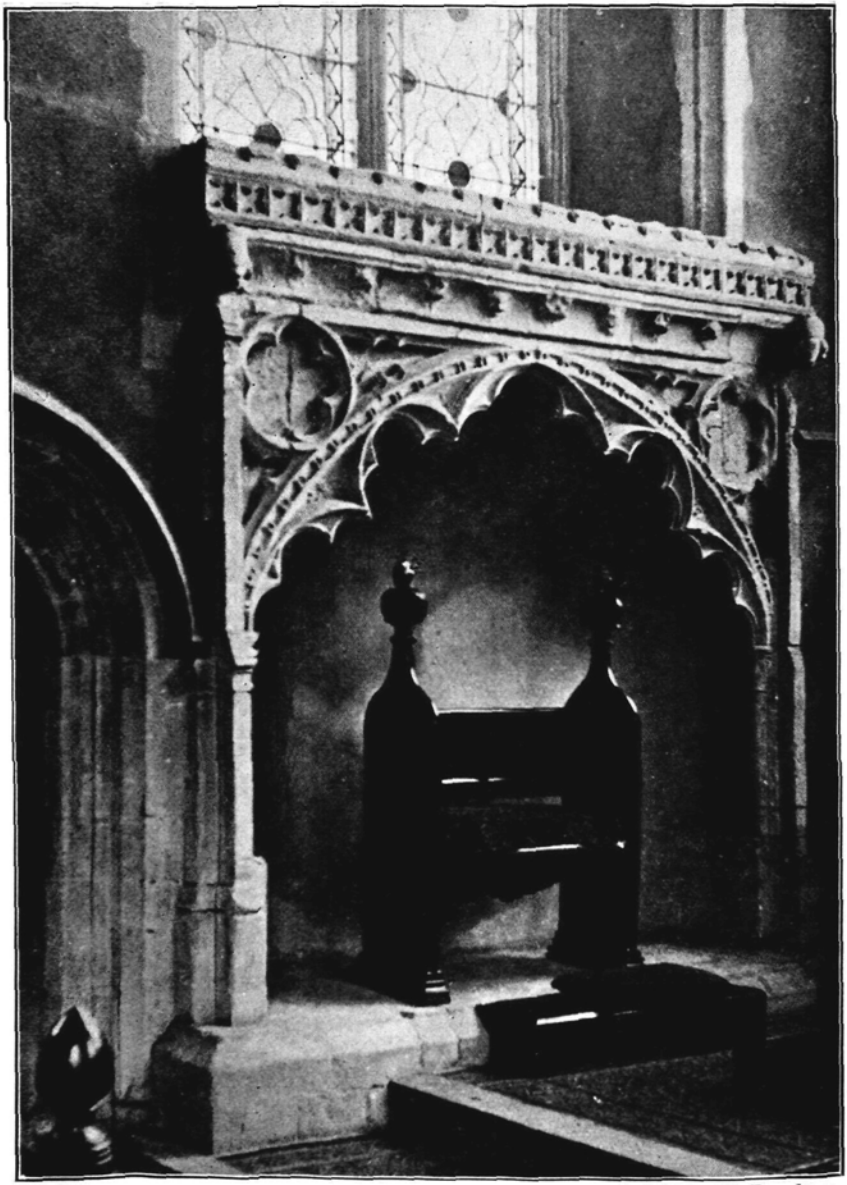
The chief interest in the chancel, however, is its fittings. In the south wall is a series of three very beautiful fourteenth-century sedilia, with a piscina of uniform character, recessed in the wall and ascending eastward. They are divided by slender buttressed shafts, supporting elaborately carved ogee canopies, and surmounted by crockets and finials. Beneath the canopies are trefoiled arches, and behind these the roof is carved in imitation of sexpartite vaulting.

Opposite in the north wall is a fine late-fourteenth-century tomb of early Perpendicular character, which is often referred to as an Easter sepulchre, for which purpose it may well have been used. The wide cinquefoil arch is surmounted by an elaborate embattled cornice, supported on narrow



CLIFFE-AT-HOO CHURCH.
Sedilia.

[*Photo. F. C. Elliston Erwood.*



CLIFFE-AT-HOO CHURCH. [*Photo. H. Boughton.*
Monument on North side of the Chancel.

buttressed shafts, and terminating with a carved head at either end; circles with internal cuspings fill the spandrils of the arch.

Immediately west of this tomb is a blocked doorway which led to an adjoining building, now demolished. The exterior wall at this point is of a different character from the rest of the chancel walls, and apparently of earlier date. It is composed of a variety of material, including pieces of Caen stone, which probably came from the earlier church, and suggests that this section of wall and the chapel, of which it formed part, survived the re-building of the chancel in the fourteenth century. The two adjoining buttresses have been constructed out of sections of the eastern and western walls of the chapel, and serve to indicate its approximate size. The position of its low roof is clearly shown by the stone corbels which remain at a height of 7 feet 8 inches from the ground. The floor must have been somewhat lower than the present ground level, as the small piscina in the exterior of the chancel wall is now only two feet from the ground. In the base of the westernmost of the two buttresses is a niche, now scarcely eighteen inches from the ground, which may originally have been used as a holy water stoup, since it was close to the entrance to the chapel. This small building probably served the joint purpose of a Sacristy and Chapel. That it contained an altar there can be no doubt from the piscina already noted.

It may possibly be referred to in the will of Richard Elys, who in 1468 left 12 pence to the light of the Blessed Mary in the chapel and 4 pence to the light of the Blessed Mary near the pulpit, though one of the transepts may of course have been here intended. Such evidence as there is on the other hand seems to point to the chapel having been pulled down at the time of the rebuilding of the chancel or soon afterwards. The blocked doorway in the chancel wall was originally carried down to the present ground level on the exterior, so that there must have been some steps in the thickness of the wall leading down into the chapel. The date of this doorway, which was probably contemporary with the

building to which it led, is uncertain. It is certainly earlier than the adjoining late-fourteenth-century tomb, as parts have been cut away when the latter was inserted, and the use of somewhat small stones points to an earlier rather than a later date. Its details on the other hand include the wave moulding which is usually taken to be characteristic of the Decorated period, or one might otherwise be inclined to think that it formed part of the thirteenth century chancel. The filling on the exterior is certainly not modern, and the fact that a plinth has been inserted when the doorway was blocked up, to match that round the rest of the chancel evidently with the intention, which was never carried out, of continuing it along the section of earlier walling where the chapel stood, seems to suggest that this work was undertaken about the same time as the rebuilding of the chancel.

We are now in a position to consider the probable development of the ground plan, which, though somewhat conjectural for the earlier period, has left some interesting and unmistakable traces of its later history. In the entire absence of remains of the early Norman church, one is forced to rely for the identification of its position on analogy with other buildings of similar type. The first church of which we have any record in all probability consisted of a simple nave and square-ended chancel. The three easternmost bays of the existing nave arcade would preserve the line of the north and south walls of the church, while the chancel would occupy the interior of the present crossing. There is nothing to show the position of the west wall, but it would have been approximately in a line with the present north and south doors. Towards the close of the twelfth century north and south aisles, about half the width of the present ones, were probably added by piercing the original walls with arches, and about the same time a small chapel or aisle appears to have been built to the north of the original chancel, and the existing arch constructed so as to give access into it. This arch, which cannot be later than about 1200, is obviously much earlier than the present transept and must therefore have communicated with an earlier building on its

CLIFFE-AT-HOO CHURCH. [*Photo. E. C. Youens.*

Nave looking West, showing strainer-arch, and at right hand upper part the entrance to Rood Loft.

site. Some evidence in support of this came to light during the restoration of the north transept in 1864. The foundations of an early wall four feet thick were found beneath the present floor running parallel and close to its eastern wall. At a distance of 15 feet from the chancel wall it appears to have been met by another wall at right angles to it. Unfortunately no further record was made of this discovery, but it establishes beyond doubt the existence of a building in this position, to which the arch in question opened. It is possible that this was the chancel arch of a late twelfth century church, and that the foundations were those of the former chancel, though such a theory would be more difficult to reconcile with the later development of the plan. Moreover on the assumption that there already existed a building on the north of the original chancel when the thirteenth-century builders decided to remodel the church, it is possible to account for the hitherto unexplained fact that the north transept is wider than the south by some three feet.

The normal development of the thirteenth century produced a cruciform church. A new and longer chancel, and north and south transepts, were built around the small twelfth century chancel, while the nave and aisles were lengthened by the removal of the west wall some 20 feet further west, and a tower erected to the west of this. These extensive works could not of course have been simultaneous.

The tower appears to be somewhat earlier than the transepts, so that presumably the lengthening of the west end was undertaken first, and at the same time an Early English arcade, extending an additional bay westward, was inserted in place of the twelfth century arches. Contrary to what was frequently the case in churches of this type, there was clearly never any intention to erect a central tower over the crossing, since the abutments are far too weak to have supported the weight. This weakness would account for the presence of the strainer arch of oak, which must have been inserted some time in the fifteenth century.

With the completion of this work the early builders grew

more ambitious. Almost immediately the work on the new chancel and transepts must have begun. A temporary hoarding was probably erected, shutting off the nave and the altar, transferred there until the new works were finished. The chancel and the south transept were probably first erected, as the sites were free of buildings; the width of the latter being determined by the size of the former chancel and the chapel on the north. When the work was completed attention was directed towards the north transept, which, according to the usual practice, would have been rebuilt round the earlier building, the foundations of which were discovered in 1864, thus accounting for its slight extra width. Probably towards the end of the century the small chapel, the remains of which have already been mentioned, was built on the north of the new chancel.

Considerable alterations were undertaken in the fourteenth century, the principal of which were the rebuilding of the thirteenth century chancel, and the widening of the nave aisles. The latter was a very frequent form of improvement at this period, and was usually occasioned by the desire for extra space to set up additional altars so as to meet the enormous increase in the popularity of Chantry bequests. At Cliffe the effect of this widening is clearly shown on the already completed design of the transepts. In the north transept one of the lancets was cut away, and a short pointed arch springing from shafts, which do not reach the ground, inserted in its place. The apex of the original lancet still remains in the wall above. In the south transept a similar alteration in plan is treated somewhat differently. A segmental arch, here reaching to the ground, and opening into the extended aisle, was inserted within the earlier blind arch in the west wall of the transept. This also necessitated the removal of an original lancet, the head of which can be seen occupying the space between the original arch and the later insertion. The windows in the nave all appear to be of this date. Probably contemporary with this extension of the aisles, was the heightening of the nave to allow for the clerestory with its row of single splayed lancets. The junction

of this work with the old can be clearly seen immediately above the arcading. The thirteenth century roof of the nave was about on a level with those of the aisles, as the small window in the east face of the tower, which now looks into the church, must originally have looked out over the roof. The line of the fourteenth roof, which was erected at the time that the clerestory was added, can be seen on the wall of the tower, passing across the window opening. Below this the position of the third roof, erected 1732, can also be seen. This roof, which was almost flat, was replaced by the present one about forty years ago.

The rebuilding of the chancel would appear to have been undertaken at the same time as extension of the aisles, to judge from the similarity of the external stonework. This would again have necessitated the use of the nave for services, and it is probable that either at this time, or during the earlier work on the interior of the transepts, the round headed arch, which can be seen on the exterior of the north wall of the north transept, was constructed for the convenience of the masons while the ordinary entrances were not available. That this arch or doorway, which has sometimes been said to be of Norman origin, was really of a much later date, and of a purely temporary character, seems to be shown by a close inspection of its construction. The position is not in the centre of the wall while the arch itself is made up of a variety of material including large flints, pieces of Reigate stone and a single block of calcareous tufa, the latter doubtless coming from the early church. Further, the fact that the filling of the arch seems to be of much the same character as the adjoining walls points to it only having been used for a comparatively short time. Everything in fact indicates that it was a purely temporary arrangement used during the construction of the transepts, or the later chancel, and filled up as soon as the work was completed. A somewhat similar, though smaller, arch in the exterior of the south wall of the tower was probably of a similar nature, though its purpose is conjectural, and it may have had some connection with original stairs to the upper floors.

By the end of the fourteenth century the church was practically complete. The porch was added early in the following century, and the large Perpendicular windows, which formerly existed at the ends of the transepts, inserted. At the same time the upper part of the west tower was rebuilt. Certain work also seems to have been in progress about this time in the chancel, for in the will of the Rector in 1413 a sum of money was left towards that object. Exactly what resulted from the bequest one cannot say.

The subsequent additions were chiefly in the nature of modern insertions. The eighteenth century saw many acts of destruction which are duly entered in the parish registers. In 1730, during the Rectorship of George Green, the old high-gabled roofs were taken down, the lead recast, and an almost flat roof substituted. Two years later the east window was demolished and a hideous brick opening substituted, and at the same time the old timber roof of the chancel, which, since it bore his arms, had probably been erected during the time of Archbishop Arundel, who occupied the See from 1396 to 1414, was pulled down, and both the nave and chancel ceiled. During this period also the two enormous brick buttresses, which are shown in some early views, were erected on the north and south sides of the tower. The church was in this condition when Sir Stephen Glynne visited it in 1857. Subsequent restorations have been extensive, though for the most part necessary. The brick buttresses to the Tower were removed shortly after Sir Stephen Glynne's visit, and the present circular stair turret erected in the place of the southern one. The chancel was restored in 1875, when traces of the original reredos were discovered, and the jambs of the original east window, which were of Reigate stone and about 15 feet apart, were found in situ. The present window was erected in place of the eighteenth century one in 1884, and at the same time the flat lead roofs of the nave and chancel were removed, and the present high-pitched tiled roofs substituted. Finally a small building, without any communication with the church, has been erected in recent years to the east of the north transept.

During these successive restorations much of the external walls has been refaced from time to time, and the whole of the upper part of the east wall of the chancel which was pulled down in 1732, was rebuilt when the present window was inserted.

It is somewhat difficult now to picture the appearance of the interior of the church in mediæval times. A brilliant colour scheme evidently played an important part in the general effect. Many of the piers of the nave arcades, which are apparently constructed of hard chalk, still show traces of a bold chevron pattern in red and yellow, and, together with the extensive wall paintings, slight traces of which still remain in the transepts, and the brilliance of the mediæval glass, must have combined to give a very rich effect to the interior. Of the ancient glass very little remains. Dr. Grayling mentions some fourteenth century borders in the chancel windows, which seem to have disappeared. In the central window of the north aisle is a small piece of ancient glass representing a ship with fish in the water beneath, which is said to have been found many years ago in a shed in the churchyard. In the top of the adjoining window is a fifteenth century figure of the Virgin and Child. A coat of arms in another window is mentioned by Thorpe, but this also seems to have disappeared. The wall paintings, though now very indistinct, were evidently much clearer until comparatively recent times. On the east wall of the north transept, in the space between the southernmost of the two lancets and the arch in which it is placed, is one of these paintings, divided into five panels, depicting the Martyrdom of St. Edmund. Very little of it can now be made out, though the whole of this transept showed traces of colour at the time of the restoration of 1864. Some remains of a painting in a similar position in the south transept can still be seen, and are said to represent the Last Judgment.

Several bequests for the provision and upkeep of lights before the various altars add a little to our knowledge of the interior in mediæval times. Of the various saints to whom lights were dedicated in the church Our Lady was of course

the most popular. We have already seen that two altars were dedicated to her. One of these is again mentioned in 1483, when Robert Qwikerell left 20 pence "to the Parish Church of Cleue and to the ligth of Our Lady besyde the pulpett there" and also a similar amount to the lights of St. Laurence and St. George. Richard Elys in 1469 also mentions lights of St. Christopher, St. John and St. James, while in 1509 Steven Tudor bequeathed to the high altar of St. Elyn 20 pence, and to the light of St. Elyn 12 pence.

Of the position of these various lights one cannot speak with any certainty. That to St. Christopher would have been near the main entrance to the church, while the light of the patron saint, St. Helen, would have been in the Chancel, probably over the high altar. Remains of a piscina in four other places in the church prove the former existence of altars in these positions. That in the Sacristy has already been mentioned. At least one altar stood in each of the transepts, while a small piscina, apparently constructed of broken window tracery at the east end of the south aisle, testifies to another. An altar probably stood in a corresponding position in the north aisle. This disposition would exactly account for the number of lights mentioned in early wills. Besides the lights burning before the altars, there would also be a light before the great Rood over the entrance to the chancel. Some of the lower panels of the original rood screen survive. Above, and partly supported by, the screen was the rood loft, which was already in existence as early as 1413, when it is mentioned in conjunction with the great rood itself and its attendant figures in the will of Nicholas de Ryssheton, Canon of Sarum and Rector of Cliffe. The small fifteenth century doorway with a four-centred arch, which gave access to it, can still be seen high up in the north wall just east of the entrance of the chancel, and the original stairs remain in good condition, though the entrance from the church has been blocked up and covered over with plaster.

The furniture in the church has suffered much from "restoration" and other causes. Six of the ancient stalls

remain, three on each side of the chancel, though panelling at the backs and all the seats except two are modern. The sides terminate in carved heads, some of which have been renewed, while the two original miserecords are carved with grotesques. The Communion rails are Jacobean, though somewhat repaired. They are of the fairly common baluster type with a central bulge. The pulpit is a very fine piece of Renaissance carving, and retains the original stand for the hour glass, though the glass itself is modern; on it is the date 1636.

Besides the fragments of the original rood screen there is another screen shutting off the vestry under the tower.

The font, which has been moved from its original position, is 3 feet 4½ inches in height, and apparently of late-fourteenth century date. The perfectly plain octagonal bowl has concave sides, around the lower edge of which is a hollow chamfer. The bowl is supported by an octagonal, buttressed stem on a plain base. On the westernmost pillar of the south arcade can still be seen the bracket and chain by which the font cover was raised, indicating its original position.

The monuments in the church are few, and call for little comment. In the floor at the west end of the north aisle are two flat coffin-shaped stones with early fourteenth century French inscriptions in Lombardic capitals. The one on the north is probably the earlier, judging from the very rough characters which are now scarcely legible. It commemorated Eleanor de Clive, of whom nothing is known. The other stone shows traces of brass, and is inscribed in memory of Joan, wife of John Ram. These stones are described in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and old rubbings of them exist among the collection of the Society of Antiquaries. There are three brasses of seventeenth century date, one of which is thought to have been engraved locally.

Two wills are of interest in connection with early burials in the church. In 1376 Robert de Walton, Rector of Cliffe, desired to be buried in the church of Clyve at the entrance to the quire. Some years later, in 1387, Thomas de Lynton, a subsequent rector, directed that he should be buried in the

chancel near the entrance, and between the entrance to the quire and the tomb of Master Robert Walton, late Rector, and he ordered that a handsome marble monument should be placed over his body at the discretion of his executors. It seems not unlikely however that his executors favoured a brass monument. In the chancel is the stone matrix of what must once have been a very fine brass of about this period, representing a priest under a canopy. Another smaller matrix of an ecclesiastic is close to the pulpit.

Of the church plate the most important piece is a very beautiful paten of silver gilt of the early part of the sixteenth century. In the centre, worked in coloured enamels, is a seated figure of God the Father holding before Him a figure of the crucifixion. The extreme rarity of pre-reformation plate is not generally recognised, and the example at Cliffe is one of the finest English patens in existence. At some period or other the paten at Cliffe served as a chalice cover, and it is even said to have been used as an alms dish, which would account for its numerous signs of wear. The other plate is of seventeenth century and later date, and of no particular interest.

It remains for me to acknowledge my indebtedness to Mr. F. C. Elliston Erwood for several suggestions and for the photographs which illustrate this paper. The present account is intended to supplement, but not to supplant altogether, an article on Cliffe Church, by the Rev. I. G. Lloyd, a former Rector, which appeared in Vol. XI. of *Arch. Cant.*, where reference should be made for further particulars.

Note on the Screenwork, by the Editor.

In 1857 Sir Stephen Glynne visited the church and recorded that the rood-screen, though "mutilated" still remained. But about 1865-70, on the pretext that it was in disrepair, the curate-in-charge caused all the upper part to be cut away down to the level of the middle rail. In 1876, the Rev. I. G. Lloyd declared that "the remains of the ancient

rood-screen have been preserved as well as they could be, and only stay where they are until they can be replaced by a new screen, . . . sufficient of the original being left to serve as a guide for reconstruction." No proper care, however, was taken of the displaced portions and all had disappeared by August, 1909. Some of them indeed, were burnt for firewood. What survives of the original rood-screen is the wainscot, or rather that portion of it which stood on each side of the entrance, for the doors or gates have been entirely removed. Each half is 7 feet 8 inches long, and the space between the doors is 4 feet 6 inches wide. The timber plinth, standing on a step 6 inches high, is modern. Along the top of the rail has been fitted (as noted in 1909) a piece of timber 2 inches thick, possibly, as the mortice holes in it seemed to imply, a relic of the destroyed upper portion of the screen. Exclusive of this addition the ancient wainscotting measures 3 ft. 3 inches high. The face of the middle rail is embellished with a band of tracery in the form of a wavy line between trefoils. This band is 5 inches deep. Either existing section of the wainscot is divided by a moulded stile into two compartments or bays, each of which again is subdivided by a lesser moulded stile, and each sub-division further divided into two panels, thus totalling eight panels on the north side and eight on the south. The whole screen, then, must have consisted of five bays of four panels apiece. The panel-heads are enriched with late Gothic ornaments to the depth of $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches, while the bottom of each panel contains tracery of saltire outline to a height of 7 inches. The last-named ornaments are sadly broken and defective. The total length of the rood screen would be slightly under 20 feet. There is no chancel-arch, but that the rood-screen stands *in situ* is proved by the fact that the fourteenth century string-course of the chancel walls is cut off abruptly at this point both on the north and on the south, to make way for the end standards of the screen. The string-course is 2 feet 11 inches above the top of the old screenwork. It is much to be regretted that in defiance of expert advice, a modern upper part has now (subsequently to 1909) been

planted upon the ancient wainscot. This addition is all wrong, since it is an imitation of the style of a century earlier than the old screen underneath it, and does not harmonise with the latter in the slightest degree. No attempt has been made to follow up the lines of the old standards, the new ones being of an entirely different profile, as anyone can judge who cares to look. The authentic portion of the rood-screen is late-Gothic of about 1460 to 1475.

A rood loft seems to have been introduced here unusually early for there is recorded a bequest in 1413 for the rood images "*supra solario.*" The rood-stair was entered from the north transept, but the entrance is walled up. The steps are continued in the hollow of the wall and emerge southwards immediately over the screen at a height of 11 feet 4 inches above the nave floor level through a four-centred doorway at the western extremity of the north wall of the chancel.

Although some parcloses are said to have been "removed about 1640,"[1] the north chapel at the time of the Kent Archæological Society's visit in July, 1876, stood "separated from the rest of the church by an oaken screen of late Decorated or early Perpendicular character." It must have been removed at the "restoration" in 1897, for there is now no screen work whatever in this position. A screen, however, of the latter end of Edward III.'s reign, about 1370, stands at the west end of the nave. It measures 9 feet 8 inches long by about 10 feet high, and comprises eight rectangular compartments of three lights apiece, the two middle compartments forming the folding doors. The wainscot is plain, without tracery, and the standards are buttressed with buttresses, square on plan, culminating in pointed gables.

A fragment consisting of four bays or compartments of the upper portion of a fifteenth century screen lies against the wall at the west end of the north aisle. It measures 5 feet 4 inches long by 5 feet 3 inches high, each compartment being about 15 inches wide.

AYMER VALLANCE.

[1] *Arch. Cant.*, Vol. XI, p. 150.