



WEST WICKHAM CHURCH, AS SEEN FROM WICKHAM COURT.



WEST WICKHAM CHURCH.

NOTES ON THE PARISH CHURCH OF WEST WICKHAM.

BY GEORGE CLINCH

(OF THE LIBRARY, BRITISH MUSEUM).

THE parish church of West Wickham, dedicated to St. John Baptist, is pleasantly situated upon the rising ground near West Wickham Court, about half a mile from the village. It consists of a nave, chancel, Lady chapel, north aisle, south-western tower, and vestry. The shape is somewhat odd, owing to the north aisle being at right angles with the nave, but the antiquity of the chancel and the little Lady chapel which adjoins it, as well as the beauty of the old stained-glass windows and the external scenery and surroundings, amply atone for any little defect in the ground-plan. With the exception of the chancel and Lady chapel, the whole of the church was rebuilt or much altered in the year 1844. The dimensions are, roughly, as follows :

Interior measurements—Nave, 34 feet 1 inch by 21 feet 6 inches ; north aisle, 27 feet 8 inches by 24 feet 4 inches ; western recess, 9 feet 10 inches by 4 feet 6 inches ; chancel, 28 feet by 19 feet ; Lady chapel, 28 feet by 12 feet. Tower (porch), 11 feet 10 inches square ; vestry, 8 feet 8 inches by 9 feet.

Exterior measurement—Tower, 19 feet square ; 48 feet high.

The oldest parts of the structure—the chancel and Lady chapel—seem to date from about the year 1467 ; and, as far as I have been able to observe, there do not seem to be in the architectural remains any traces of earlier work, although the existence of an earlier church is well known, and indeed is testified by the monuments in the present edifice and by early records.

Leland thus speaks of the building of the church and manor-house : “ *Henry, Sunne to John (Heydon), passid not of the Gaines of the Law, or to any great Getting by Service, but al for profite at Home. And yet he did great Feates.* ”

* * * * *

“ He purchasid 300 Markes of Land yn yerely Rent.

“ Wherof an Hunderith *li.* by Yere is at *Wikam* by *Lewsham* in *Surrey*, toward *Oroydon*, wher he buildid a right fair Manor Place, and a fair Chirche.”*

Stained Glass.—The “ six different shields of relatives of the family of Lennard,” which Hasted mentions as occupying in his time the north windows of the Lady chapel, are unfortunately removed or destroyed, but as they are of great interest, I transcribe

* *The Itinerary of John Leland the Antiquary.* Second Edition. Oxford : 1745. 8vo, vol. iv., p. 12.

from Thorpe's *Registrum Roffense* the following account of them :
 "In three north windows are the effigies of our Saviour, the Virgin Mary, St. Anthony, some saint carrying an infant on his back through a river, and the following coats, viz. :

"I. Barry of six *ermine* and *gules* ; the crest a boot *sable*, spurred *or*, and over it two hands holding an heart proper ; with this motto—*Cor mobile, cor mobile*.*

"II. Two coats quarterly : first, quarterly *argent* and *sable* ; 2dly, *argent*, a chevron *gules*, between three bulls heads couped *sable* ; impaling, *azure*, a bend ingrailed *argent*, between two cotizes *or*.

"III. *Argent*, a cross ingrailed *gules* ; impaling, quarterly *argent* and *gules*, a cross ingrailed counterchanged.

"IV. *Argent*, six fleurs-de-lis *azure* (3, 2, and 1), a chief . . . ; impaling, quarterly *argent* and *gules*, a cross ingrailed counterchanged.

"V. *Sable*, a star of eight points *or* between two flanches *ermine*, a crescent for difference ; impaling, quarterly *argent* and *gules*, a cross ingrailed counterchanged.

"VI. *Gules*, on a saltier *argent* a rose of the field, seeded proper."

In the east window of the Lady chapel there appear to have been, according to the account in the *Registrum Roffense*, "the following arms, viz. :

"I. The arms and quarterings of Sir Samuel Lennard, as above"
 ("Four coats quarterly : first, *Or*, on a fesse *gules* three fleurs-de-lis of the field ; secondly, quarterly *argent* and *sable*, an eagle displayed on the first quarter of the last ; thirdly, *vair*, a chief *ermine* ; the fourth, as in the first ; the crest a tiger's head *argent*, within a crown *or*"); "impaling, *gules*, a bend between three martlets *or*, and under it these words—Lennard and Slany.

"II. Two coats quarterly : first, *Azure*, three fleurs-de-lis *or* ; secondly, *gules*, three lions passant-gardant *or* ; impaling, *gules*, a saltier *argent*.

"III. *Gules*, on a chevron *or*, three lions rampant *sable* ; impaling *gules*, on a saltier *argent*, a rose of the field.

"IV. Quarterly *argent* and *gules*, a cross ingrailed counterchanged ; impaling, *argent*, a chevron *gules*, between two bulls heads couped *sable*.

"In the same window are the effigies of our Saviour, the Virgin Mary, and of Death ; over whose head are these words—*Ne remiscaris, domine, delicta nostra paren. . .*"

Of these arms in stained glass none now remain in the church.

The following is a list of the subjects now represented in the old glass in the Lady chapel :

East window. South light: The Blessed Virgin and infant Saviour. Middle light: St. Christopher and our Saviour ; also a kneeling skeleton, which Mr. J. G. Waller describes as that of Henry Heydon, who rebuilt this church. His coat of arms was originally at the feet of the skeleton. North light: St. Anne and

* Lysons says the motto is, "Cor mobile, cor immobile."

the Blessed Virgin. On the scroll over the skeleton's head the words which Thorpe reads, "... *delicta nostra paren...*" are by Lysons and most other people understood to be, "*delicta mea aut par...*"

First north window. East light: St. Elizabeth (?).* West light: The Blessed Virgin and infant Saviour.

Second north window. East light: St. Catherine. West light: St. Christopher.

The latter is described by Thorpe as "some saint carrying an infant on his back, through a river." Alban Butler says: "He seems to have taken the name of Christopher . . . to express his ardent love of his Redeemer, by which he always carried him in his breast as the object of all his affections and desires. He is represented wading through a sea of tribulation, by which the faithful meant to signify the many sufferings through which he arrived at eternal life."

Readers of William Hone's *Every-day Book* may remember a short article on St. Catherine (vol. i., pp. 1504-1508). It gives an engraving of this stained-glass window in West Wickham Church, which shews a full-length figure of the saint, crowned, and the head encircled with a glory. She has long flowing robes, over which falls her hair, reaching below the waist. Her left hand holds a book and a large sword, the handle of which is richly ornamented. At St. Catherine's feet lies the prostrate figure of the Emperor Maximinus, crowned, and with a sceptre or mace in his left hand. His right hand rests upon a wheel armed with knives or sharp spikes, which appears in the background. Alban Butler thus narrates the incident: "She is said first to have been put upon an engine composed of four wheels joined together, and stuck with sharp-pointed spikes, that when the wheels were moved she might be torn in pieces. . . . At the first stirring of the terrible engine the cords with which the martyr was tied were broken asunder by the invisible hand of an angel, and she was delivered from that death. . . . She was at length beheaded."

William Hone, writing in 1831, says, "Some years ago, collectors of curiosities paid their attentions to these windows, and carried off specimens; since then wires have been put up on the outside." (*Table Book*, vol. i., p. 814.)

Some of the modern stained glass is by Thomas Willement. In the south wall of the chancel a window by him represents our Saviour standing, with the motto, "Feed my sheep;" and also a kneeling figure of St. Peter, with the text, "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." In the lower part of the window are the initials, "T. W.;" underneath is this inscription: "*To the glory of God, a memorial of deep respect and affection to the*

* The saint who is here represented may be St. Elizabeth, perhaps, as the face shews some marks of age. Hasted and Thorpe mention a figure of St. Anthony as being in one of the north windows, but they do not mention St. Catherine, and this indicates that they were probably in error, but it is quite possible that a figure of St. Anthony may have existed here.

Rev. Sir Chas. F. Farnaby, Baronet, by his tenants. Anno Domini M.DCCCLX." The east window of the chancel is filled with stained glass, the subject of which is the transfiguration of our Lord upon the mount. The central figure is surrounded by a halo of glory; on one hand stands Moses holding the tables of the Commandments, and on the other stands Elias with a scroll in his hand. The three apostles, Saints Peter, James, and John, lie at the foot of the window, under which is the following inscription: "*To the glory of God, and to fulfil the intentions of Sir Chas. F. Farnaby, Bart., A.D. MDCCCLX.*" In two of the lower quarries these initials and date appear: "T. W. 1860."

In the north wall of the Lady chapel there is a window in which are the figures of Saints John and Peter (?), but there is no inscription. In the west wall of the north aisle is a well-executed stained-glass window; in the south light is a seated figure of our Lord and two female figures, probably those of Martha and Mary, one kneeling at the Saviour's feet, the other standing close by. The north light represents the resurrection of our Lord. Under the window is this inscription: "*To the memory of their parents, John and Harriet West, by their children, A.D. 1864.*" A small trefoil window in the north wall of the north aisle is filled with rich stained glass.

There are three monumental brasses remaining; and the matrix of a fourth—a demi-figure of a priest with inscription—still exists close to the south door of the church. Near the pulpit, at the junction of the nave and chancel, there is the figure in brass of a priest in sacerdotal attire, about 18 inches in length, and beneath it the following: "Hic jacet D'n's Will'm's de Thorp quonda' Rector istius Eccl'ie qui obiit decimo die Maii Anno d'ni M^oCCCC Septimo cui' an'e propicietur deus AMEN." Near the altar rails is another brass with the figure of a priest, about 12 inches in length, with this inscription on a plate: "Pray for the soule of S^r John' Stockton the whiche decessed the xxiiii day of september y^e yer of o' lord M^oV^eXV o' whose soule ih'u have m'ci."

On the nave's south wall is another inscription in brass, to the memory of a former Rector, and evidently erected during his lifetime. It reads as follows:

"JOHN LANG BORNE AT RICHMOND IN Y^e COVNTY OF YORKE WAS AFTERWARDE ONE OF THE FELLOWES OF S^t IOHNS COL: IN CAMBRIDGE, BY THE SPACE OF IX YEARES; FROM THENCE HE WAS LAWFVLLY & FREELY CALLED TO BE PARSON OF THIS PARISH OF WESTWICKHAM, WHERE HE CONTINVED RESIDENT THE WHOLE TIME OF XXXVIJ YEARES AND MORE WHO LIVED HERRE WITH THE GOOD REPORTE & LIKINGE OF THOSE Y^t DID FEARE GOD & IN AN ASSVRED HOPE OF A BETTER LIFE AFTER THIS IN Y^e KINGDOME OF HEAVEN; THIS MEMORIALL OF HIM WAS MADE IN A^o 1619. AND IN THE 77th YEARE OF HIS AGE:"

On the chancel floor is an inscribed slab to the memory of

"Burton Morice, Esq., Steward and one of the Judges of His Majesty's Palace Court at Westminster," *died* 1825.

On the floor of the nave are memorials to the following: "Frances, late wife of Ch . . . Martin," *d.* 1708. "Sarah, the daughter of William Whitaker, Esq., and Loretta Maria, his wife," *d.* 1746. "Also William Whitaker, their only son," *d.* 1761. "John Adams Gregory, son of John S. Gregory, and Charlotte, his wife," *d.* 1828. "Sir Thomas Wilson, Bart.," *d.* 1775; "also . . . ne Elizabeth, his wife," *d.* 17 . .

There is in the nave one other inscribed slab, the inscription of which is almost worn out. It probably commemorates Elizabeth, wife of William Applebury, *d.* 1706.

North of the altar is a marble tablet, "Sacred to the memory of Anne Elizabeth, wife of the Rev^d Frederick Gildart," *d.* 1817; and on the south wall of the nave is a similar memorial, "Sacred to the memory of the reverend Frederick Gildart, LL.B.," *d.* 1841.

In the Lady chapel, on its south wall, there is a curious marble tomb. The central figure is that of a lady seated, with one hand resting upon a clasped book which lies upon a square pedestal or table. At her feet is the figure of a young child clad in grave-clothes. This is the tomb of "Margaret, wife of Thomas Hobbes, esq., eldest daughter of Sir Samuel Lennard, who died in child-bed of her only child, in 1608, aged 20." Below these carved figures is a tablet upon which the following inscription appears:

"Margaritæ uxoris Tho: Hobbes Arm^{ri}: primogenitæ
Sam^{lis}: Lennard Mil^s: 20: plus annos natæ ex abortu
filioli sui unici (hic unâ sepulti) 20: Febr: A^o Dⁿⁱ:
1608: ex morte ad vitam translata corpus hic
obdormit. In cujus erga Deum pietatis, in paren-
tes conjugemque, amoris et obsequii gemmæ vere
splendidæ, piam memoriam: lugubris conjux
indignum hoc monumentum
posuit."

The arms on this monument are mentioned by Thorpe thus: "*Argent*, a bend wavy, *azure*, between two birds of the same (as I think); impaling four coats quarterly: first, *Or*, on a fesse *gules* three fleurs-de-lis of the field; secondly, quarterly *argent* and *sable*, an eagle displayed of the last in the first quarter; thirdly, *Vaire*, *argent* and *sable*, a chief *ermine*; fourth, as the first."

Close by, on the east wall, is an altar-tomb surmounted by the Lennard arms, on which, written in gold, is this inscription:

"Memoriæ Samuelis Lennardi, militis
charissimi mariti posuit mœstissima
conjux Elisabetha: Is Cheveningo
oriundus, Cantabrigiæ & Lincolnensis hospitii
alumnus; Westwickhamiæ, ubi sedem fuit
terræ redditus, φιλομαθης & φιλαρετος* fuit

* The Greek letters are very inaccurately formed, and I am indebted to Professor Skeat for the above reading. The meaning is "a lover of learning, and a lover of virtue."

Christianæ veritatis zelo, Romani vero pseudo-christianismi & bigeneris religionis odio flagravit: ex præfata Elizabetha, Stephani Slanye, militis, nuper maioris civitatis London filiarum una filios habuit quatuor filiasque octo. Obiit anno ætatis sexagesimo quinto ineunte, eræ Christianæ 1618. Aprilis primo."

Four modern tablets of white marble on the Lady chapel's north wall commemorate several members of the Farnaby and Cator families.

First tablet: "Rev^d Sir Charles Francis Farnaby, Bart," died 1859. "Eliza, his widow," died 1861.

Second Tablet: "Penelope Mary Cator, eldest daughter of Lieutenant Colonel William Cator," died 1830. "Charles Fitzroy Cator, youngest son of Colonel William Cator," died 1834. "General Sir William Cator, K.C.B.," died 1866.

Third tablet: "Sir John Farnaby, Bart," died 1802. "Mary, his widow," died 1833. "Also . . . their only daughter and three sons:" viz., "Penelope Anne," died 1833; "John Samuel Farnaby, Esqre.," died 1813; "Lennard Motley Farnaby," killed at the storming of Fort Cornelis, Java, 1811; "William Thomas Farnaby," died 1809.

Fourth tablet: "Laura, wife of Captⁿ J. Farnaby Cator," died 1850.

On the south wall of the Lady chapel is a marble tablet: "Sacred to the memory of Mrs. Elizabeth Richardson," *d.* 1823.

On the north wall of the nave is a small marble tablet: "Sacred to the memory of Harriet, Countess of Devon, born May 25th, 1777; died December 16th, 1839. 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.'—Matt^w c. 5, v. 8." In the nave are tablets to the memory of "Isaac James, of St. James's, Westminster, Citizen," died 1828; "also of Belinda, Relict of the above named Isaac James, who departed this life Augst 12th 1837, aged 60 years;" and to "Elizabeth, Wife of John Howell of this Parish, died March 28th 1838, aged 68 years."

In the north aisle is a large marble tablet, erected in 1846, to the memory of the following members of the West family: Gilbert (author of *Observations on the History and Evidence of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ*), *d.* 1756. Richard, son of the above, *d.* 1754. Temple, brother of Gilbert, above mentioned, *d.* 1757. Catherine, relict of Gilbert West, *d.* 1757. Temple (Lieut.-Col.), eldest son of Admiral and Frances, *d.* 1753. Frances, relict of Admiral Temple West, *d.* 1793. Jane, relict of Col. West (and daughter of Francis Drake, a lineal descendant of the great circumnavigator), *d.* 1799. John Balchen, 2nd son of the above Admiral Temple West, *d.* 1793. Thomas, younger brother of the above, *d.* 1821. Frances Sophia, eldest daughter of Col. West, *d.* 1833.


Near the above are tablets to Admiral George Augustus Elliott, *d.* 1872, and Henry Craven, Esq., *d.* 1849. Another, over the east

door of the church, to William Dallas, *d.* 1859; Louisa Dallas, his widow, *d.* 1869; William Dallas, eldest son of the above, *d.* 1853.

Five melodious bells hang in the tower. Of these, four are ancient. The following are their inscriptions:

First Bell. "Gloria Deo in excelsis 1640 B + E."

Second Bell. "C. & G. Mears, Founders, London, 1857."

Third Bell. "Edward Wooden * John Hodgson made mee 1669, W. H. + C. H., Church Warden."

Fourth Bell. "Brianus Eldredge made mee 1624."

Fifth Bell (*tenor*). "Gloria Deo in excelsis Bryanus Eldridge made mee 1640."

The octagonal font, standing upon an octagonal pedestal, is of quite modern date. William Hone visited the church about the year 1831, and he gives, in his *Table Book* (vol. i., p. 813), the following account of the ancient tiles and of the font: "At the north-east corner, near the communion table, are many ancient figured tiles sadly neglected, loose in the pavement; some displaced and lying one upon the other. Worst of all,—and I mean offence to no one, but surely there is blame somewhere,—the ancient stone font, which is in all respects perfect, has been removed from its original situation, and is thrown into a corner. In its place, at the west end, from a nick (not a niche) between the seats, a little trivet-like iron bracket swings in and out, and upon it is a wooden hand-bowl, such as scullions use in a kitchen sink; and in this hand-bowl, of about twelve inches diameter, called a font, I found a common blue-and-white Staffordshire-ware half pint basin. It might be there still; but, while inveighing to my friend W. against the depravation of the fine old font, and the substitution of such a paltry modicum, in my vehemence I fractured the crockery. I felt that I was angry, and, perhaps I sinned; but I made restitution beyond the extent that would replace the baptismal slop-basin."

The ornamented tiles are not now "lying one upon the other." They have been laid down in front of the Communion rails, but they are so much worn that it is to be feared that anything like a restoration of the original arrangement is now impossible. They are of two sizes, viz., five inches square, and four and a half inches square. An elegant example of the fleur-de-lis occurs upon some of the tiles; others bear circles, five-foiled flowers, and other designs. Some have lost all traces of the patterns they originally bore.

Hone mentions that "on the walls are hung pennons, with an iron helmet, sword, spurs, gloves, and other remains of a funeral pageant." (*Table Book*, vol. i., p. 814.) No trace of these interesting relics now remains in the church.

On the south wall of the nave, close to the Communion table, is a piscina, and in the north wall is an ambry or locker, of which the iron hinge-hooks and the staple for receiving the bolt still remain. Another piscina exists on the south wall of the Lady chapel.

* A coin of Charles II. is here inserted in the bell.

The depression or basin which conducted the water to the drain-pipe is elegantly carved in the shape of a six-foiled flower.

On a large black wooden tablet is the following account of "Benefactions to this Parish :

"The Lady Marget Slaney in the year 1610 gave Three Pounds p. ann. to the poor of this parish payable by the Grocers' Company.

"In memory of the execrable Gunpowder Plot Sir Samuel Lennard, Bart., in the year 1617 gave 20 shillings p. ann. to the Minister to preach on the 5th of November and 40 shillings to 40 poor people, viz., 15 of this Parish, 10 of Keston, 10 of Haies, 5 of Farnborough, who are all to be present to hear the Sermon.

"The land in Haies called Dockmead is charg'd with the payment of this money.

"CHRISTOPHER HUSSEY, D.D., Rector.

"MR. GEORGE PHILLIPS, } Churchwardens.
"MR. GABRIEL WOOD, }

"In the year 1734."

The sermon "in memory of the execrable Gunpowder Plot" is still preached, and every year, early on the morning of the 5th of November, old women, only just able to walk, may be seen making their way from the various parishes to the church at West Wickham, in order to participate in Sir Samuel Lennard's benefaction.

The Register dates from the year 1558. The entries before the year 1600 do not appear to be original ; they are probably copies of older entries brought together into one volume. Among the surnames mentioned before that date are the following: Banted, Bartlet, Bullen, Dansten (?), Jarson, Mumford, Phillips, Pope, Pratt, Spilsteede, Stephins, White, Woodward, etc. Mention is frequently made of burials "in woollen" between the years 1678 and 1705. Lysons, in his *Environs of London*, mentions that in 1603 one person died of the plague; in 1608, four; in 1609, two; in 1625, one; and in 1665 (the plague year) only two are mentioned in the register as having died of that terrible epidemic.

An inventory of the church goods at West Wickham in 1552 is printed in the fourteenth volume of *Archæologia Cantiana*, pp. 298-9.

A picturesque old lych-gate, somewhat like that at Beckenham, stands at the entrance to the churchyard.

The following lines, composed by Mr. Gilbert West, and inscribed by him in a summer-house at Wickham Court, are suggestive of the peaceful quietude which still reigns over the country all around West Wickham Church :

"Not wrapt in smoky London's sulphurous clouds,
And not far distant stands my rural cot;
Neither obnoxious to intruding crowds,
Nor for the good and friendly too remote."