

NOTES ON THE PARISH AND CHURCH
OF HARTHILL.

By *Godfrey W. Mathews, F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S.*

Read 18th October, 1928.

THE village of Harthill, in the Hundred of Broxton, is situated $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles North-East of Broxton Station and about 11 miles South-East from Chester. The parish is bounded on the North, South and West by that of Bickerton and on the East by Burwardsley.

It is a hamlet rather than a village, consisting of a few houses, one or two farms, a schoolhouse, the Church and the Rectory. The Church and the majority of the houses are built round an old-world village green, in the centre of which an aged oak-tree stands, though showing signs of rapid decay. Even to-day Harthill is a secluded spot, for it is off the main road and in the past must have been still more isolated. It stands upon an escarpment of the Broxton Hills. The Church is 428 feet above sea-level. From the Churchyard the ground slopes quickly to the valley of the Dee and on a clear day the estuary of the Dee is visible.

The manor of Harthill is not mentioned in Domesday, but according to Ormerod,¹ formed part of the Barony of Malpas.

The first mention of the manor occurs in the Inquisition of Sir Hugh Calveley of Lea,

Inq. p. m. 5 and 6 Philip and Mary. Sir Hugh Calveley, Knight, held in demesne, as of fee, by law of England, after the death of Eleanor his wife, daughter and heir of Thomas Tattenhall Esq. *inter alia*, the manor of Herthill, with its appurtenances. Value, per annum, 3*l.* 12*s.* 4*d.*"²

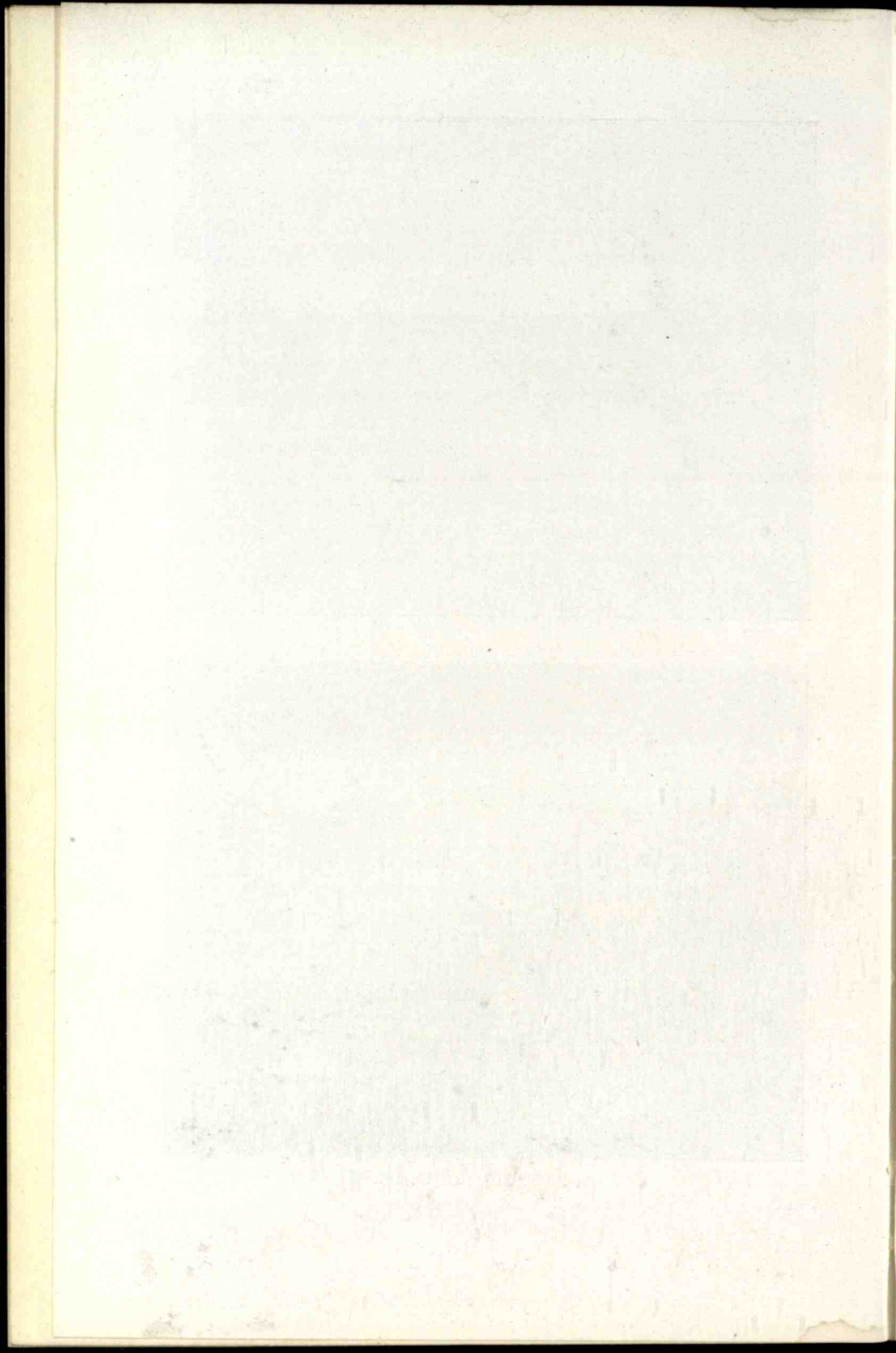
In the reign of King John there is record of one Edwin

¹ Ormerod, *History of Cheshire*, ii, 712.

² *Ibid.*



HARTHILL CHURCH.



de Herthill, lord of Herthill. The lordship remained in this family until some time in the reign of Edward III¹ when it passed, by the marriage of Cicely de Herthyll to Thomas de Tatenhall, to the Tattenhall family; from the latter it passed again in the female line to the Calveleys of Lea. On the division of the estates of the last named between the co-heiresses, Harthill passed to the Cottons of Combermere, from whom it was purchased by Oswald Moseley of Bolesworth, by whom it was sold, circa 1805, to Thomas Tarlton. On the death of Thomas Tarlton in 1826 the manor passed with the Bolesworth property by purchase to George Walmesley, from whom it has descended to the present lords of the manor, the Barbour family.²

Ormerod states that a family of Hadley, and some of the Eggertons, held lands in Harthill at one time.³

By will proved 3 November 1361, William Ketell gave "To the fabric of the chapel of Harthull 12*d.*"⁴ Later, in 1573, in a dispute between William Brereton, Esq., and Sir George Calveley, Knight, and others, Harthill was definitely stated to be a chapel of Malpas.⁵

The advowson was in 1406 a right of the barony of Malpas when in an Inquisition after the death of Sir Walter Cokesay it was stated to be held by him "*in capite, from the Prince, per baronium.*" It passed by purchase to several families, but so far as I know, the present lords of the manor, the Barbours, are the first who have also had the gift of the living.

¹ Lysons, *Cheshire*, ii, 666. On August 20th, 1357, Simon de Hurtull was pardoned for the death of David de Broxon, the death of the Prince's ministers and of Norden and Becheton, being excepted in the pardon. The reason of the pardon was that he had served with other Cheshire gentlemen in the Gascon campaign. *Cheshire Sheaf*, 2, 64 (1880).

² Ormerod, ii, 713.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Cheshire Sheaf*, 21, 44 (1924). By the same will 2*s.* 6*d.* was given to Sir Thomas Belew, parson of Harthull to celebrate a *trental*.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 21, 20 (1924). Evidence to this effect was given by Ralph Weston, clerk, parson of Harthill, successor to Sir Edward Bagelley since 1539.

Ormerod states that the whole of the great tithes belonged to the living and were commuted to a recent charge of £42, then (1815) paid to the incumbent.¹

THE CHURCH.

The present Church, dedicated to All Saints, was built in 1609. Of the earlier structure, the first mention of which occurs in 1280, nothing appears to be known, and all efforts to discover any particulars of it have been unsuccessful.

The Church is in plan a rectangle, 65 feet long by 24 feet wide internally, with a South-West porch, and vestry on the North side. There is no structural chancel, but a wooden screen reaching to the roof separates the eastern bay for that purpose. The walls are of local red sandstone, and parts of the North wall are evidently older than the rest, some of the stones of the old building having apparently been incorporated in the new, especially near the ground.² The eaved roof is modern and slated; there is a slated bell-cote at the West end.

A print of the Church in 1825³ shows that except for the addition of the vestry, there has been little alteration in the exterior since that date. It is late Perpendicular in style with square-headed windows and diagonal angle buttresses.

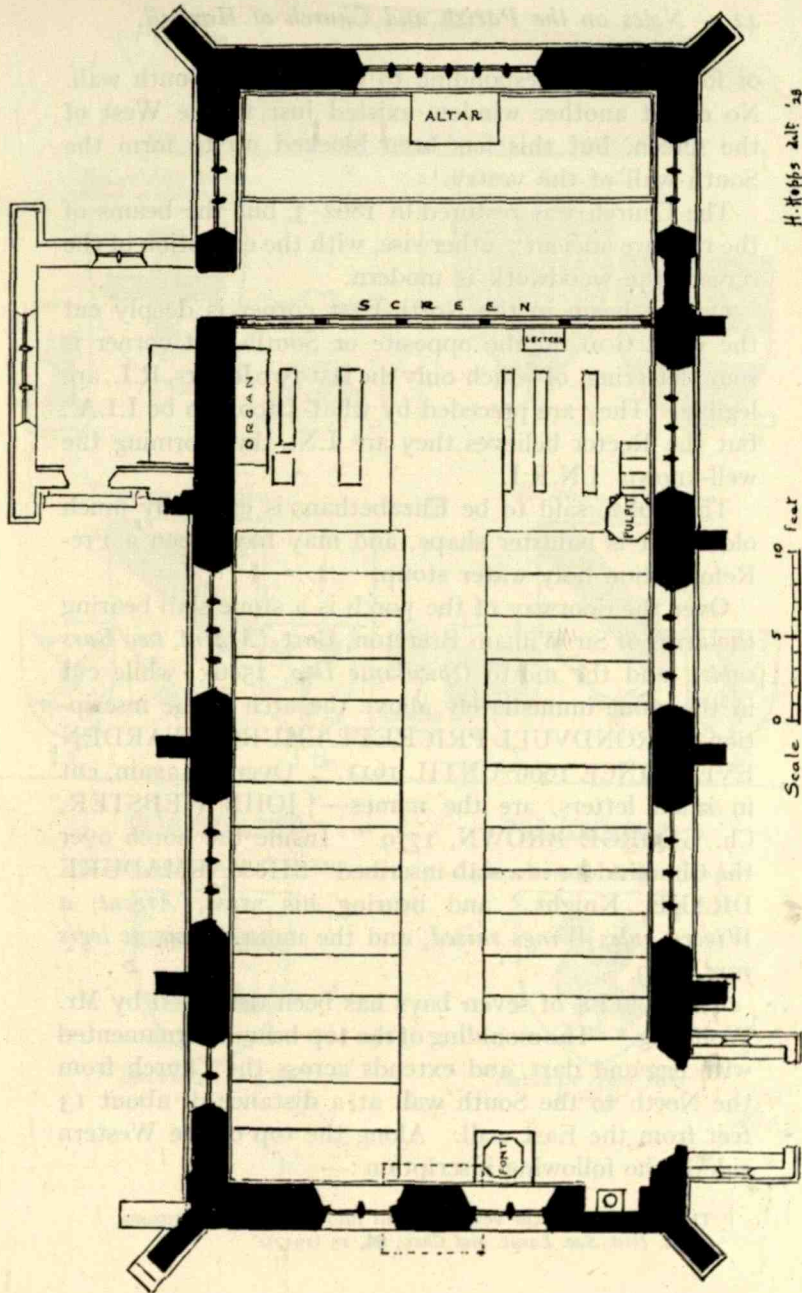
The East window is a large one of six lights. There are two West windows of two lights each. The South wall is pierced by four windows, three lighting the nave, of four lights each, and a smaller window in the chancel of three lights. On the North side there is a two-light window immediately opposite the porch, two windows

¹ Ormerod, *op. cit.*, ii, 715.

² Whether this has anything to do with the fact that there is a big bulge outwards in the North wall, I do not know, but certainly it is very considerably out of plumb.

³ The West wall of the vestry is built into one of the buttresses.

FIG. 13



of four lights corresponding to those in the South wall. No doubt another window existed just to the West of the screen, but this has been blocked up to form the South wall of the vestry.¹

The Church was restored in 1862-3, but the beams of the roof are ancient ; otherwise, with the exception of the screen, the woodwork is modern.

On the beam in the North-East corner is deeply cut the word GOD, in the opposite or South-East corner is some lettering, of which only the last two letters, R.I., are legible. They are preceded by what I took to be I.I.A., but the Rector believes they are I.N., thus forming the well-known I.N.R.I.

The FONT, said to be Elizabethan, is evidently much older. It is baluster shape, and may have been a Pre-Reformation holy water stoup.

Over the doorway of the porch is a stone slab bearing the arms of Sir William Brereton, Bart. (*Argent, two Bars sable*), and the motto *Opitulante Deo*, 1506 ; while cut in the stone immediately above the arch is the inscription—" RONDVULL PRICKETT/CHURCH WARDEN EVER SINCE 1606/UNTIL 1611." Over this again, cut in small letters, are the names—" JOHN WEBSTER, Ch./GEORGE BROWN, 1779." Inside the porch over the Church door is a slab inscribed "SIR MARMADUKE DRAKE, Knight." and bearing his arms, *Argent, a Wivern gules Wings raised*, and the motto *Pacis ac legis jure* 1669.

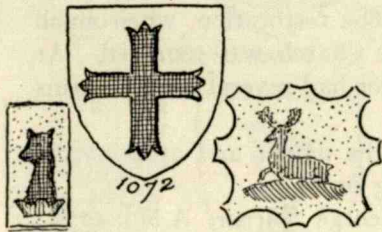
The SCREEN of seven bays has been described by Mr. Wolfgang.² The moulding of the top beam is ornamented with egg and dart, and extends across the Church from the North to the South wall at a distance of about 13 feet from the East wall. Along the top of the Western side is the following inscription :—

¹ The West wall of the vestry is built into one of the buttresses.

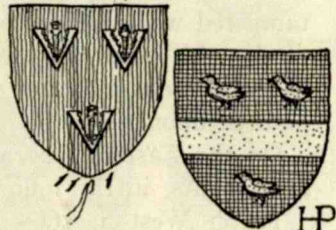
² *Trans. Hist. Soc. Lancs. and Ches.*, 64, 25 (1912).

ON ROOF TIMBERS, OF HARTHILL CHURCH.

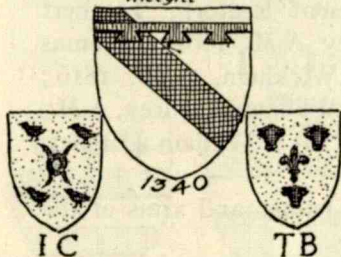
*Robert Filz Hugh
Baron of Malpas.*



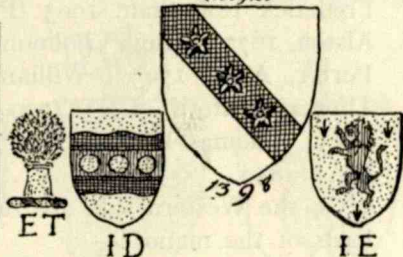
*William Belward
Baron of Malpas.*



*Sir Urian St Pierre
Knight*

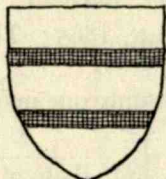


*Sir Walter Cotesey
Knight*



OVER PORCH DOOR.

Sir William Brevelon, Bart.



*"Opitulante Deo"
1506*

OVER SOUTH DOOR.

Sir Marmaduke Drake, Knight



*"Pacis ac legis jure"
1669*

*H. Hoops del.
28*

THIS CHURCH WAS BUILDED UPON THE DEVO'CON OF THE CUNTRYE BY YE LABOR AND TRAVELL OF Ed TANAT, TO: DOD, THO: BUCKLEY, and Ra WESTON, A.D. 1609.

Mr. F. H. Crossley informs me that the screen was much tampered with during the 1863 restoration, when much of the old woodwork of the Church was removed. At the same time, a former rector had several coats of arms painted upon it.¹

On the Eastern side are the names and arms of the incumbents, in the following order:—

Ralph Weston, 1609; George Turner, A.M., 1773; Francis Bowes Plummer, B.A., 1898; Ralph Wright, A.M., 1641; George Harper, A.M., 1787; Thomas Frederick Robathan, 1903 (Present Rector); Lambert Alston, 1677; Hugh Cholmondey, A.M., 1801; Thomas Porter, A.M., 1703; William Wickham, A.M., 1816; Thomas Pulford, A.M., 1730; William Vawdrey, A.M., 1833; Thomas Dutton, A.M., 1763; William Lutener, B.A., 1850.

On the Western side are the names and arms of the lords of the manor:—

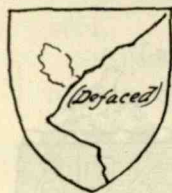
Thomas de Tattenhall, 1346; George Walmsley, 1827; Sir Thomas Calveley, 1558; Thomas Crallan, 1838; Sir Robert Colton, Bart., M.P., 1703; Robert Harrison, 1701; John Crewe, 1775; Robert Barbour, 1857; Oswald Mosley, 1786; George Barbour, 1885; Thomas Tarlton, 1805; Robert Barbour, 1919.

Except a quite recent tablet, there is only one memorial on the walls, it is:

Sacred/To the memory of/Thomas Crallan Esq^r. /Late of Bolesworth Castle/Cheshire/and Ardwick House, Lancashire/who died suddenly/On the 14 day of February 1856/ aged 64 years/ His remains were interred in the/Church-yard of St. John's Manchester./This Tablet was erected by his tenants/in grateful remembrance of him/as their Landlord/and friend./

¹ *Trans. Hist. Soc. Lancs. and Ches.*, 64, 25 (1919).

ON HARTHILL CHURCH SCREEN (EAST FACE)



Ralph Weston, 1609



Ralph Wright, A.M.
1641



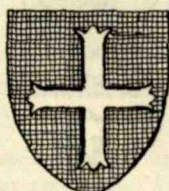
Lambert Alston, 1677



Robert Harrison
1701



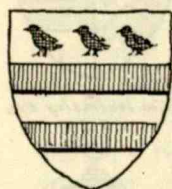
Thos Porter, A.M.
1703



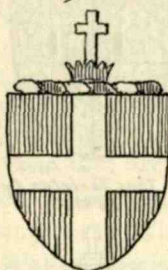
Thos Pulford, A.M.
1730



Thomas Dutton, A.M.
1763



George Turner, A.M.
1773



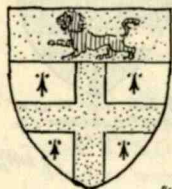
"Hoc signo vinces"
George Harper, A.M.
1787



"Cassis dulcissima virtus"
Hugh Cholmondeley, A.M.
1801



"Pacis ac legis jure"
Willm Wickham Drake
1816



Willm Vawdrey, A.M.
1833



"Haud vescor muscis"
William Lutener, B.A.
1850



"Les plumes de Dieu sont mes ailes"
Francis Bowes Plummer, B.A.
1898



"Justum et tenacem"
Thos Frederick Robathan
1903

H. H. H. 1911

ON HARTHILL CHURCH SCREEN (WEST FACE)



Edwin de Harthill
1250



Thos. de Tallenhall
1346



Sir Hugh Calveley
knight
1558



Sir Robert Cotton, M.P.
Baronet
1705



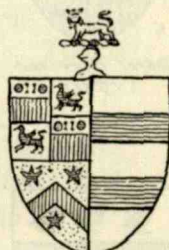
"Sequor nec inferior"
John Crewe Esq.
1775



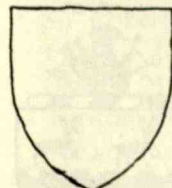
"Mos legem regit"
Oswald Mosley Esq.
1786



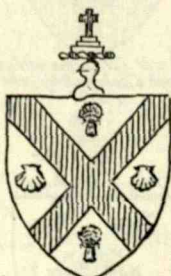
"S... a Pace"
Thos. Tarleton Esq.
1805



"Semper Fidelis"
Geo. Walmsley Esq.
1827



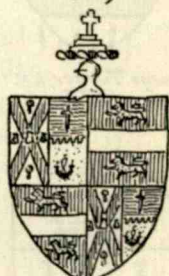
Thos. Crallan Esq.
1838



"Nihilo nisi cruce"
Robt. Barbour Esq.
1857



"Nihilo nisi cruce"
George Barbour Esq.
1885



"Nihilo nisi cruce"
Robt. Barbour Esq.
1919

H. Hobbs

The manor pew has some rather poor panelling dated 1862.

STAINED GLASS. The East window is filled with modern stained glass depicting in the upper lights: Christ in the Garden and the sleeping disciples, Christ before Pilate, the Resurrection and Mary Magdalene, each subject occupying two lights. In the lower part are the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, three lights each.

In the two West windows is glass depicting Christ blessing Little Children, the Baptism, the Good Samaritan, Christ and the Woman of Samaria. Inscription:

"To the Glory of God and in memory of John Johnson of the Higher Hall, who died 17 October 1861, aged 83. This window was erected by his widow."

Three-light window, North of the chancel: St. Werburge, Ecce Agnus Dei, St. Chad. Inscription:

"To the Glory of God and in loving memory of William Lutener, Rector of this Parish 1850-1898, who died Dec. 9, 1907, aged 82. Also in memory of Charlotte Matilda his wife, died Sept. 6, 1911, aged 81."

First window from West on North wall of nave (two lights): Raising of the Widow's Son. Inscription: "In memory of Walter Lewis Lutener who died Oct. 12, 1889, aged 18 years." The widow's son is a portrait of him to whose memory the window is erected.

Second window on South wall of nave (four lights): Simeon Blessing the Child Jesus, the Boy Jesus in the Temple with the Doctors, two lights to each subject. Inscription:

"To the Glory of God and in affectionate remembrance of Janet, widow of Robt. Barbour Esq. of Bolesworth Castle, Died May 4, MDCCCXCVI in the ninetieth year of her age. This window was erected by her son, Geo. Barbour."

The **COMMUNION PLATE** consists of a chalice and paten, a large flagon, and a large plate, with hall-marks of 1773

and 1775. The paten has affixed to it a stand of much older date.

The REGISTERS begin in 1730, though Canon J. A. Atkinson¹ states that they begin in 1706. Evidently the earliest book has disappeared since his time (1893).

In the CHURCHYARD there are remains of the shaft of a cross, said to be of the fifteenth century. On its East side is cut THOMAS SMITH, c.w.

Near it is a sundial, the plate of which bears the names : JOHN HURST/WILL^M HATTON/CHURCH WARDENS, 1735. The top stone, on which the dial rests, bears the initials of two later wardens : TS/IF/Ch.W./1778. It is conjectural that the TS is the Thomas Smith whose name is on the cross shaft.

A lych gate was erected in 1909. Round the inside of the lintel runs the inscription : JOHN WARBURTON, GEORGE BARBOUR, Ch. WARDENS/TERCENTENARY YEAR HARTHILL CHURCH 1609-1909.

The Barbour family have a large mausoleum at the East end of the Churchyard.

I have not discovered any tombstones earlier than the end of the eighteenth century, but some are so worn and defaced that it is impossible to determine their date. The great majority, however, belong to the nineteenth century.

BENEFACTIONS. On the wall near the doorway is a wooden board with the following inscription :—

“ Dame Mary Calveley, Widow and Relict Calveley of Lea in this County, whose ancestors were heretofore of Calveley in Bunbury Parish, she having lived in the state of widowhood 57 years, together departed this life, April 25 in 1705, and by her last will and testament bequeathed to the poor inhabitants of this Parish of Harthill the sum of Ten Pounds to be preserved as a perpetual stock for the poor of the s^d parish and by her said will hath ordered and appointed that ye minister and churchwardens for the time being shall have the management thereof and dis-

¹ *Chetham Soc.*, N.S., 32, 30.

tribute The Interest thereof to such poor persons in this parish as they shall conceive to be the fittest objects of charity. But none to receive any benefit thereof but such as do frequently, when they are in health and have no just Impediment, come to prayers and Sermons in this church.

Tho. Porter, Rect^r.

John Edge, Ch. Wardens.

Daniel Smith, Anno Domini 1707."

Above this is a board with the list of Benefactors as under :

"The names of the Benefactors to the poor of the Parish of Harthill Forever.

"Dame Mary Calveley, widow of Sir Hugh Calveley of the Lea, Knight, did by will dated 21st July 1701, leave to the Poor of the Parish of Harthill, to be kept and preserved as a perpetual Stock for the use of the Poor under the management of the Minister and Churchwardens, who from Time to Time shall pay and disburse the Interest and Produce thereof amongst such Poor Persons as in their discretion they shall judge and conceive the fittest objects of Charity provided that no Poor Person whatsoever partake of or receive any Part or benefit from the said Legacy but such as do frequently, when they are in Health and have no just Impediment, come to church to hear Prayers and Sermons.

"Richard Stockton of the Oaks, Gent^l did in his lifetime freely give £10 to the Poor of the Parish of Harthill to be kept and preserved as a perpetual Stock for the use of the Poor under the management of the Minister and Church Wardens, who from Time to Time shall pay and disburse the Interest and Produce of this Benefaction in like Manner as the Legacy of the Lady Calveley.

"Richard Whitfield of the Parish of Tattenhall, Yeoman, did by Will dated 19th June 1711 leave £6.16.4 a year forever to the Poor of the Parish of Harthill to be payed off certain Lands therein mentioned and to be dealt at Harthill on every St. Andrew's Day.

"Thos. Bebington of Harthill, Yeoman, did by Will dated 29th Sepr. 1733 leave 20 shills. a year forever to the Poor of the Parish of Harthill to be paid off his lands in Burwardsley and to be distributed at Harthill every St. Thomas' Day."

I am indebted to the Rector of Harthill, Rev. T. F. Robathan for kindly answering various questions ; to Mr. H. Hopps for the plan of the Church and for making the drawings of the Arms on the Screen ; and to Mr. P. Culverwell Brown and Mr. F. H. Crossley, F.S.A., F.R.I.A., for assistance in various ways.