

BOSLEY CHURCH IN 1777. (From a drawing now in the Vestry.)

THE TIMBER-FRAMED CHURCHES OF CHESHIRE.

Contributed by Fred H. Crossley, F.S.A.

"In England very few half-timber churches, in the strict sense, have been preserved, and they have not been treated as thoroughly and systematically as they deserve to be. At a time when a society founded for the purpose was taking steps to preserve what remained of the mast-churches in Norway, in England during the last hundred years these monuments have been allowed to be destroyed. Ignorant and thoughtless restorers have had a free hand, with the result that now it is almost impossible to find material for critical study and research." (*Early Church Art in Northern Europe*, by Josef Strzygowski, page 81.)

IN a county originally half forest land, including such areas as Wirral, Macclesfield and Delamere, timber was a natural material for building, and was so used for every class of dwelling, excepting the greater abbeys, castles and important churches, for which stone was usually employed. The majority of small churches, manor houses and ordinary dwellings were timber-framed in what local idiom described as "timber nogging or wattle and daub." The frame was erected upon a stone foundation, the spaces between the uprights and diagonals filled in with either twigs, rushes or basket work into which puddled clay was squeezed, and the whole walling completed with a coat of plaster.

Until the eighteenth century, Cheshire could show an unrivalled series of timber mansions, which were however allowed to fall into decay owing to the general adoption at this time of brick for building, the county families preferring to erect their new halls in this more substantial material; their old homes, if not actually destroyed,

were handed over to the yeoman farmers, the moats filled in and only as much of the buildings as were really useful retained. It is possible to tabulate an extensive list of destroyed timber houses, and the process still continues: Middlewich has gone in recent years, Dutton has been pulled down and portions re-used in a modern house in Sussex, whereas Carden has been destroyed by fire. The more interesting of those still standing include Little Moreton and Bramhall, the latter after several narrow escapes having now become the property of the Rural District Council.

The same procedure was followed when dealing with the smaller timber-framed churches, which still numbered twenty-five at the commencement of the eighteenth century. Of these nine are left, though none in a perfect condition. Sufficient remains however, together with the knowledge of what has disappeared, to make it worth while to describe this type of church. Owing to the materials used in their construction they required fairly constant attention, which the eighteenth century folk were not prepared to give to them; neither were they at all sentimental towards the places in which they worshipped, nor did they show them either reverence or affection. When repairs were needed they were executed with the materials nearest at hand, irrespective of the context, and at the same time as economically as possible. These people went to work in a straightforward manner, making no attempt to disguise their building with any antiquarian faking (which has been the bane of many nineteenth century architects), nor did they turn out spurious goods.

The fabrics of the churches had already suffered severely from the neglect of a hundred and fifty years, and the majority were in a deplorable condition. Moreover, utility as well as fashion dictated the use of the ubiquitous brick; it was not only cheaper, but more convenient to

use, and it lasted longer. Derelict timbered churches were therefore pulled down and re-erected in brick as cheaply as possible, and those not wholly destroyed were repaired with the same material. The south aisle at Lower Peover was brick until the restoration of 1852; Holmes Chapel retains its outer walls of brick, the nave of Siddington likewise, although now painted to represent timbering. Baddiley, Cholmondeley and Chadkirk have brick naves, Marton a brick chancel and Swettenham had the same until the meddlesome nineteenth century.

The Whitegate wardens' accounts of the first half of the seventeenth century contain many items connected with repairs. In 1602 they repaired the church end with daub; in 1603 they paid for a tree to make a gutter and gables for the church end; in 1637 3s. 1d. was expended on "plats and nails for the church ende"; in 1646 they were busy collecting for the repairs of the church. The briefs issued in the eighteenth century for the authorizing of collections on behalf of church repairs well show the condition of many of the timbered churches of Cheshire, as in the following instances.

CHURCH MINSHULL. "That the said parish church of Church Minshull aforesaid being an ancient timber structure, is so much decayed both in the roof and the walls thereof, that the parishioners cannot attend the service of Almighty God in the said church (especially in windy weather) without manifest danger and peril of their lives: and that the said church cannot be repaired otherwise than by taking down and rebuilding the same." 1704. (*Cheshire Sheaf*, new series, Vol. I.)

SWETTENHAM. "The church and steeple, being both of timber, are now ruinous and want to be rebuilt." 1718.

"The church is now rebuilt and the steeple is now building." May 1722. (Gastrell, *Notitia Cestriensis*, Vol. I, 260.)

WHITEGATE. "This church is built of wood and plaister, and is now in a ruinous condition." 1715. (Gastrell, Vol. I, 264.)

Note in 1728 a brief was obtained for the purpose of rebuilding it. (Milnrow Reg.)

CHADKIRK. "The chapel is now in a ruinous condition, no service having been performed there for 30 or 40 years past." (Certificate, 1718.)

BOSLEY. "The chapel of Bosley is a very ancient structure, and the most part thereof bulged and cracked and so much decayed, that it is dangerous for persons to assemble therein for the worship of Almighty God, and not withstanding the inhabitants of the said chapelry have from time to time laid out considerable sums of money in repairing the said chapel, yet the same being by length of time become so ruinous that it cannot be any longer supported but must be wholly taken down, and also that the said chapelry is become so populous that the said chapel is too small to contain all the people that would resort thereto to hear divine service, and therefore it must be enlarged." 1771. The cost was estimated at £1,070. (Earwaker, *East Cheshire*, Vol. 2, 430.)

KNUTSFORD. "In January 1740-1 the steeple and a great part of the parish church fell down to the ground, but providentially no body received any personal hurt thereby."

The following descriptions of timber-framed churches in Cheshire now destroyed have been culled from various sources :—

BOSLEY. This was formerly a chapel of ease to Prestbury and dedicated to St. Thomas the Martyr (Becket) before 1300.

"A bull of Boniface IX given at Rome in April 1402, shows, on the petition of the inhabitants of Boslegh, that they were a distance of six miles from the parish church, that by reason of the high hills, deep valleys and swollen rivers, it was often impossible, without peril, for them to attend divine service there ; their prayer, therefore, that they might have licence to erect a baptismal font, baptize children, and have one or several priests always serving in the chapel of St. Thomas the Martyr here, and have rights of burial in a cemetery to be made near to the chapel, was decreed to be complied with." (Lich. Dio. Reg. ; Ormerod, Vol. 3, p. 738.)

The original church of Bosley was a structure dating back to the 14th or 15th century. Dugdale in "Church Notes" gives a fragmentary inscription in stained glass dated 1450. The body of the church was half timbered. (Renaud, *Parish of Prestbury*, page 7.)

It is not improbable that the nave and chancel of this chapel were built of timber and plaster, like so many of the smaller Cheshire chapels, the tower, like that of Nether Peover, being in stone. (Earwaker, *East Cheshire*, Vol. 2, page 430.)

There is a framed drawing in the vestry showing a timber church with a wide south porch and a stone tower. It depicts a fairly large building similar to Lower Peover with good square-headed windows of three and four lights.

The present building was erected in brick in 1777, enlarged in 1834 and restored in 1879. The main body is built of brick and designed in the usual quasi-Italian style of the period. The short sanctuary was added in 1834.

LITTLE BUDWORTH. Note by the antiquary Cole, 1757 : "a neat building of red sandstone, having a tower at the west end, with two aisles supported by wooden pillars." The church was rebuilt in 1798.

CHELFORD. This was a timbered church until its destruction in 1774, when it was rebuilt in brick. The tower was added in 1840.

"It was erected at the expense of Samuel Brooke, late of Chelford, gent., deceased, Catherine Brooke, spinster, his sister, John Glegg, of Withington, in the chapelry of Chelford, Esq., and the Rev. John Parker, of Astle, in the same chapelry, clerk, the curate or minister of the said chapel, and the owner and proprietor of a mansion-house and considerable estates in Astle." (Note in Earwaker, *East Cheshire*, Vol. 2, page 367-8.)

The early history of the chapel shows that it was given to the abbey of St. Werburgh by Roger Worth in the thirteenth century with other property including the "finding of one fit chaplain to pray for ever in the chapel of Chelleford for the souls of himself and his ancestors and successors for ever, and to celebrate mass there on Sundays and two days in each week at the pleasure of the Abbot, and the remaining four days in the mother church of Prestbury at the altar of St. Nicholas there." (Earwaker, *East Cheshire*, Vol. 2, page 361.)

CHESTER CITY. A member of the Randle Holme family sketched many of the city churches and although constructed mainly of stone they had many embellishments in timber.

St. Michael's had a four-square vestry or parvise as a narthex at the west end supported upon wooden pillars, a gabled structure overhanging the footpath ; it had a covered flight of steps to it whilst above it was an important four-square timbered bell-house.

St. Peter's had a fine timbered structure on its south side connected with the corporation, together with a south porch of two stories also constructed of timber.

St. Martin's had a timber porch approached by a flight of stairs and a wooden belfry at the west end.

St. Bridget's. Here the top of the tower beneath the spire was fenced round with a timber palisade.

CHURCH COPPENHALL. This church in 1817 presented a "very curious fabric in the style of Elizabeth's reign, built originally of wood and plaister, the latter of which has been replaced with brick. The side aisles are divided from the centre, by rude wooden pillars, and are lighted by a row of transom windows running down each side uninterruptedly. At the west end is a wooden belfry, and at the other a chancel rebuilt with brick. In the windows are various specimens of painted glass including a shield several times repeated, portraying the five wounds of Christ; and the antient oak pews are ornamented with cumbrous carvings of armorial bearings, human faces and animals. The floor is the bare clay, on which, for the convenience of kneeling, are placed circular lumps of wood chained to the seats." In 1875 there was a general restoration of the interior of the church which has now a flooring. (Ormerod, Vol. 3, pages 326-7).

In the will of John Smallwood, rector of Coppenhall, 1578, is the following item of interest:—

"Itm whereas Thomas Hall blacksmythe hath the greateste parte of a clocke of myne I will that the parishoners of Coppinshall shall have bothe yt and certen timber of myne to make a frame withall uppon condiccon yt be sett upp and mayntayned to goo in Coppinshall steeple but yf they will not bestowe coste uppon yt and sett yt upp then I will that yt remeane to myne executor." (Chetham Soc., Vol. 51, page 60.)

In 1821 this interesting church was rebuilt in brick. This structure was again destroyed in 1906, when a new church was built of red brick from designs by James Brooks of London. The parish was incorporated in Crewe in 1892.

CHURCH MINSHULL. After the issue of the brief already cited, the church was utterly destroyed and rebuilt in brick with stone facings at a cost of over £2,500; towards defraying this cost two extraordinary church rates were levied, one, Feb. 17th 1702-3, of forty shillings in the pound, the other, Feb. 22nd 1704, for ten shillings in the pound, "for discharging such debts and sums

of money as are already expended in building a steeple and other necessary charges belonging to our church and for perfecting the same." The tower was erected in 1702. (Historic Soc., Session II, 1849-50, "An account of the Parish of Church Minshull," by the Rev. G. B. Sandford, page 85.)

CONGLETON, ST. PETER'S. Smith's description of Cheshire mentions two churches here, "one in the town and the other at the bridge end on the other side of the Dane." This was written in the time of Elizabeth and it is probable that the chapel near the bridge, which was lately used as a poor house, and has recently been taken down, was disused before 1625, about which year Webb wrote his *Itinerary*, wherein one chapel only is mentioned.

"The chapel at Congleton stands upon high ground above the town, and is a handsome substantial building of brick, with a stone tower. According to the following Entry in the Book of Briefes at St. John's church, Margate, it was rebuilt about 1740. A collection on a brief was made Jan. 25 in that year, "fur rebuild: the church (called "Chapel to Astbury" in the margin) an irregular piece of timber building much too little to contain the inhabitants, computed to be upwards of 2,000 souls, charge £2120, and upwards; the sum of two shillings and fivepence collected." (Ormerod, Vol. 3, page 38-9).

"In 1405 it was rebuilt in half-timber with a stone tower and chancel. Of this hardly a trace remains save a few crudely carved timbers which do duty as ceiling joists in the present church. Two lean-to aisles were added by John Dale carpenter in 1613, and in the middle of the south aisle was a porch also by Dale. The lower part of the stone tower is incorporated in the present building. The lower chapel was also a half-timbered construction." (W. T. F. Castle, *An English Parish Church of 1740. Saint Peter's Congleton*, 1933.)

DUTTON HALL, DOMESTIC CHAPEL. "This House standeth upon a pleasant prospect to the opposite hills of the forest; and hath in it an ancient chappel, built first by sir Thomas Dutton towards the end of Henry the third's reign; unto whom Roger de Lincoln then prior of Norton, and the convent there, did grant *liberam cantariam in capellis suis de Dutton & Weston infra limites parochiarum nostrarum de Budworth & de Runcorne: id est*, free liberty of reading divine service, or singing the same; so as the mother-churches receive no detriment either in their greater or lesser tythes. Lib. C. fol. 155. s. That

of Weston is long since vanished ; but this chappel at Dutton yet remains, and is now a domestick chappel within the manor-house of Dutton, unto which sir Piers Dutton of Hatton, after he was adjudged next heir male to the lands of Dutton by the award of Henry the eighth, did annex his new buildings at Dutton, *Anno Domini* 1539, as appears by the inscription round about the hall of Dutton yet extant, adjoyning those unto the chappel, and so making it one continued building ; before which time the old house stood a little distance from the chappel aforesaid . . . Robert Lord Kilmorey and Dame Elinour his wife came to live at Dutton, even in our days ; who beautified the domestick chappel at Dutton with handsom pews, and kept a chaplain in his house constantly, whereunto all the neighbourhood resorted every Sunday." (Leycester, *Historical Antiquities*, page 249.)

Robert viscount Kilmorey died at Dutton 12 Sept. 1653. " So that the lady Elinour survived both her husbands ; in whose custody Hudard's sword, as tradition hath it, now remains." This lady Elinour died at Dutton 12 March 1665, aged 69, and was interred at Great Budworth. (ibid, 260.)

ECCLESTON, ST. MARY'S. Before the various rebuildings of this church in the nineteenth century, an old engraving dated 1800 depicts the fabric with a nave and aisles under a single roof completed by a battlemented parapet. The tower of the simplest kind, of three stories, with diagonal buttresses with three off-sets, a battlemented parapet, the vice in the south-east corner ; the belfry windows of three lights having pointed heads. On the south side of the body of the church towards the west end a two-storied porch built of timber and plaster having a square framed doorway with a window above. The south aisle with square-headed windows of four lights. No architectural division between nave and chancel is observable.

GOOSTREY-CUM-BARNSHAW. " Confirmation of a grant to build an isle on ye north side of ye chapel, 1668. Licence to build a new isle granted to Mr. Jodrell, 1711. The like granted to Baskerville and Kinsey." (Gastrell, *Notitia Cestriensis*, Vol. I, page 257.)

" There are those yet living who remember the pretty little fabric of timber, in which 65 years ago, the churchmen of Goostrey were wont to assemble. How different the prospect now ! " (*Cheshire Arch. Journal*, Vol. I, page 392.)

" My old cure at Goostrey had a black and white chapel (from about 1200 to 1790) which, at the last interesting era in the

history of national architecture, was supplanted, at a cost of £1700 by rate for a brick nave and tower, from a design by the village bricksetter, with flat ceiling adorned with a pretty circle of red and green christmas in the centre, and four substantial milestones at each angle of the square steeple, wherein three bells rang to the tune of "Three blind mice" on many a happy occasion. On enquiry I found that the bitter cold of the thin walls had determined the abandonment of the old wooden walls of England; if so, I can affirm that the remedy is as bad as the disease (at least no warmer)." (Rev. W. H. Massie, *Chester Arch. Journal*, Vol. I, page 302-3.)

HASLINGTON, ST. MATTHEW'S. "An ancient chappell built by ye Vernons for ye ease of themselves and tenants, but not consecrated. Has a chapel warden. Is repaired by a common purse." (Gastrell, *Notitia Cestriensis*, page 214.)

"The chapel was termed anciently *libera capella*, and clerks were regularly instituted from the year 1302; why it was not regarded as a parish church like Barrow, Brereton and Wistaston, etc. called originally chapels, is involved in obscurity. The ancient chapel of timber and plaster was taken down some years since by Sir Thomas Broughton, bart., and a brick building erected by him on its site, which was consecrated about the year 1809." (Gastrell, Note by Raines, page 214.)

"The church, erected about 1810, is a plain edifice of brick consisting of chancel, nave and western turret containing one bell: a new chancel, vestry and organ chamber were added in 1910 at a cost of £1,700: there is a clock dated 1694." (Kelly.)

HIGH LEIGH, ST. JOHN'S. "It appears here was a church at the time of the conquest; but at this day no prints thereof remain." (Leycester, 303.)

"This chapel was built by Tho. Legh of High Legh (East Hall), 1581. Certified yt nothing belongs to it. It is not consecrated: said to be domestick to ye Leghs of High Legh; very neat and kept in good repair by Mr. Legh, who gives 10s. every other Sunday to have preaching and divine service performed in it." (Gastrell, Vol. I, page 346.)

"To the north of the west hall, and at a short distance from it, has recently been re-erected the west hall chapel which sir Peter Leycester notices as being, in his time 'converted to other uses.' The old chapel was of timber and most picturesque. The bell hung on the branch of an immense sycamore, both of which have of course disappeared. . . . The present building is of white

stone and of Grecian architecture from a design by Harrison. It was completed in 1814." (Ormerod, Vol. I, page 455.)

"This church was destroyed by fire in 1891, and has been rebuilt from designs by Edmund Kirby of Liverpool, 1893." (Kelly.)

KNUTSFORD. "There is also a chappel of ease situated within the Lower Town of Knutsford with a schoolhouse adjoining. Sir John Legh of Booths purchased from the king certain lands in Nether-Knutsford, Sudlow, and Over Knutsford, 3 Edw. 6, which in old time were given for the finding of a sufficient school-master at Nether Knutsford, and also for finding of a priest to say service in the said chappel; which lands came to the king by the Statute of Dissolution of Chantries and Abbies . . . Now the said sir John Legh was bound in a recognisance of 200 marks to the king, to pay out of those lands £5 6s. 8d. yearly, to the maintenance of a school-master, and to suffer the said chappel to stand for administration of the Communion: dated 3 Edw. 6. And which moneys are yearly paid by his heirs at this day. An ancient copy of which recognizance remains with me, 1667." (Leycester, page 300.)

"An Act of Parliament was passed, 1741, to make Knutsford into a separate parish, and a new parish church was then built. At that time the old parochial chapel, with its tower of stone and its peal of old bells, and the chapel of ease and old grammar-school, structures of timber and plaster, with overhanging roofs, and a tiny cracked bell, were taken down, and the materials as far as possible made use of in the present buildings. (Green's *Knutsford*, page 68.)

NORTHENDEN. "During the rebuilding the rough rubble walls of an earlier church were traced along the site of the nave piers, showing a narrow structure with a diminutive square chancel." (Earwaker, *East Cheshire*, Vol. I, p. 270.)

STOAK OR STOKE. "Sir Peter de Thornton, after obtaining possession of the manor, gave the church gratuitously to the dean and chapter of the college of St. John at Chester in 1349. At this time the church is described as a sumptuous fabric of stone and wood, with four bells, but was then becoming ruinous, and the dean and chapter pray the bishop's compassion on its dilapidated state.

The church (1816) is a picturesque and venerable building of red stone, in a low situation, and embosomed in trees. It is very irregular in its architecture and the disposition of its windows

and buttresses which are of all forms and ages. At the west end is a wooden belfry, which has for many years been in a very dangerous state of dilapidation. The body of the church is about twenty yards by nine, and it is divided into two parts by a massy pointed arch. On the east side of the arch, the width of the church is increased by a wooden transept projecting into the churchyard on the south side, formerly used as a chancel by the Bunbury family. In 1827 a new tower and north transept were added to the church; and the south side and south transept were then rebuilt." (Ormerod, Vol. 2, page 399.)

WARMINGHAM, OR WARMINCHAM, ST. LEONARD'S. "There died in London a native of Warmingham who left £20 to the poor of the parish, and it was long before the executors could find out where Warmingham was; at length on procuring the intelligence, the money was sent thither and the rector gave out on three successive Sundays that it would be paid to any claimants who were paupers, and there was not one person who would acknowledge himself a pauper, though now it abounds with such. So the money was laid out in building of a porch to the south door of the church, which was dated 1620. It stood till the church, which was built of timber, was taken down in the year 1796 and a new one built of bricks. In the chancel were two rows of stalls as in collegiate churches, and there were several gravestones with ancient inscriptions on plates of brass. The church was a very ancient building, the pillars and arches which supported the roof were all of timber. They had all been hewn, it did not appear that any saw had been used upon them. There was much stained glass in the windows, particularly the twelve apostles. I believe it was a chantry under the abbey of Vale Royal." (Cheshire Sheaf, Oct. 1891.)

"The church stands between the bank of the Wheelock and the site of the antient residence of the Trussels. The tower, which is built with blue brick and stone, and has a fine effect at a distance, was re-erected in 1715. The body and chancel were rebuilt in 1797 and appear equally mean and displeasing in design and execution, in general effect, and on a near examination." (Ormerod, Vol. 3, page 232.)

"The nave transept and chancel were rebuilt in stone in 1870 in the perpendicular style, from designs by Hussey, and the whole described as admirable work." (ibid.)

WHITEGATE, ST. MARY'S. "This church stood at ye abbey-gate of ye monastery of Vale Royall, and (as it appears

by ye recitall in ye Act) had been time out of mind, but, at ye dissolution of ye monastery, made a parish church, by authority of ye pope, for ye tenants of ye monastery and other inhabitants dwelling upon ye demesnes and within ye libertyes of ye sd monastery, and other tenants of the monastery dwelling in Foxewist, Gavill, Salterswall, Over, Merton, ye Brookhouses, and all other houses within ye precinct of ye parish of Over. Ordered by Act yt shall henceforth be called ye parish church of our Blessed Lady the Virgin of Whitegate, and yt ye Vicar and his successors shall receive all tiths and other ecclesiastical dues wch by custom of ye realm and laws ecclesiastical ought to be paid by ye aforesaid tenants and inhabitants except only ye tyth of corn wch is reserved to ye king." (Gastrell, Vol. 1. 264.)

" This church is built of wood and plaister, and is now in a ruinous condition, anno 1715." (ibid.)

" The present church is a modern building. In 1728 a Brief was obtained for the purpose of rebuilding it." (Milnrow Reg.)

" The present church is a modern building, and does not contain any monuments or other matters worthy of notice. This church was rebuilt in 1874-5." (Ormerod, Vol. 2, page 145.)

WINCLE. " In 1786 a presentment was made to the justices at Knutsford that the chapel had then become very ruinous, that the roof was slated and a very heavy one, and only supported with pillars of wood from the ground on the inside. A Brief for the collection of money was granted in 1788, and it is probable that the body of the present church was then built, and a gallery erected at the west end. In 1815 another Brief was granted, which states that the chapel of Winkle was a very ancient structure and greatly decayed in every part thereof, but particularly at the west end, and the gallery there also greatly decayed etc. and that a new steeple would have to be built." (Earwaker, *East Cheshire*, Vol. 2, page 436.)

WISTASTON, ST. MARY'S. " Is a small antient building, situated on a gentle rise, between the hall and the road from Sandbach to Nantwich, at a distance of two miles from the latter place. It is chiefly built of wood, and consists of a nave, with side-aisles and small chancel, and a belfry at the west end, containing three bells. This structure was taken down in 1827 and a barn-like building was erected in its place, by a local architect; no memorials of any importance are now remaining." (Ormerod, Vol. 3, p. 334.)

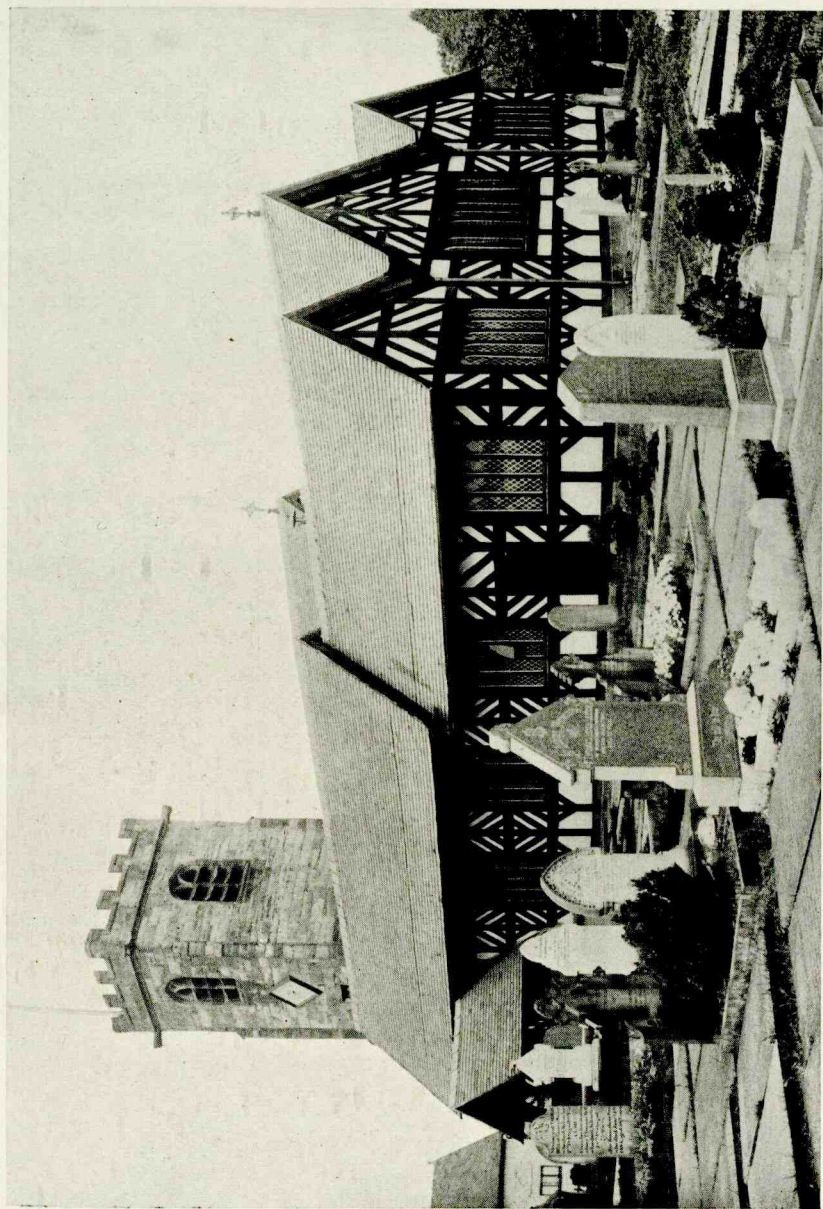
"The chancel was rebuilt, and an organ chamber and south transept added, in 1884." (Kelly.)

In addition to the existing domestic chapels at Little Moreton and Bramhall and the destroyed chapel at Dutton, other timbered domestic chapels existed of which at the present time there is little record as to their construction and condition. We know of chapels at Arley, Ashley, and Handford, all timbered mansions, and there were others at Lea, Barnshaw, Calverley, Carrington, Darley, Hooton, Lyme, Sutton, Toft, and Woodford, principally black and white halls built in the seventeenth century. There are however ten buildings in which timber work is visible, but with the exception of Lower Peover none perfect (the latter only by the aid of drastic restoration); nevertheless, the majority of these retain enough timberwork to make a separate description of each church desirable.

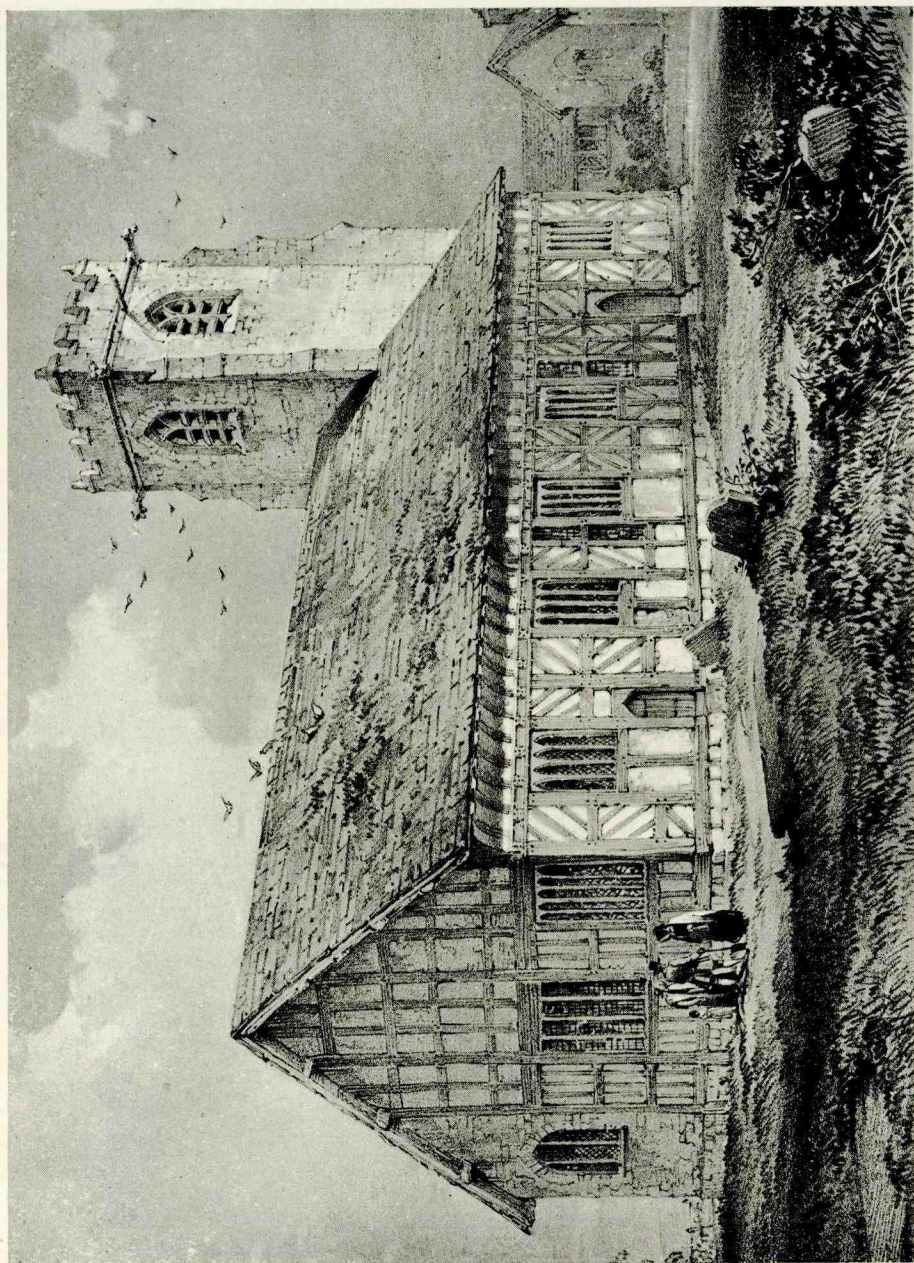
Timber construction. In their construction the timber-framed churches followed closely upon the plan employed in the erection of the manor-houses of the time, and if the building was not over-sized it could be framed together with floor and roof timbering as a complete unit irrespective of the filling in of the walls. The stout cills were laid upon a foundation of stone to prevent decay from damp, and the strong uprights were tenoned into the cills below as well as into the head beams above. This timbering might be anything from $4\frac{1}{2}$ to $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter, the size ruling the general thickness of the walls. The framing between these principals was usually of lesser scantling; in the older work simple uprights and horizontal bars, in the later work diagonals and patterning. The windows were often part of the construction, their lesser members moulded to receive the glass. In Cheshire work the tracery is of the simplest, but in the fourteenth century,

elaborate tracery was cut in wood for windows used in stone dwellings of a similar nature to that used for screen-work. Examples may be found in the solar adjoining prior Crauden's chapel at Ely and in some fragmentary remains at St. Mary's Guildhall at Coventry. The floor and roof timbers were notched, pegged or tenoned into the principal beams, forming a solid piece of work, as shown at Marton, where the arcades and roof are morticed and pegged together into a single unit of great strength.

This early type of timber construction has been copied by our twentieth century engineers in the steel construction used in the erection of the gigantic modern warehouses, with this difference, however, that their "meccano" like structures are riveted and bolted in place of being morticed and tenoned. When the framework was complete, the inter-spaces were filled in with wattle and daub, and in later times when this decayed, brick was substituted, the whole covered with a coat of plaster inside and occasionally without as well. In the manor-houses the cold and draughts were further excluded by framed oak panelling placed against the inner walls of the principal rooms. Unlike the stone mason, the dissolution of religious communities and guilds had little effect upon the work of the carpenter; he was no nomad, travelling about from job to job, but a settler in his own village or hamlet, with a long tradition of craftsmanship behind him, like the Dales, who at various times were responsible for the bay windows at Little Moreton hall and later the aisles and porch at St. Peter's, Congleton. Work was to be had in the erection of the timbered dwellings of the time, mansions, yeomen's and cottagers' houses, and in the many new roofs required in the seventeenth century as a result of the neglect of the wardens and those who were supposed to care for the fabrics of the churches.



LOWER PEOVER CHURCH FROM THE SOUTH-EAST



LOWER PEOVER CHURCH FROM THE NORTH-EAST, ABOUT 1840. (From an old engraving.)

LOWER PEOVER, ST. OSWALD'S. Although severely restored and smartened, this church is still the best example of a timber-framed church within this county. Its position as a chapel of ease to Great Budworth did not prevent its gradual enlargement until it became a parallelogram measuring eighty feet in length by forty-four feet in breadth, divided into nave with aisles, chancel with side chapels and at the western end a sandstone tower sixteen feet square on plan.

Of its earlier history Leycester the Cheshire historian states in 1672 (when he published his researches concerning the county) that he had seen a deed whereby in 1269 it was agreed between the prior and convent of Norton and Richard Grosvenour and other parishioners of Nether Peover :—

“ That the prior of Norton should find them *Capellandum Seculare missam Celebrantem in dicta Capella*, that is, a secular chaplain to say divine service, and officiate in that chappel every Sunday and Wednesday through the year, and in the feast-days of the Nativity of Christ, St. Stephen the Martyr, Circumcision, Epiphany, Purification, *cum suis processionibus*, Annunciation, Palm Sunday, Easter-day *cum suis processionibus*, Whitsunday, Ascension-day, Nativity of St. John Baptist, Peter and Paul Apostles, *die Sancti Oswaldi, in cujus honorem fundata est praedicta capella*, Assumption of Mary, and All-Saints-day ; and to have liberty of Baptism, if they can obtain leave from the mother-church of Budworth, to be allowed by the prior and convent of Norton¹ : saving to the mother-church all tythes, both great and small ; and the parishioners to find books, vestments, vessels, and other ornaments of the church, at their own costs. *Lib. C. fol. 120. b.* The original *penes* Shakerley of Houlme.” (Leycester, pages 228–9.)

With the dissolution of the monasteries, which included the priory of Norton, nothing was left to the church but the benevolence the parishioners were pleased to give ; however Sir Robert Leycester gave a free gift for ever

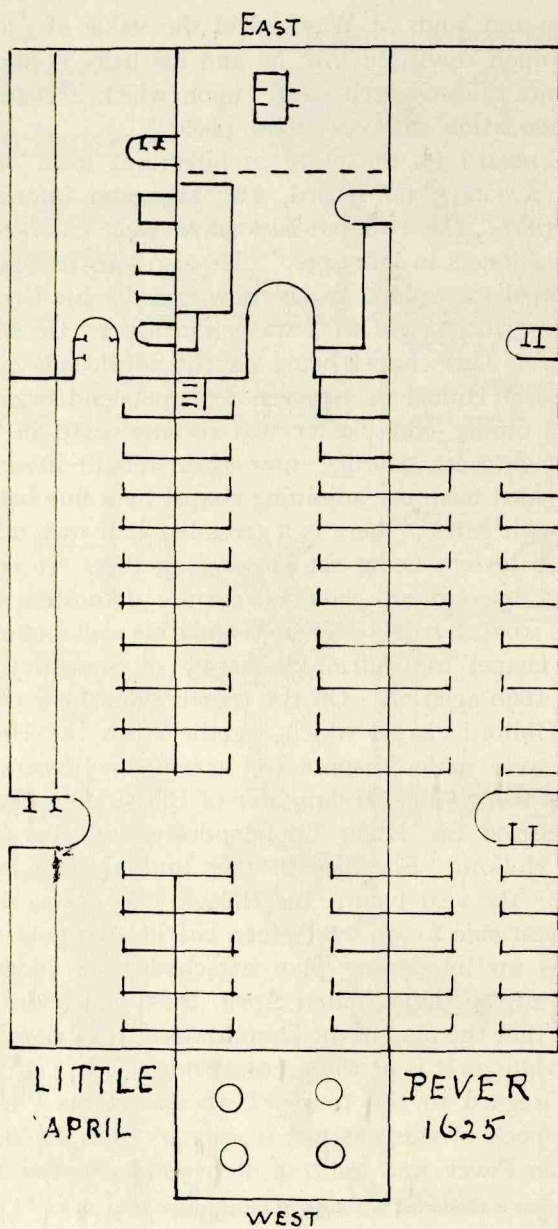
¹ They had to wait until 1331, when Bishop Roger de Norbury granted the inhabitants of the hamlet of Pever the use of a font. (Lich. Dio. Reg. II. f. 25.)

of house and lands at Wanford of the value of £30 per annum upon condition that he and his heirs nominated the curate; as Gastrell says "upon which account his recommendation always takes place."

With regard to the early architectural form of the church we have no record, but Leycester informs us (1672) that "the two out-isles have been enlarged by the parishioners in late ages." He also tells us that "a new chapel was added to the new isles by Sir Geoffrey Shakerley whose right to it was confirmed by the bishop in 1610." This chapel being on the south side to the east of the Hulme or Grosvenor chapel, and originally built of timber and plaster was reconstructed in brick in the eighteenth century, now again rebuilt in timber. It is divided from the adjoining chapel by a fine baluster screen with gates; there is a cross-bar half way up, the turned balusters being set closely together. It is surmounted by a broad moulded cornice decorated above by large wooden balls.¹ There is a marble wall monument in the chapel to Galfridi Shakerley of Shakerley who died in 1696 aged 78. On the north side of the church is the Holford chapel which together with the Holford estates were under dispute for nearly forty years, the litigants being the sole daughter of Christopher Holford who married Sir Hugh Cholmondeley, and her uncle George Holford. She died in 1625 and was the last of her line; the year before, the Holford chapel was fenced on its west side by an oak screen bearing the date 1642. There is an interesting plan attached to a judgment relating to the chapel dated April, 1625, which discloses the fact that the plan of the church was as fully developed at that date as it is at the present time.

With regard to the tower, Leycester states "in the register book of this chappel it appears that the steeple of Nether-Pever was built of stone *anno domini* 1582.

¹ This screen is illustrated in Vol. 69 of these *Transactions*, p. 62.



John Bowden being then master of the work." This date however is too late for the mouldings employed and we find that in a Visitation by the bishop of Chester twenty-five years earlier (1557) it states: "Peuer Inferior. Against the churchwardens there,—the tower needs repair." It is therefore probable that John Bowden did the requisite repairs and is spoken of as the builder of the tower in the general loose manner of the time.

The church was restored by Salvin in 1852, but before this took place we have an interesting account of the building as seen by Stephen Glynne who paid a visit in the 'forties of the nineteenth century. From his description we glean:—

"The south aisle rebuilt in brick in a hideous style, but the north aisle rudely constructed in wood and plaster framework. The south porch is of somewhat similar construction. The north wall is certainly very curious and the same character is rare in churches though often found in domestic architecture. There is a cornice below the roof containing square flowers, the windows consist of four lights pointed, set in a square compartment at rather short intervals, but that next the east end has been modernized. There are also two very rude doors formed in wood with very flat and depressed heads. The east end is spoiled by the centre gable being extended over the side aisles and the two windows badly altered; that at the east of the north aisle resembles those of the north aisle but has six lights. The interior has a singularly rude and primitive appearance, the roof is very low and the divisions of the aisles formed by circular wooden columns of clumsy construction, apparently entire trunks of trees; from which rude arches spring and others across the roof of the body. . . . There are no arches thrown from the wooden piers of the chancel, and the interval partially filled with walling. The wooden mullions of the north windows are moulded." (*Cheshire Churches*, p. 51.)

There is an interesting plate published about 1840 depicting the church from the north-east before the restoration, much as Glynne saw it. However in 1852 this Mr. Salvin was called in and restored the church at

a cost of £1,300. The following is culled from Ormerod and marks the approval of the time of these drastic alterations :—

“ The flat ceiling was taken down, and the now open roof displays in the north and south aisles some very neat ancient carving. The usual coats of whitewash which in past generations had been liberally used had also covered the oaken pillars. These have all been cleansed, as well as the rest of the church, and the gallery near the tower and the square sash windows abolished. For the latter, semi-circular headed windows have been substituted.¹ But the principal feature of the restoration is the substitution of three high pitched roofs for the former flat one.” (Vol. 3, page 140.)

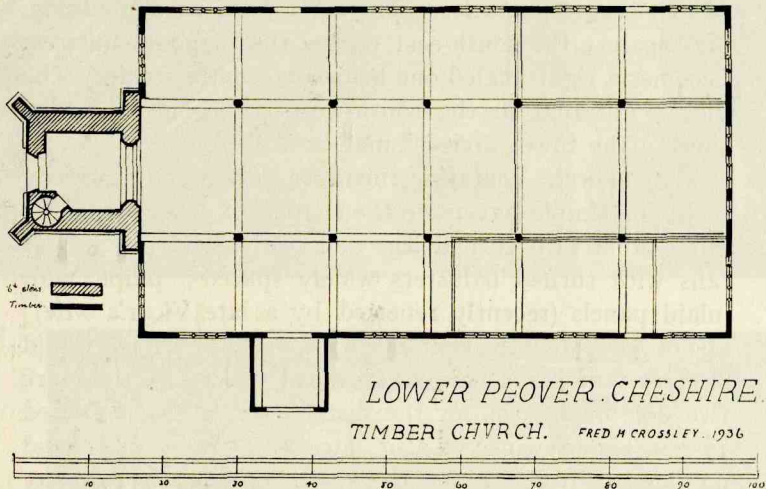
As it stands to-day the church looks too good to be true, and in many ways this is so, but after we have deducted Mr. Salvin's good intentions there is still a sufficient body of material to make the church a notable example of half-timbered construction. It is open to question whether the single span roof was not the original design, bar of course the plaster ceiling. The same type of single span is employed both at Marton and Warburton, both timber churches.² The 1840 drawing shows the east end constructed in the older type of framing, with vertical and horizontal struts, still unaltered, as in the chancel at Siddington. When the new three-gabled roof was substituted the east end was evidently taken down to the ground and rebuilt with rather fussy diagonal struts, the east windows of the chancel and south aisle

¹ The heads of the windows were pointed before the restoration and they are pointed now. Ormerod evidently was mistaken.

² “ Another type is found in Cheshire, a county rich in half-timbered houses. Dietrichson supposed that Warburton church dated from Norman times, but this theory was disproved by Meldahl, who assigned it to the fourteenth century. In 1891 he exhibited a model of it to the Anthropological Soc. of Vienna, showing three aisles under a single-gabled roof, and long walls with vertical timbers divided by a horizontal beam. Another church, Marton . . . has three aisles under a single roof. The framework chiefly consists of uprights, a short distance apart, banded together, as at Warburton, by a horizontal transom. Inside are wooden arcades consisting of pointed arches which support the roof structure. The church terminates in a rectangular chancel.” (Josef Strzygowski, *Early Church Art in Northern Europe*, page 82.)

altered and the chancel window raised to a new level. The south aisle of brick was taken down and a timbered wall substituted with diagonal strutting in imitation of the existing north aisle.

The interior is impressive. The aisles are separated from the nave by massive pillars of oak averaging 15 inches in diameter, adzed to octagonal form with primitive capping $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches in depth and cut from the main trunk ;

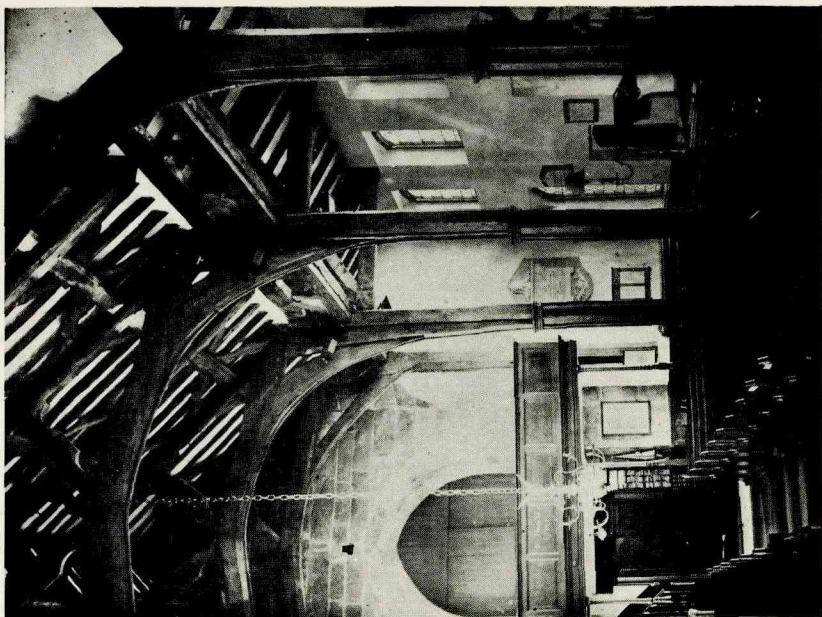


the majority of the piers are original. From the pillars spring strong curved struts forming arches between the pillars and also across the nave and aisles, fastened together by oak pegs. The upper reaches of the main roofs are modern. The windows are all square-headed, generally of four lights with pointed heads, the majority renewed. The various doorways have wooden jambs and lintels with flattened heads. On the exterior the eaves are curved to the roof ; the porch has been renewed.

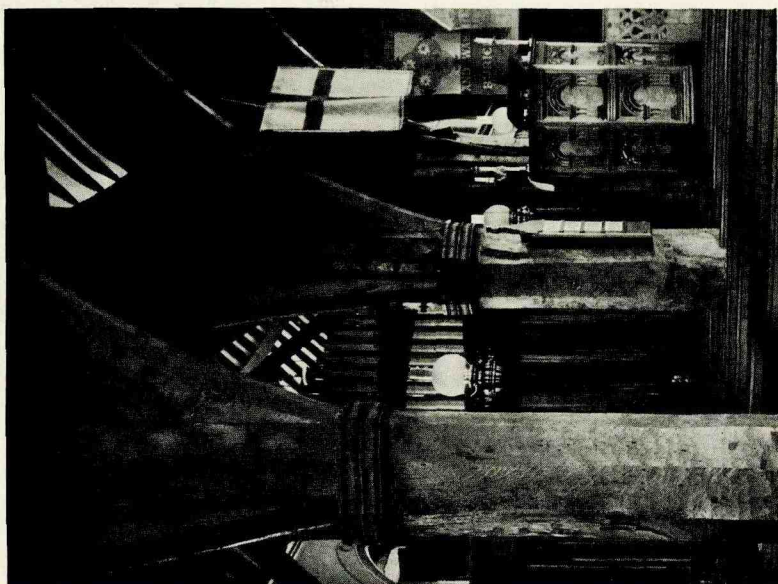
The western sandstone tower is of the late Cheshire type ; the western doorway with rather mixed mouldings,

the two-light window above having a depressed head. The ringers' chamber is blank, excepting the south side, where is a small two-light window. The belfry windows have depressed four-centred heads of two lights with plain tracery. With the exception of the doorway the tower is without hood-mouldings and has only a single string bar, the top one; the buttresses are diagonal with four off-sets finishing a yard below the string; above this is a battlemented parapet with the remains of four corner pinnacles. There is a good base moulding, and against the south-east corner the diagonal buttress becomes a right angled one below the centre string. The vice is internal in the south-west corner lit from the south; the tower arch is small and narrow.

The church contains furniture of much interest, including simple screens to the chapels of Jacobean date; Holy table with turned legs and top carved rail; altar rails with turned balusters widely spaced; pulpit with inlaid panels (recently renewed by a late Vicar's wife); all of seventeenth century date. The curious round circular font has a turned Jacobean cover and there are two dole cupboards for the distribution of bread, dated 1737. The pewing is also Jacobean, well made and moulded; in the aisles the doors only open half-way down, the lower portion forming a box for the rushes spread upon a clay floor for the benefit of the worshippers every Rush-bearing Sunday. In the Shakerley chapel is a remarkable dug-out chest of the thirteenth century, six feet in length, two feet in width and the same height. It is bound together by heavy iron straps, with additional chains and rings for carrying. Within is an excavation four feet six inches in length by one foot six inches in width, the lid shaped gablewise made from another chunk of oak. In the churchyard the sundial stands on the base of the old cross; upon the dial, "John Hassellhurst, 1691."



HOLMES CHAPEL, INTERIOR LOOKING WEST



LOWER PEOVER CHURCH, INTERIOR



WARBURTON OLD CHURCH FROM THE NORTH



HOLMES CHAPEL ROOF

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HOLMES CHAPEL, ST. LUKE'S. This church is the next in size to that of Lower Peover and there is evidence that originally it was a complete example of a timber-framed and plaster church. Unfortunately in the eighteenth century it was remodelled by the rebuilding of both aisle walls in brick, raising them to the full height of the church to allow of the erection of galleries, the chancel being rebuilt in brick at the same time. In this reconstruction the timber arcades were left, together with the roof, which was however ceiled over and hidden from view. Of its early architectural history nothing is known. A survey taken in 1569 mentions the monuments and glass but not the fabric. At that time there was an altar tomb with the effigy of a knight dated 1448, a slab with two brasses, 1431 and 1468, and a third dated 1480. In the wardens' accounts for 1718 is an item "spent carrying gravestones out o'th chancel, 3d." probably an explanation as to their disappearance. Gastrell referring to Holmes Chapel says, "Confirmation of Mr. Winnington's right to an oratory, or chappell, in ye south side of ye chancell, wch he and his ancestours had enjoyed time out of mind, wth an addition made to it about 20 years before ye date of this, anno 1609" (page 259). At a bishop's Visitation in 1684 the wardens are admonished for not keeping the chancel in repair. The wardens' accounts between 1718 and 1732 are full of details of expenditure upon "inlargyng" the church, including £58 13s. od. for rebuilding the chapel wall. As they left it so we see it to-day, with the exception of the removal of the plaster ceiling and the repairs to the original roof. A note by Helsby in Ormerod, vol. 3, page 123, shows the mischievous nineteenth century at work :—

"The interior has lately been restored, and resealed with pitch-pine, and the seats are now free and unappropriated. The usual hot-water pipe heating is also introduced, and other modern alterations have been made."

The church is planned with nave and aisles, chancel and chapels, with a western tower on similar lines to Lower Peover and of about the same date. The nave measures 40 feet in length and is 19 feet 4 inches in width, divided into two and a half bays. The timber arcades are more ornate than at either Peover or Marton; they are octagonal with a fillet down each corner of the angles, completed with separate caps having a bolder treatment; the pillars are placed upon stone bases. Above the capping spring posts of nearly equal height, the pier and cap being 10 feet out of a total of 18 feet 6 inches; there are no side arch-braces and as there is no appearance of their having been removed it is difficult to say exactly how the division between nave and aisles was constructed before the eighteenth century alterations. The aisles were evidently low, for the overhang of the nave roof was preserved and used to support the new aisle ceiling, in which much of the timbering of the old aisle roofs was re-used; possibly the upper part of the nave walls was plastered.

The re-discovered nave roof is both interesting and beautiful; it is a combination of arch-brace and beam roof, the collar being placed sufficiently low as to produce this effect. The wall-plates are three feet in depth and are made up of two separate beams 19 inches apart, strutted by short posts and diagonals. The main standards rise above these, the collar being housed into them, the ends resting on the top-beam of the wall-plate; this is cambered sufficiently to form with the braces an arch of Tudor shape, the braces coming down below the wall-plate beam. The principal rafters are supported by strong diagonals ornamentally cut, these struts starting from the centre of the beams. Intermediate rafters rise from the wall-plates with a small collar and arch-brace at a higher level than the principals. The ridge is small, the four purlins being laid flatwise and tenoned into the

principals. Between each corner is a large ornamental wind-brace forming a quatrefoil, three complete and two halves across the roof.

In addition to the construction of the church there is some interesting furniture, including two well-panelled galleries dated 1705, turned baluster altar rails of seventeenth century date and the earliest brass candelabra in the county, dated 1708 and inscribed "Ex dono Thomae Hall de Hermitage in Com. Cestre. Ironmaster. Anno domini 1708."

The tower, built of red sandstone, is the usual late Cheshire type. It measures 17 feet north to south and 17 feet 6 inches from east to west, the walls being 45 inches in thickness. The western façade has a doorway with a pointed head and deep mouldings; above is a two-light window, also with a pointed head. The ringers' chamber is lit by a small square window, below which is a niche with a base and decorated head. The belfry windows are of two lights, with the centre mullion running into the head. There are four gargoyles, but the battle-menting now shows no signs of pinnacles. The tower is without intermediate strings. The buttresses are diagonal, with five off-sets terminating well below the cornice. The vice is in the south-west corner approached from the inside. The tower arch is pointed and as far as one can see is without caps, the octagonal responds being chamfered. The tower was restored in 1931.

The following items from the wardens' book are of interest; the entries do not begin until 1716, evidently after the major remodelling had been undertaken:—

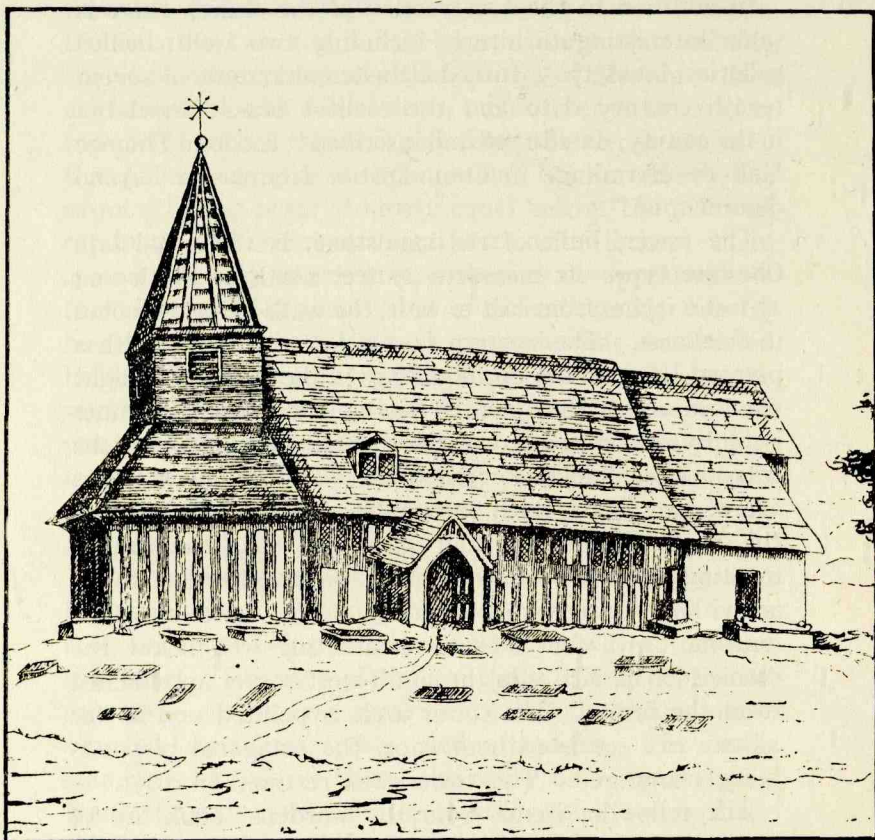
1719. Pd Peter Walley for work done at church and vestry
new roof leaded £11 10s. 8d.

Pd Roger Brooks for slating and ridging church, £2 19s. 10d.

1721. Pd for a lycenc to inlarg ye church £3 12s. 8d.

1723. Peter Walley's bill for repairs £10 13s. 8d.

1726. In this year are several items for work and materials
in building a porch and about a gallery at the west end.



MARTON CHURCH, SOUTH FRONT,
as it stood before its restoration.

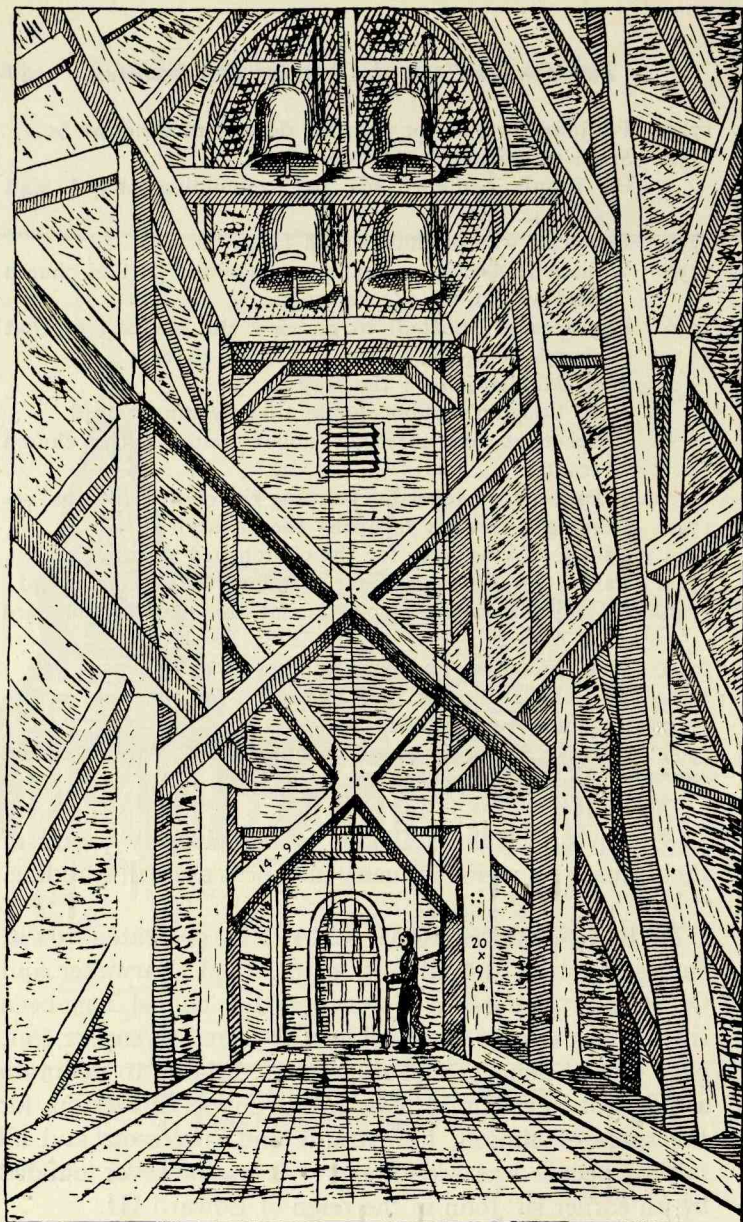
From a sketch by Miss Leigh

1727. Pd John Swayne for painting doors and windows 6s.
1732. Spent at rearing the church side 5s.
Pd Frank Faulkner his bill, rebuilding chapel wall
£58 13s. od.
1734. Repairing wall of church yard £4 4s. 2d.
1735. William Henshaw, mason, repairing west part of church
yard wall 46 yds. £9 6s. 10½d.
1736. Expences to Minshull to go view the painting of that
church, as a patern for H. Chapel 1s. 8d.
At Middlewich on the way 7s. 3d.
At Coughin's public house that evening 2s. 4d.
Spent at five meetings about painting the church
12s. 6d.
Paid Mr. Fletcher for painting the church £20 10s. od.
1740. Leading a tree for repairing the chancel 4s.
1743. Paid for Lyme trees for the churchyard 12s.
1744. Paid John Richardson for mending the screen 2s. 4d.
1746. To John Yarwood fencing about the trees in Ch. yard
1s. 6d.
1749. Paid for during and cording trees in church yard 3s.
1751. Pd John Swain for rods and poles for the trees in the
church yard 9s. 6d.
1799. Thomas Brown for painting church £20. Varnishing and
cleaning gallery £1 1s.

The people of Holmes Chapel were evidently proud of their lime trees which in many instances are still standing.

MARTON PAROCHIAL CHAPEL, dedicated to St. James (Gastrell and Glynne) or St. Paul (Earwaker and Ormerod). The early history of this chapel has been traced back to 1390 when by deed sir John Davenport, knt. gave four messuages and sixty acres of land, to maintain a fit priest to celebrate mass in the chapel of Merton, for the souls of himself, his parents and successors and all faithful people deceased for ever. It was however founded by an earlier sir John in the reign of Edward III.

After the suppression the chapel was robbed of its revenues, the site granted in 1549 to some speculator through whom it became invested in the Davenport



H. J. Bellars del.

INTERIOR OF MARTON TOWER.

Framed with rough-hewn oak trees, and reduced externally into form by a casing of boards, shingle, and plaster. Exterior dimensions 24 x 17 ft.

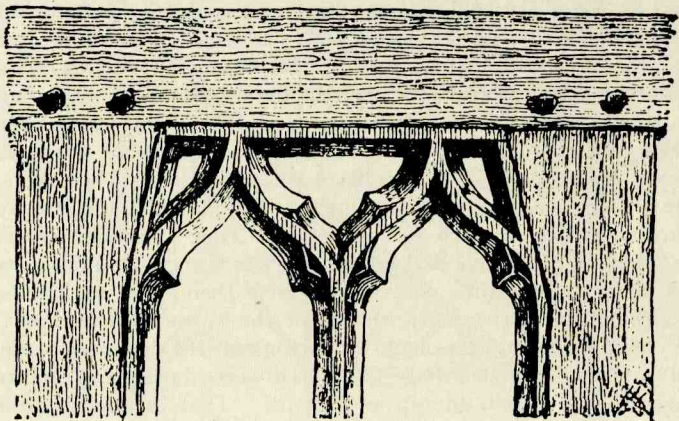
From the Journal of the Architectural, Archæological and Historic Society, 1857, Vol. I.

family. "James Whitacres, priest, who then served the chantry retired on a pension of £3 14s. and was living in 1566" (Ormerod, vol. 3, page 726). An interesting link is given by Earwaker (*East Cheshire*, vol. 2, page 390) in connection with the above. "About 1600, a return was made by the churchwardens of Prestbury to the bishop of Chester that the inhabitants of Marton had informed them,

that sir John Davenport, knt., lord of the manor or lordship of Marton, did by ancient deed give 3 tenements in Marton, of the ancient yearly rent of 59s. 4d., for the use of saying mass and other divine prayers for ever, in the chapel there, reserving 6d. to the house of Davenport for ever. That the lands were seized into the king's hands, who gave allowance of 4 marks a year, to be paid at the audit of Chester, to one Wyttakers, curate there, who enjoyed the same for life and died about twenty years since, since which it has ceased. That John Davenport esq., the lord of Marton, had taken sundry tenants to that chapelry and of an ancient time contributors with them, into his hands, and that Mrs. Davenport, widow, of the house of Davenport, who held the capital messuage in Marton and the demesnes there, did not pay and contribute to church lays, duties and curate wages to the parish church and chapel. That in ancient time there were 19 or 20 kyne given to the furtherance of a stock for the said chapel and a chalice valued at £4 or £5, and other chapel goods and the kyne were taken away by Robert Tatton, esq. and the chalice by the hall of Davenport or Marton, and the chapelry dispossessed thereof and of other goods."

Before describing the church as it stands to-day a short statement of the various changes which have taken place during the last hundred years is necessary. In 1804 the old roof was taken off and lowered. In 1850 a Mr. Derrick was let loose upon the fabric and there was a considerable and unhappy restoration, the old fourteenth century two-light windows with tracery were taken out and plainer three-light windows substituted, the pews were cut down and many other so-called improvements effected. In 1871 a still more disastrous

restoration took place under Butterfield, the north door was abolished, the south porch rebuilt, and much new work was introduced into the exterior of the fabric, including the reconstruction of the belfry on different lines to the original. There are fortunately drawings showing the church before this doubtless well-intentioned but sadly destructive restoration. As Dr. Cox remarks, it was done on meagre lines, for several of the quatrefoils



ORIGINAL WINDOW IN MARTON CHAPEL.

are in deal. For the third time it has recently been in the hands of an architect.

Glynne visited Marton in 1853, but not before Mr. Derrick's hand had been laid upon the church; his description however is useful:—

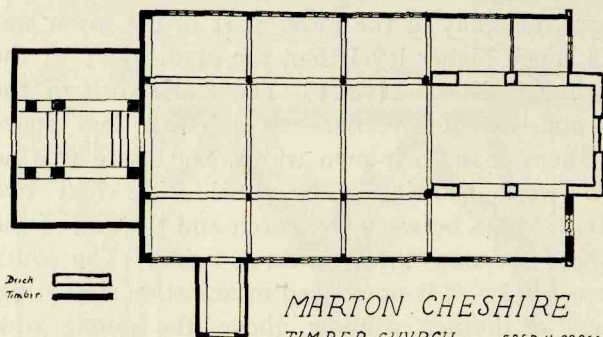
“ This church is an interesting and complete specimen (save the chancel) of the curious wood and plaster building, as adapted to an ecclesiastical edifice. It comprises a nave and chancel, each with narrow aisles, under the same roof, and a western belfry; but the chancel has been rebuilt in brick. The whole of the nave is of very good wood and plaster frame-work, lately put into excellent condition; the windows square-headed of three lights, with wooden mullions, and tracery of a rather

decorated character. . . . The interior is in excellent order, and has an interesting appearance with its open low benches and curious wooden arcades. . . . The aisles are narrow and shed-like, but the arcades are regularly formed. In the nave are three wooden arches of pointed form, rising from slender octagonal columns also of wood with capitals. These arches reach the roof, and there are also pointed arches of timber carried across the nave, and across the aisles, with open spandrels." (Glynne, *Notes on the Churches of Cheshire*, p. 92.)

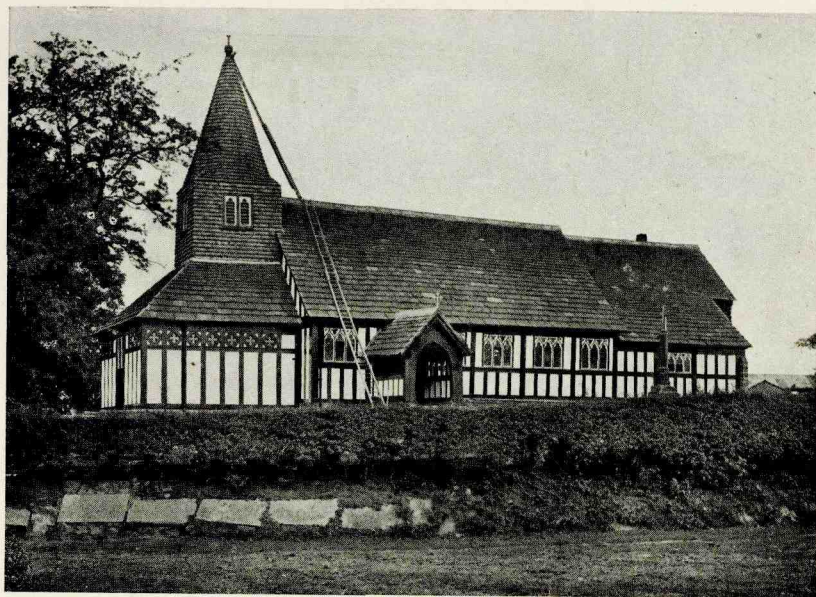
The principal difference to be noted from a drawing before the restoration and what we see to-day is the following: the splay of the lower part of the tower was then at a much higher level than the main roof; at the present time it is the reverse. The framework of the narthex consisted of vertical struts with less space between them than their own width, and there was no quatrefoil work showing. The south aisle had two four-light windows between the porch and the end of the aisle; there are now three of three lights. The south chapel was brick; it is now faced in imitation timbering. There was a dormer window above the porch, now abolished. The fabric is situated upon a mound close to the main road and approached by a flight of about 21 steps, six of these being within the narthex.

The church, originally of timber throughout, was altered in the eighteenth century, the chancel and side chapels being rebuilt in brick. On plan the nave measures 38 feet in length, and with the aisles is 33 feet in width; the narthex or tower chamber is 23 feet 9 inches from north to south and 17 feet 1 inch from east to west. The body of the church has a nave and aisles of three bays, the chancel of two. The nave is separated from the aisles by four octagonal wooden pillars on either side running up into the roof; these pillars are of lesser scantling than the ones at Lower Peover. About 10 feet from the ground they have moulded caps from which spring arch-braces on three sides, the east and western braces

forming the arcade, the north or south forming the arch across the nave morticed into what might be termed the collar-beam. Above the collar is a king-post supported by curved braces to the ridge. There are four purlins on either side of the roof, the second from the top strengthened by short diagonal struts; the third resting upon the collar, the fourth above the arch-braces forming the arcade. The aisles have curved beams with struts below also forming arches; these support the



principal rafters of the lean-to roof which butt into the continued upright of the pier below the collar, the latter housed on the top of the pier forming a compact scheme of bracing from the low outer wall of the aisle to the collar. The aisles have one purlin and one common rafter between each principal rafter. The construction of this church in which arcades and roof are of timber is a most satisfactory method, the whole morticed and pegged together into a single unit of great strength. The narthex at the west end supports the belfry, which is constructed upon four massive posts strengthened by struts. Round three sides of it is an aisle covered with a sloping roof, forming the narthex. The belfry is crowned by a spire with oak shingles. Butterfield rebuilt this tower in 1871 with new angle posts, altering both the construction and

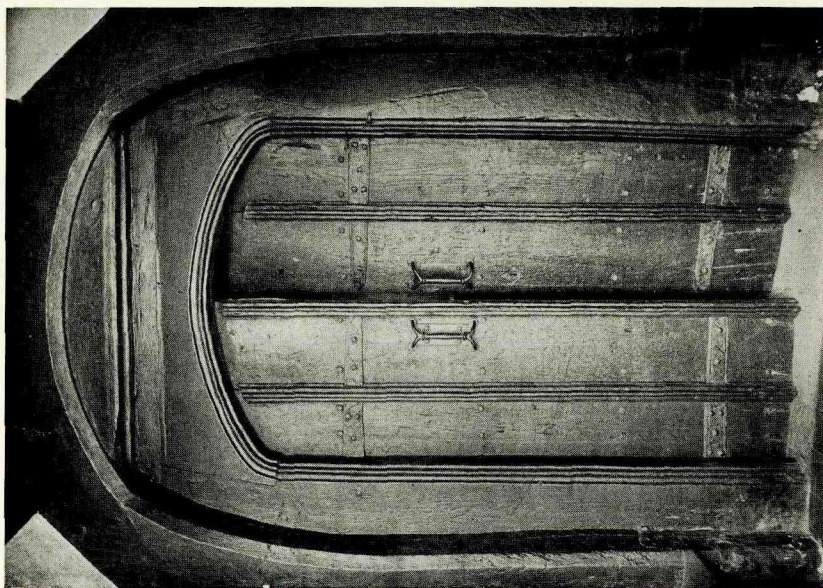


MARTON CHURCH, EXTERIOR FROM THE SOUTH

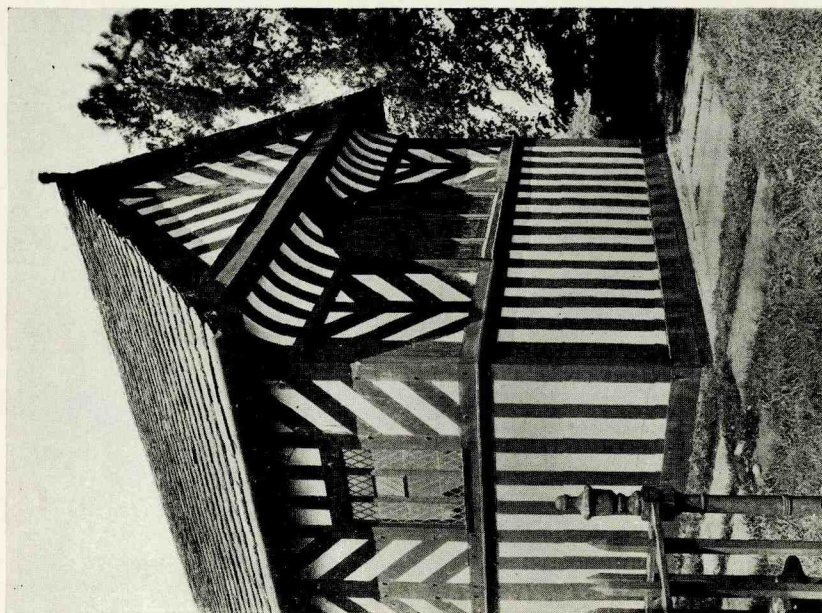


MARTON CHURCH, INTERIOR LOOKING WEST

To face page 32]



SIDDINGTON, INNER DOOR OF SOUTH PORCH



SIDDINGTON, EXTERIOR OF CHANCEL FROM THE SOUTH-EAST

design. The old furniture includes an oak pulpit dated 1620 having an inlaid coat of arms and a late sixteenth century long chest with three hinges and square lock-plates.

SIDDINGTON CHURCH. Our knowledge of the early history of this chapel of ease to Prestbury is slight ; it at least went back to the fourteenth century. We come, however, on to firmer ground by 1474, in the will of Robert Sydyngton, who left his soul to God and his body to be buried in the chapel of Merton. He left 6s. 8d. to the chapel of Sydynton and 40d. to Merton, also 40d. towards building of the bell tower at Gouseworth. In 1520 Margaret Hawarden of Chester left by will the sum of 6s. 8d. "to the chapel of Sydynton, at the oversight of sir Randulph Fitton parson of Gawsewarth as he thinkes nedefull." Gastrell speaking of the church about 1721 gives the following particulars :—

"No burying place, tho' there be a chappell yard enclosed. . . . The tyths of this chappelry belong to the vicar of Prestbury and set for 40 pounds per annum.

The former vicar for 50 years past, and present vicar for several years gave 40s. per annum to ye curate, but upon pretence yt he is put in by other persons, the vicar hath for 8 or 9 years refused to pay ye 40s., as is certified by Edw. Thornicroft esq. anno 1717. . . .

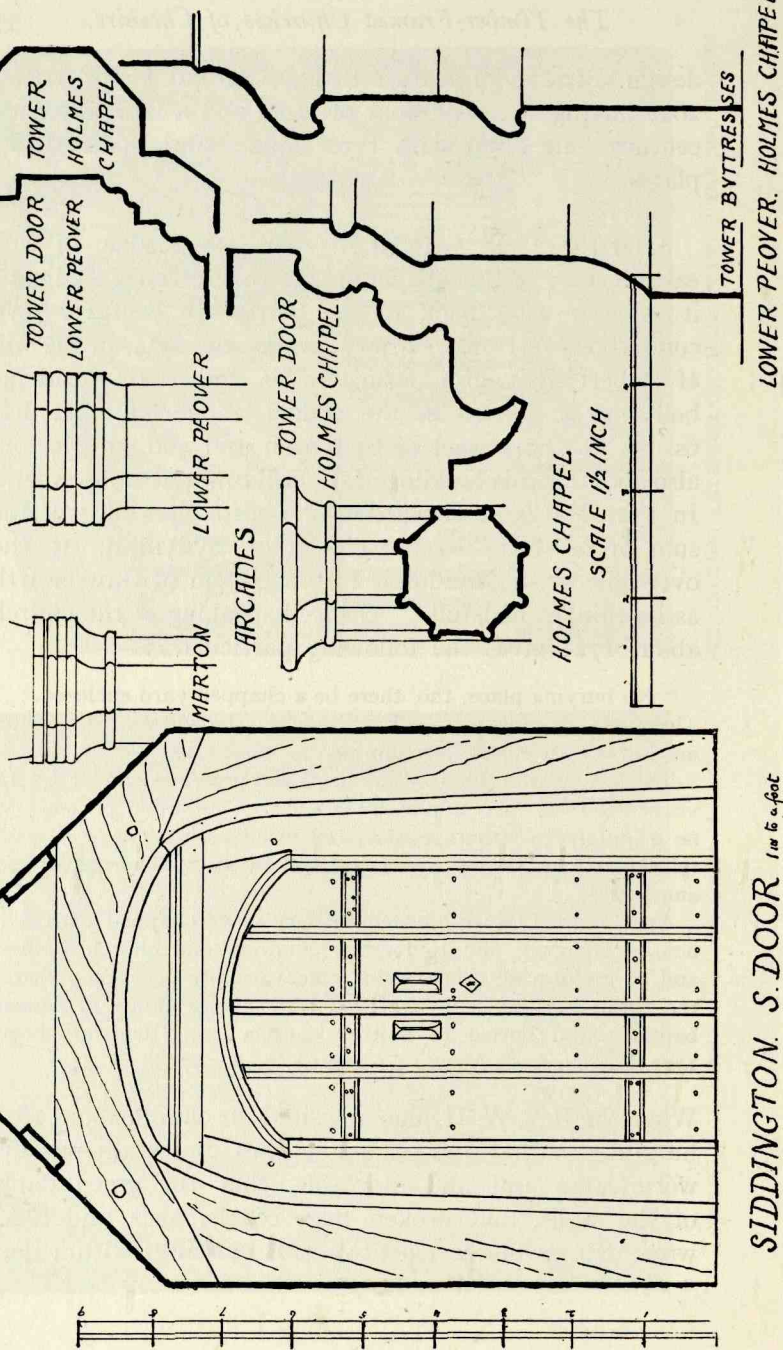
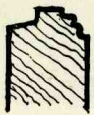
Anno 1721, Licence granted to bury in ye chappell yard, but not ye chappell, and to baptize children, and church women, and to perform all other divine offices usually performed there ; the curate to keep a register and transmit ye names of persons baptized and buried to mother church. . . . (Registers begin 1721.") (Gastrell, *Notitia Cestriensis*, page 297-8.)

When the Rev. W. H. Massie visited the church about 1850 he stated "that the oaken benches and stall-ends are worm-eaten and uncomfortable, that the green damp of the walls, and broken flags of the aisle and utter wretchedness of the existing state of things within does

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*TIMBER-FRAMED CHVRCHES
IN CHESHIRE* *And St George's Hall*

Feed of Goose Bay 75A.



TOWER

HOLMES

TOWER DOOR

LOWER PEOVER

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7

MARTON

ARCADES

TOWER DOOR

HOLMES CHAPEL

HOLMES CHAPEL

SCALE 1 1/2 INCH

TOWER BYTTRESSES

SIDDINGTON. S. DOOR

1 in to a foot

LOWER PEOVER. HOLMES CHAPEL

no honour to the parish." (*Chester Arch. Jour.*, Vol. I, page 305). Glynne also visited the church in 1853 and noted the following :—

" This chapel not far distant from Marton, has probably been a similar specimen of the ancient wood and plaster church, of which original traces remain in the chancel, the south porch, and the belfry, but the walls of the nave are wholly rebuilt in brick, so that the original character is more than half obliterated. The belfry, set over the west end, is gabled, and has some character with its black and white timbers. The porch is similar, with open sides, but stone roof: The chancel is pretty complete, its timber work is, however, ruder than at Marton, the east gable overhangs on its upper part like many domestic specimens, the windows small, square-headed, and of two lights. The interior is less well kept, and greatly inferior to that of Marton, but has open seats, and a late Perpendicular wood screen across the entrance to the chancel. There is an adjunct or excrescence on the north side, near the west end which retains the black and white timbers. The situation is fine, and there is a good view to the east, in which a fine old timber house forms a chief feature." (Glynne, *Notes on the Churches of Cheshire*, page 98.)

Ormerod states,

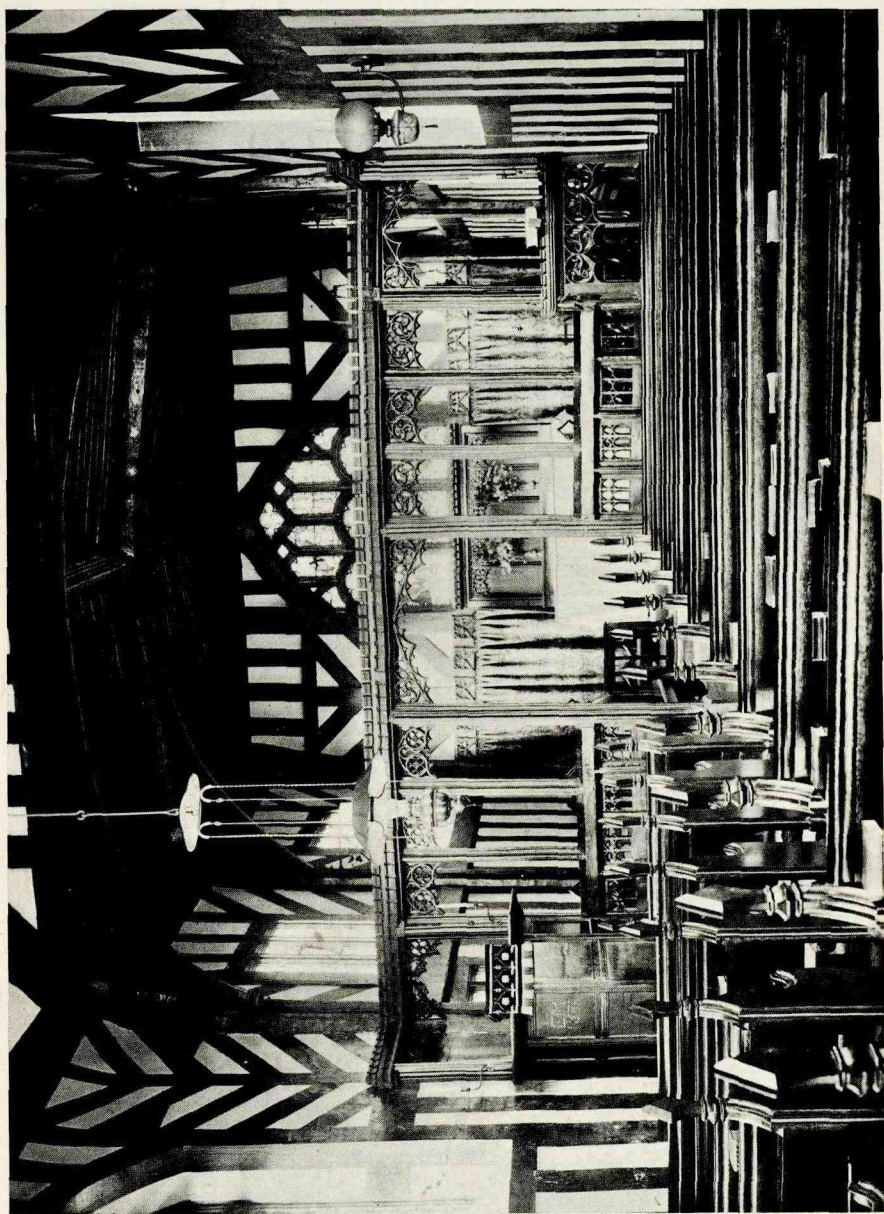
" In the interior the chancel is divided from the nave by an oak screen which formerly was painted and gilt and is carved in a style of richness which greatly exceeds what would be expected from the exterior of the building." Helsby adds, " if the same it is now reduced by the carpenter's adze to a plainness which leaves no trace of its former beauty." (Ormerod, vol. 3, page 729.)

This probably took place in 1853-4, when the church was restored at a cost of £700. It was again restored in 1894-5.

Siddington is almost equal in size to Marton church but as it stands at the present time is without aisles, but there is little doubt that prior to the rebuilding of the nave in the eighteenth century it was planned with them. On the south side there is still a bricked-up arch near the chancel and a black and white vestry at the

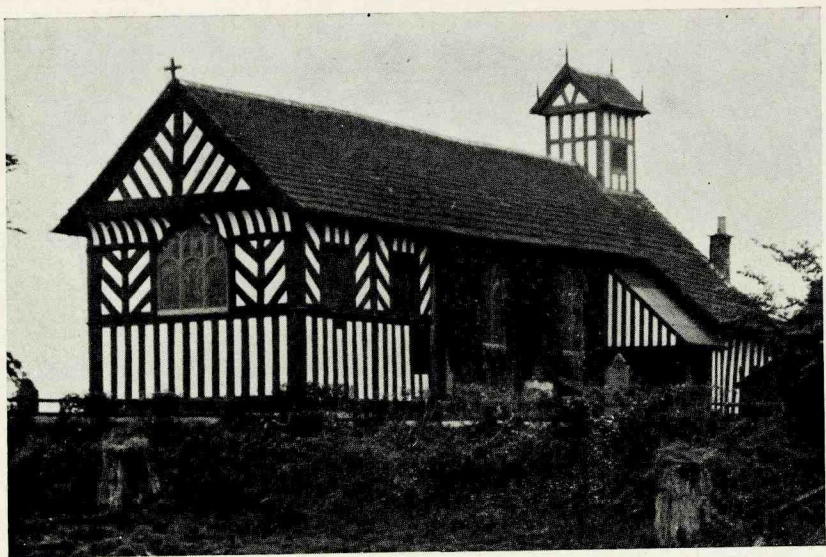
west end of what was the north aisle. The brick nave is now camouflaged at the west end with imitation timber-work and the interior is painted to represent a timber-framed church. The chancel is the least spoilt and much of it is genuine. According to Earwaker, the windows were at one time filled with glass given by the Fyttons, the east window being inscribed with the date 1513, which is a reasonable time for the erection of this part of the building. It is decidedly domestic in character, with a charming overhanging gable, roofed with Kerridge slabs. The lower part of the wall has vertical struts with a moulded transom, above which the timbering is diagonal. The interior is not plastered but shows the timber construction, the chancel in two bays measuring 20 feet square, covered by a camber-beam ceiling resting upon strong braces. The roof has a ridge and moulded rafters of equal size. The principal is cambered above and below to the same angle, finished with a broad simple chamfer. The arch-braces are large and deep, extending from the centre of the beam to well down the wall; they are plain, and now rest upon columns with moulded caps placed in front of the uprights, forming part of the wall construction. The wall-plate is poor and looks modern. The east window is pointed, the side windows square-headed. The screen has returned ends upon which the soffit and gallery would rest, and there are tracery heads nailed upon the east wall, which originally formed part of this gallery front.

At the west end is a pretty gabled bell-cot of timber, and at the north-west corner a small timbered vestry. The porch covers an interesting fifteenth century doorway with a coeval door; the head is a flattened arch moulded on the edge. Within there is a gallery at the west end. The nave measures 49 feet 3 inches in length and 19 feet 6 inches in width, the roof being divided into three and a half bays, the latter over the gallery. It is a simple

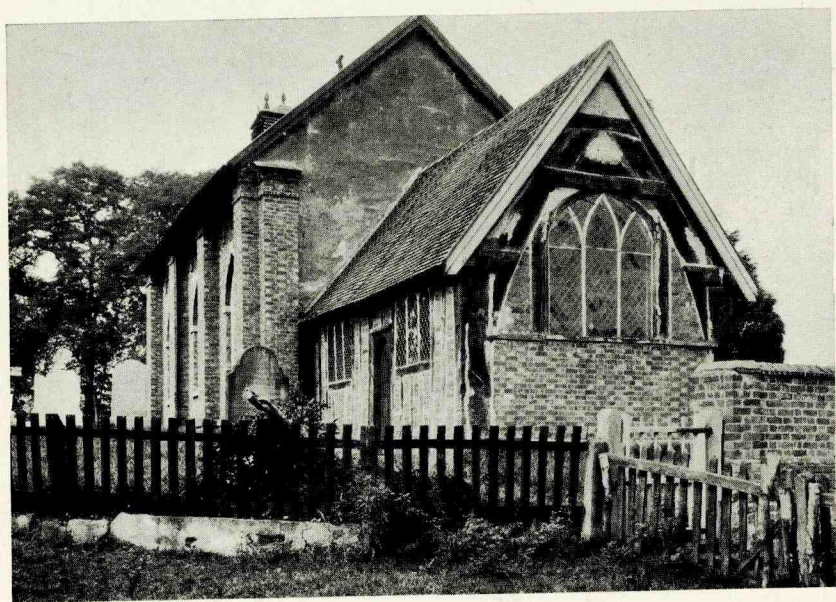


SIDDINGTON CHURCH, INTERIOR LOOKING EAST

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SIDDINGTON CHURCH FROM THE NORTH-EAST



BADDILEY CHURCH, EXTERIOR OF CHANCEL

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arch-braced roof with collars ; the braces do not meet at the apex, but come down to the wall level, finishing in wall-posts placed against the wall with moulded ends. There is a ridge and four purlins strengthened by stout straight wind-braces at the corners. The timbers are roughly squared with chamfers, and have recently undergone cleaning and repair. In addition to the screen and west gallery the church contains an oak pulpit inscribed " 1633 E.M.", of Carolean design.

BADDILEY, ST. MICHAEL'S. This church is mentioned as early as 1308 in the recognizance rolls, 2 Edw. II, m. 2, " in a sum of 30 marks from William de Praers and William son of Robert de Praers, to Roger de Praers parson of the church of Badelegh, for the tithes and other things pertaining to the said church " (Ormerod, vol. 3, page 458). The living passed through the Vernons and Praers to the Mainwarings and finally to the Tollemaches, the last by purchase. Webb in 1621 speaks of " Baddiley with a little church and an ancient seat that belongs to sir Randal Mainwaring, knt." (Lysons, 498-9). Raines in a note to Gastrell, page 210, says " The church was built entirely of English oak, and presented a most unique specimen of a timber ecclesiastical edifice until certain alterations were made in 1811."

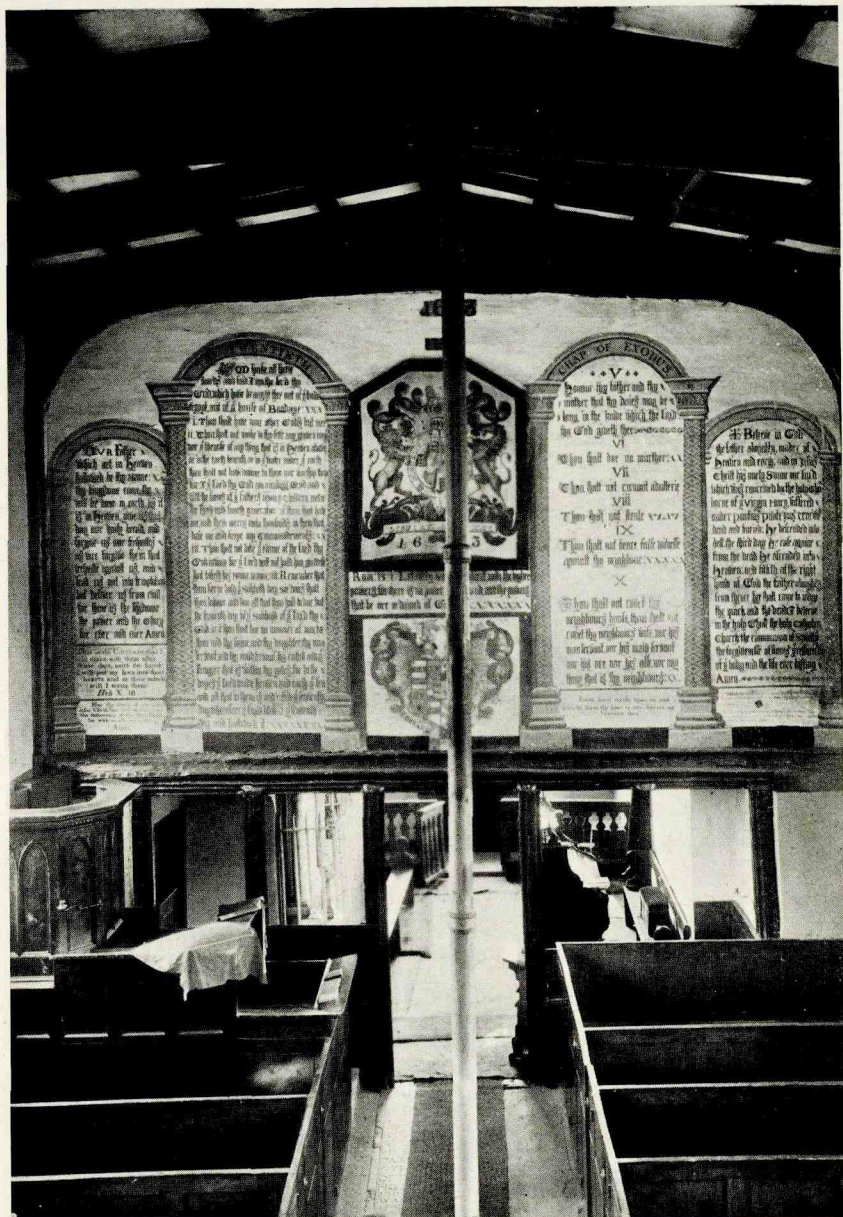
" The ancient hall, a large irregular building of timber and plaister [seems to have been occupied by ' sir Thomas Mainwaring of Baddeley, bart.' as late as 1725, the date of his will ;] it has been taken down ; near the site is the church, standing on a small green, within the same enclosure with the barns and other farm buildings. It consists of a small nave and chancel originally composed of timber, but the nave has recently been underbuilt with brick. There are remains of carved seats in the chancel." (Ormerod, vol 3, p. 457).

The church is still rather remote from general traffic,

standing almost alone within its graveyard. It is a small aisleless church consisting of nave and chancel, the latter of less elevation. The chancel has kept the greater part of its timber work, but the wattle and daub has been replaced by brick. The corner posts with the eastern gable and collar exist as well as the vertical struts of the side walls. It is in two bays with a high pitched roof and square-headed windows at the sides, the east window of three lights under an arched head. Within is a flat ceiling placed half-way up the gable, the plastering coming down to the head of the screen.

Unfortunately the nave was either rebuilt or faced with brick; it has now four brick pilasters on either side of the exterior and the same number on the west face. The western gable is still of timber and plaster and is completed with a quaint wooden square-shaped bell-cot. The windows throughout are arched in the head. The interior is of unusual interest, retaining as it does the original arrangement of a tympanum above the screen, which is a low one with moulded uprights but no tracery. Upon the tympanum are painted the Commandments, the Decalogue and the Lord's Prayer in semi-circular-headed panels; in the centre between the panels are the "Kinges Armes" dated 1663, below which are the arms of the Mainwarings. Between the two coats of arms is the following inscription: "Let every soul be obedient to the higher powers, for there is no power but God and the powers that are ordained of God." The screen is 8 feet 4 inches in height, the tympanum 19 feet 5 inches to the wall-plate, the width being 20 feet 10 inches. The church contained mediæval glass until its removal to Higher Peover when the Mainwarings sold their estates at Baddiley after 1725.

The nave roof is mediæval, a camber-beam of three bays, well moulded and constructed. The carved bosses no longer exist, but there is evidence of their having



BADDILEY CHURCH, INTERIOR LOOKING EAST

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been there. The bays are divided by an intermediate rafter and two purlins of the same scantling into eight squares. These are subdivided into four by lesser purlins and rafters making 32 panels to each bay. The panelling is plastered, the mouldings carefully mason-stopped. The principal beams are cambered on both edges, more acutely above than below, and are housed into wall-posts from which spring well-curved braces, the lowest moulding to the beam continuing down their edges. There is a deep wall-plate, the upper half moulded to match the intermediate rafters. There is a west gallery, a set of excellent altar rails and a large wall tomb in the chancel to sir Thomas Mainwaring, 1726.

CHOLMONDELEY CHAPEL. The early history of this chapel is clear, the deed for its foundation being preserved in the estate office, dated 1285. It is as follows :—

“ To all the faithful of Christ to whom the present writing shall come, William de Audelym and Leodegarius de Notingham, rectors of the church of Malpas, greeting in the Lord. Know ye that we have granted to Hugh de Chelmundeleley that he can have a fit chaplain celebrating divine services in his chapel at Chelmundeleley, saving the indemnity of our mother church at Malpas, so that the chaplain, if there shall be any, celebrating divine services shall not intrude himself on any things belonging to our mother church. In testimony whereof we have set our seals to this present writing. Farewell. Dated at Malpas, on Monday, the morrow of St. Martin (12th Nov.) in the year of grace one thousand two hundred and eighty-five.”

Very shortly after the grant of this deed an attempt was made to make the chapel parochial, but without success. Nevertheless the petition is interesting as showing the state of affairs between the English and the Welsh at that period :—

“ Because there is a certain chapel situate from olden time in a certain vill which is called Cholmundelegh, in the bishopric

of Chester, in the parish of Malpas, and that chapel is four miles distant from the church of Malpas, on account of the distance of which place many harms have happened, that is to say, that infants as well on account of their tenderness as the distance of the place die without baptism. And in like manner old men cannot go to the said church on account of their weakness wherefore at no time do they hear divine celebration when they enter upon old age. Besides men and women frequently die without confession, communication and extreme unction. And that the dead in the time of war are buried in the fields, because that church of Malpas is so near Wales that part of that parish belongs to the Welsh and part to the English. Wherefore the English dare not go with their dead to the said church of Malpas in time of war. And likewise at one time it happened that no Englishman dared to come to the said parish church of Malpas on Easter Day, to receive the body of Christ, for fear of the Welsh, but received the body aforesaid at the aforementioned chapel of Cholmundeleg. Wherefore, the lord of the aforesaid vill of Cholmundeleg, considering such harms, prays, for the love of charity, that a place of burial, baptism, and other necessary things may be established in the said chapel of Cholmundeleg; and that the tithes, oblations, and other appurtenances of the said chapel of Cholmundeleg may be granted for the sustentation of a chaplain, serving in the said chapel of Cholmundeleg." (*Cheshire Sheaf*, 1896, p. 103.)

It therefore remained a domestic chapel throughout the ages. Gastrell (page 193) states: "challenged by Lord Cholmley to be his domestick chappell, and is supplied by his chaplain. The Lord's Supper is administered here. People in the neighbourhood resort to it, but there is no endowment for a curate. It is said to be built upon a common, and not upon Lord Cholmley's ground." It however stands on ground adjoining the site of the old hall destroyed during the Civil Wars. This hall had been rebuilt by sir Hugh Cholmondeley the younger in the reign of Elizabeth. It was a quadrangular timber building projecting at each storey. Over an escutcheon of the family arms and quarterings, carved in the wainscot, over the hall door, was cut in wood: "The house was

then built by William Fawkoner, master of the Carpentry and Joyneryworke, 1571." (Ormerod, vol. 2, page 635.) Probably the timber and plaster chapel was built by William Fawkoner at the same time, but unfortunately it has suffered many changes. The chancel was refaced with brick in 1716 and the rest of the chapel rebuilt with brick and stone facings, sir John Vanbrugh being the architect, the master mason one Thomas Featherstone. As rebuilt it was in many respects similar to the chapel at Woodhey which has two windows at the east end; here there were two windows to the west. Since that date there have been further alterations; the two windows have been blocked and a door inserted, and new transepts added in 1829. Galleries and further alterations were made in 1840 and another restoration took place in 1905.

The chapel was damaged during the Civil Wars, when the hall was besieged and partly destroyed, and was repaired by Robert Cholmondeley, earl of Leinster, and according to Leycester sumptuously furnished. The interior of the chancel is still very beautiful, filled as it is with screen, reading desk, rails and Holy table, stalls and panelling as well as a pulpit and font cover of the time of the Commonwealth, 1652.¹ The east window contains some excellent Flemish glass. The roof over the chancel is in two bays and was evidently remodelled at the same time; the principals now being supported on arch-braces and hammer-beams. Each bay has two intermediate rafters, a ridge and two purlins, making twelve panels to each bay, the surface between being plastered. The mouldings are of fifteenth century date, composed of hollows and rounds; below the top moulding is a frieze of running ornament, below a brattishing, finishing with receding mouldings. The arch-braces have two curved arches, the inner, Tudor, dying upon the outer end of the

¹ Illustrated in Vol. 69, *frontispiece*.

hammer; the outer arch housed into the wall-posts. The openings are filled in with perforated tracery and the arch-braces have blind tracery cut upon them. The hammers are moulded and finish with carved heads. The lower braces between the post and hammer are well curved and have tracery carved upon them.

WARBURTON, ST. WERBURGH'S. Leycester says: "Here is an ancient free chappel now usually taken for a parish church. One moiety of Warburton was given by Adam de Dutton with the consent of his wife to the religious house of canons of the order of Premonstratensians about the time of king John. The church is dedicated to St. Werburgh and probably from the church, or some religious houses founded here anciently in honour of this Virgin it had the name of Warburton." (Leycester, page 383). Warburton and Lymn have been ecclesiastically connected for several centuries, hence the old Cheshire saying, "I'll tear him Lymn from Warburton." About 1190 the small convent at Warburton was merged into that of Cockersand near Lancaster. The present church is now used for occasional services, a new church having been erected in 1885, the living having been made into a distinct parish apart from Lymn in 1869.

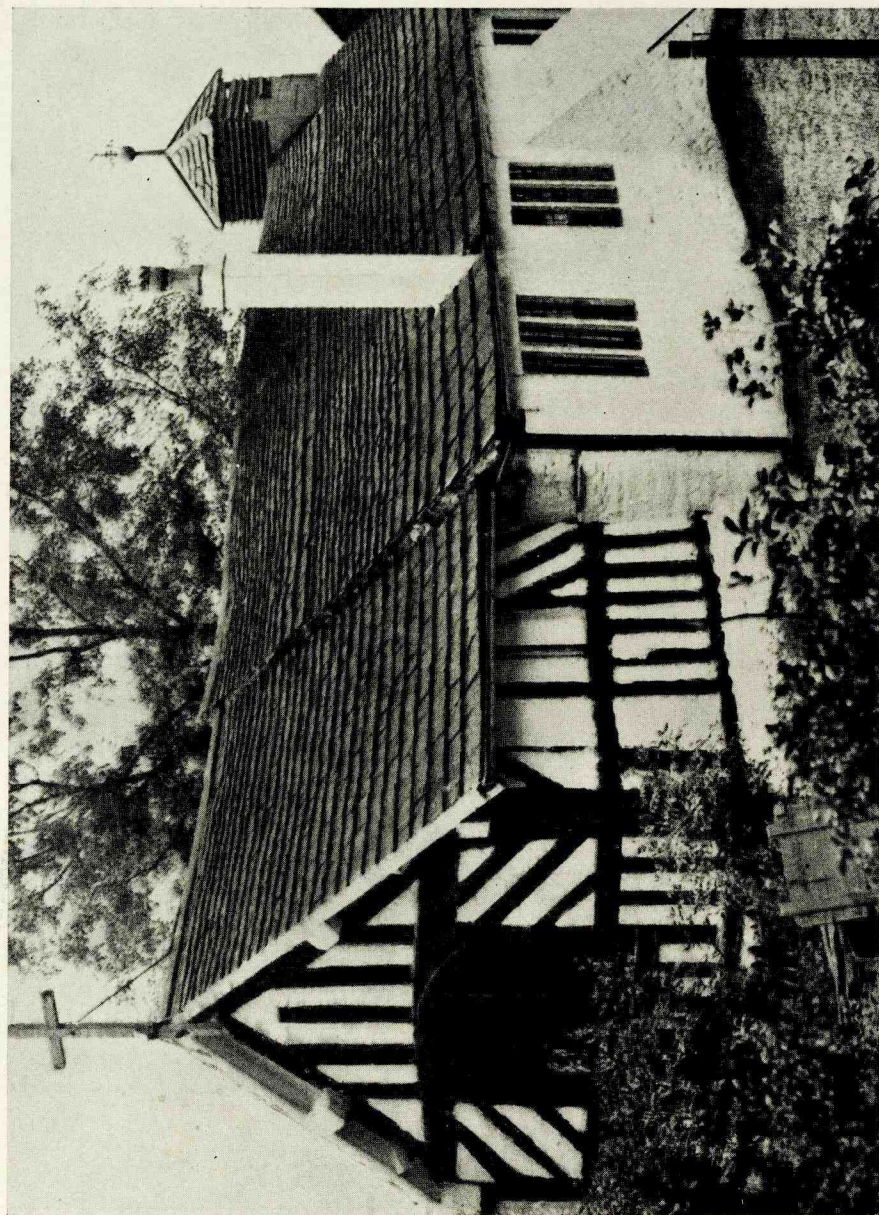
Glynne visited this church in the middle of the nineteenth century, and has left an excellent description of what he found there, from which I quote the following:—

"A small church, chiefly curious for presenting an ecclesiastical specimen of wood and plaster work. Originally it was probably entirely so, and wood superseded entirely the use of stone, but alterations have been made, and some parts have been reconstructed in stone and brick. As it exists at present, the church has a small nave and chancel, slightly distinguished, each with north and south aisle, and a brick tower, now mantled with ivy, has been added on the north side of the sacarium. The north wall is still of wood and plaster framework, the south wall is of stone, and the aisle or chapel south of the chancel has a



WARBURTON OLD CHURCH, INTERIOR LOOKING NORTH-WEST

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CHADKIRK CHAPEL FROM THE NORTH-EAST

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brick gable, and extends wider than the wall of the arch of the nave. The sacarium is also of brick, and the tower extends beyond it, thus placed in an unusual position, and disturbing the arrangement. The church is small and confined, but its interior presents a quaint and uncommon appearance, from the divisions of the aisles being formed by rude timbers and the wood framework of the roof coming down very low, especially in the part which forms the chancel, the boundary of which is marked by a horizontal beam. The nave may be said to occupy two bays, the chancel one. In the nave the timber of the roof is arched and rude arches with spandrels formed across the narrow diminutive aisles. The windows appear to be late, somewhat Elizabethan, with square heads and obtuse arched lights of three or four lights. The north aisle of the chancel is lower and narrower than that of the nave. The seats are all open, the pulpit Jacobean, the altar bears candlesticks. It may be doubted whether any part is prior to the reformation, but though rude, there is much quaintness, and the church is kept in excellent order." (*Cheshire Churches*, p. 81-2).

There is but little to add to the Rev. Stephen Glynne's description, which fits in well with its present condition ; it was conservatively repaired in 1927 at a cost of six hundred pounds. The whole of the interior is timber-work but on the exterior only the north side of the nave. The stonework includes the south and west sides of the nave and the north chancel aisle, all of which bears the date 1645, a time when very little repair work was being done to churches. The brickwork includes the chancel, south transept, tower, vestry and hearse-house dated 1711. The interior of the church and chancel afford remarkable examples of timber construction. The nave of two bays is supported on each side by two great timbers which have chamfered edges but no capitals ; there is a space of 15 feet between them, the whole of the nave and aisles are under a continuous roof covered with Kerridge slabs. The chancel is narrower also with a timber arcade, the narrowing being on the south side, where two uprights are set closely together, one for the

nave the other for the chancel. Throughout, everything is of the simplest and the word "rude" so often used by Glynne to describe the timber work of the Cheshire churches applies well to the timbering of this church.

There is a Jacobean pulpit and Holy Table; the chancel is separated from the nave by a low balustered screen with gates, also forming the backs to the stalls. The altar rails are of the same date and there is an iron hour-glass stand near the pulpit, the solitary example in the county. The octagonal font is dated 1603, its pyramidal cover 1595.

CHADKIRK CHAPEL, dedicated to St. Chad. This small fabric can be best described by a series of quotations from various writers at different periods.

"Leaving on our right hand that great mountain, called Werneth Low, where the Davenports have goodly possessions; and at the foot of which, towards the Mersey, lies the old Dearn and Deavly chapel, so people call desert places out of company and resort, called Chad-chapel, where seems to have been some monkish cell." (Webb's *Itinerary*, Ormerod, Vol. 3, p. 544.)

"In the southwest part of this township, opposite to Marple hall, is Chadkirk chapel which is not improbably the site of a manor, which a Saxon was suffered to retain possession of at the time of the Domesday Survey, but which might afterwards merge in the adjacent lordships of the baron of Dunham Massey." (Ormerod, Vol. 3, p. 849.)

"An ancient chantry existed here, which is thus noticed in the general ecclesiastical survey of 1534: Cantaria in Chadkyrke. Rad'us Grene capellanus, ib'm valet in terris et tenementis eidem cantar' spectan' iiij li. xvjd. Xma inde, 8s. 1d. The chantries survey, 2 Edw.6, states that Ralph Grene, the incumbent there, was aged 60. Val. £6 13s. 4d. Goods and ornaments (but no plate and jewels) Val. 16s. 8d. Lead and bells 6d. 8d." (ibid.)

"The saide chauntrie is of the dotacon of th'heires of one master Davenporte of Henburie and in the same chappell they have used to cristen, burie and wedde, wch chappell and lands the saide Davenporte claymeth to be p'cell of his inheritance, and

hath sued his livery for the same, amongst other his lands and possessions as upon the syght of his livery shewed before us did appear." (Earwaker, Vol. 2, p. 81.)

"Chadkirk, certified yt nothing belongs to it but £5 per annum left by Serg. Bretland in his will (1703) wch has never been paid since his death. He left £5 per annum to any orthodox preaching minister at Chadkirk chapel within Romely in ye parish of Stockport, payable out of ye rents of his manours of Werneth and Romely, desiring in his will yt ye parson of Stockport may adde so much thereto. The chapel is now in a ruinous condition, no service having been performed there for 30 or 40 years past." (Gastrell, Vol. 1, p. 302.)

The small chapel at the suppression of the chantries was evidently deserted, nevertheless the structure was allowed to remain, for in the Stockport registers its name occurs in connection with a marriage in 1642. Its vicissitudes have been many. After being ruinous, as mentioned by Gastrell, it fell into the hands of the Non-conformists for 50 years, until they were ejected in the reign of Anne. About 1746 this long ruined chapel was rebuilt and Bretland's legacy paid by Mr. Tatton, whose ancestors had bought the lands so charged.¹ In 1860 it was modernized and in 1865 practically rebuilt, only to be restored again in 1876.

Glynne visited the place in 1860 and thus describes it (page 107):—

"This small ancient chapel has been much modernized, and is but a mean fabric, consisting of nave and chancel without architectural division, and no aisles, and a wooden bell-cot. The roof is covered with stone flags. In the east wall there remains part of the original wood and plaster work in the gable, and a flat arched east window of debased character. The south wall and windows are quite modern, the north wall also of stone with some debased square-headed windows. The interior is pewed, and there is a modern screen to the chancel. The chapel closely adjoins the hall, and the situation in a wood and dell is romantic enough." (Glynne, p. 108.)

¹ For Bretland's monument, etc., see *Transactions* of this Soc., Vol. 91, page 81.

In 1876 all the pews and galleries were swept away and the screen replaced by a simple erection of plain beams together with a timber porch. There are pictures of Moses and Aaron holding the tables and a figure of an angel 3 feet in height on a pivot, showing the first verse of Psalm 95, which when turned round has different features with the hymns of the day. The font which was a shallow stone shell on a slender rounded stem has been turned out and is now used as a flower-pot. The inscription from the destroyed screen read : " This chapel was Raised out of its Ruines 1747. Repaired and Beautified and the loft erected 1761."

Although originally a timbered and plastered building, the various re-buildings have left but little of its earlier form. In the eastern wall of the chancel and the north side of the same is some of the old timbering consisting of cross bars, upright and diagonal strutting ; the rest of the building is plaster work over stone and brick. The old wooden bell-cot still stands, or did so the last time I was there.

SWETTENHAM CHURCH. Gastrell states : " Anno 1304, patron Richard de Swetenham. This manour was held anno 1342 by Randle de Swetenham under ye abbey of Vale Royall in wch family it continued till J. Davenport of Davonport had it. . . . The body of ye church and steeple being built of timber, are in a ruinous condition, and want to be rebuilt (1718). The church is now rebuilt of brick, and the steeple is building. May, 1722." (Gastrell, page 259). Ormerod speaking of it says :—

" The church is a neat building of brick with a tower and side aisles, the former of which forms an interesting object in several romantic views along the banks of the Dane. It was originally of wood and plaster ; and the chancel (which retains much of its former character) was encased with brick, like the rest of the church, in 1722. It also comprises a presbytery, side chapels and vestry. In 1846 an attempt was made to restore to it its

original Norman character. A chapel, adjoining and forming part of the church, was at that time erected at a cost of £1,200. It is built of stone, has a Norman arcade enriched with carvings, and is in the early decorated style from designs by Derrick." (Ormerod, Vol. 3, p. 75.)

There is little to praise at the present time. It is unfortunately a telling example of misguided restoration undertaken at various times, each time from a different angle or point of view ; it suffered the last as recently as 1938, and what little antiquity it then possessed has vanished. The Holy Table, which had maintained its position from the time it was made in the seventeenth century, has been turned out for a mundane production of no merit, and several unnecessary things have been carried out detrimental to the value and interest of the building. It is still largely of brick and what is left of the old timbering of the chancel walls has now been renewed ; the interior of the roof is of two bays, 21 feet 6 inches in length and 17 feet 6 inches in width. The centre principal is built into wooden uprights with curved arch-braces. Above the beam is a king-post on which rests a collar. The exterior is covered with heavy stone flags. The nave roof has been entirely renewed, being 33 feet in length and 16 feet in width. The eighteenth century font, a delightful thing, has been turned out and is now in the churchyard, its place taken by a monstrous affair, shaped and carved in servile imitation of the work of the twelfth century, lacking however both the crude vigour and strength of character of that period.

LITTLE MORETON HALL, domestic chapel. Raines in a note to Gastrell (page 236) says, " The hall, surrounded by a square moat, with a chapel, and other baronial appendages, is one of the most interesting and perfect remains of a timber house now in existence." Ormerod says (Vol. 3, pages 49-50), " The most antient

side of the building is on the east. In this part is a small and very curious chapel, divided into the regular form of chapel and ante-chapel, separated by a wooden screen. The extreme length is 10 yards, the ceiling very low: the chapel is about four yards long and three wide; the ante-chapel about six by five: at the east end is a pointed window, and texts of scripture are painted in black letter within compartments on the walls." James Croston describing its state of neglect when he saw it in 1883 (*Historic Sites of Lancs. & Ches.*, p. 41-2) says also "a part of the old oak screen separating the chancel from the nave remains, but from the upper portion, where the rood formerly existed, a plastered wall is carried up to the roof, which is flat and worked in panels." (This of course is original, forming a small tympanum.) "The plasterwork of the chapel is enriched with an ornamentation of Renaissance character, and the walls in places are strewn with scripture texts." The plain rectangular screen has two sturdy standards on either side of the doorway and is otherwise divided into three lights on each side, resting upon a low solid piece of timbering. The whole screen is roughly moulded and the heads are without tracery. The hall is now a possession of the National Trust, 1938-9, and is well cared for. In 1939 a stained window was placed in the sanctuary and the table adornments made good.

Acknowledgments. The writer is indebted to the kindness of the Rev. J. W. O. Greenacre of Bosley Vicarage for photographing the drawing of the old church now hung in the vestry and for allowing me to reproduce it for this paper; also to Wm. Fergusson Irvine, Esq., for sending me the 1625 plan of the church of Lower Peover, although it is now so long ago that he may have forgotten his kind deed of November 1916.

A LIST OF CHESHIRE CHURCHES KNOWN TO HAVE
BEEN ERECTED IN TIMBER.

| <i>Name.</i> | <i>Status when erected.</i> |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Arley Hall . . . | . domestic chapel. |
| Baddiley . . . | . rectory. |
| Bosley . . . | . parochial chapel. |
| Bramhall . . . | . domestic chapel. |
| Budworth, Little . . . | . parochial chapel. |
| Chadkirk . . . | . chantry chapel. |
| Chelford . . . | . chapel of ease. |
| Cholmondeley . . . | . domestic chapel. |
| Church Coppenhall . . . | . rectory. |
| Church Minshull . . . | . vicarage. |
| Congleton, Lower chapel . . . | . chapel of ease. |
| Congleton, St. Peter . . . | . chapel of ease. |
| Dutton hall . . . | . domestic chapel. |
| Eccleston . . . | . rectory. |
| Goostrey . . . | . parochial chapel. |
| Handforth hall . . . | . domestic chapel. |
| Haslington . . . | . domestic chapel, later chapel of ease. |
| Holmes chapel . . . | . parochial chapel. |
| Knutsford . . . | . chapel of ease. |
| Leigh, High . . . | . domestic chapel. |
| Marton . . . | . chantry chapel, later parochial chapel. |
| Moreton hall . . . | . domestic chapel. |
| Northenden . . . | . rectory. |
| Peover, Lower . . . | . parochial chapel. |
| Siddington . . . | . chapel of ease. |
| Swettenham . . . | . rectory. |
| Warburton . . . | . ancient free chapel, later rectory. |
| Warmingham . . . | . rectory. |
| Whitegate . . . | . capella-extra-portas, later rectory. |
| Windle . . . | . chapel of ease. |
| Wistaston . . . | . rectory. |

A HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENTS TO THE PRESENT TIME.

BY JAMES OSGOOD, ESQ., OF NEW-YORK.

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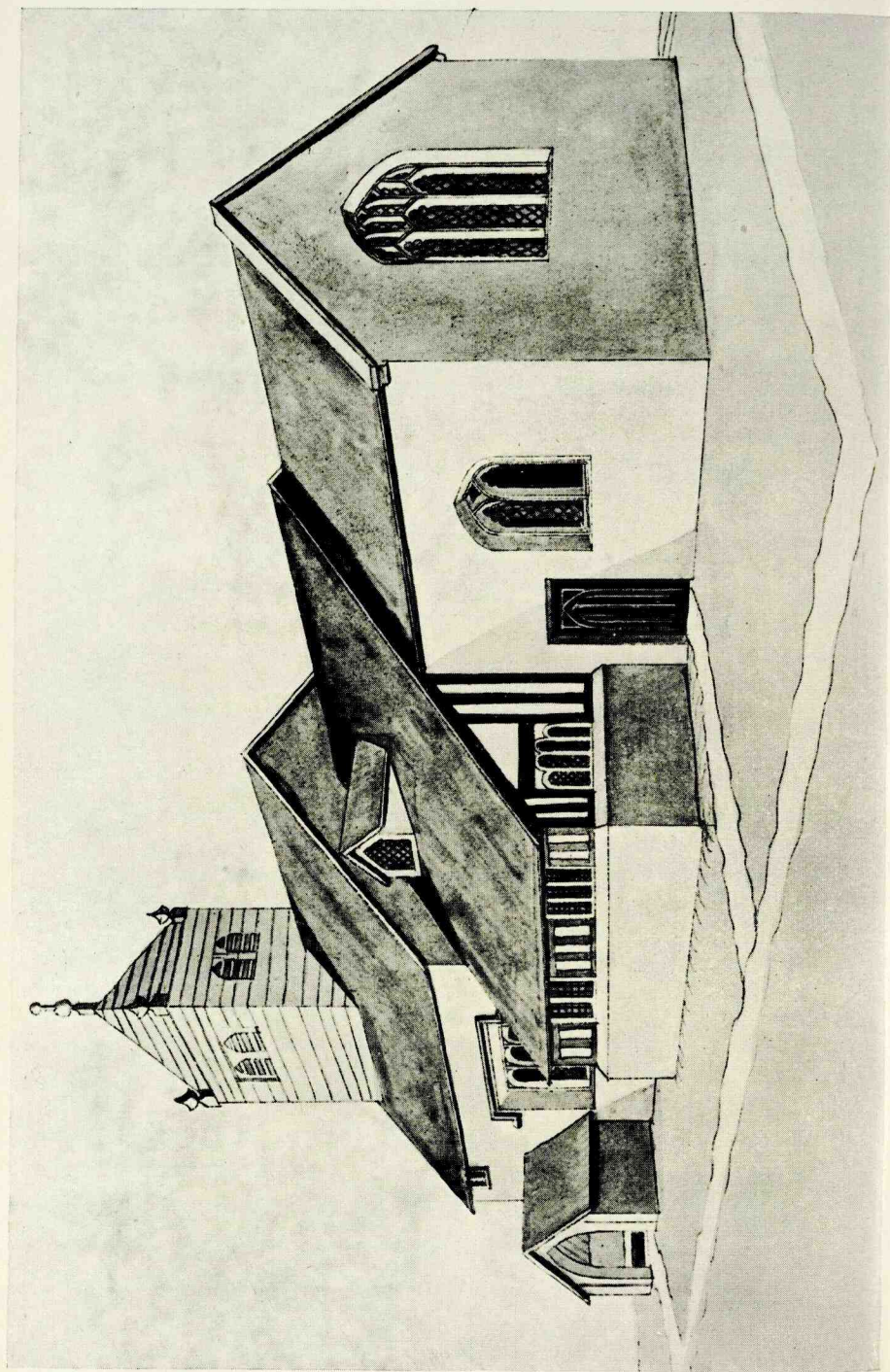
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STOAK CHURCH FROM THE S.E. (From a drawing by Thomas Rickman, 1869)

ADDENDA

FURTHER NOTES ON THE CHURCHES OF STOAK AND
WHITEGATE

STOAK. On page 10 is an extract on Stoak church from Ormerod, Vol. 2, page 309. This may now be supplemented as follows from the same source:—

“A doorway, under a semi-circular arch, ornamented with chevron mouldings, forms the entrance to the body of the church. The ornaments are concealed by the south porch, and another semi-circular arch, opening into the church at the opposite side, is altogether defaced and walled up. At the west end, under a rude oaken gallery dated 1679, is a circular font, about three feet in height and rather more than two feet in diameter, ornamented round the sides with a series of tall narrow Saxon arches. The chancel of the church is divided by a mutilated oaken screen, over which has been a rood loft, decorated with lines of running foliage well executed in oak, of which a considerable portion is remaining. This chancel appears to have been rebuilt about the time of Henry VIII. The roof of this part is very mean and of modern date, but that of the greater part of the body of the church precisely corresponds with the timber work in the roof of the hall of Stanney.”

Mr. Fergusson Irvine has discovered a drawing, now in the British Museum, dated 7 mo. 31, 1809, by Thomas Rickman, showing the church from the south-east corner of the churchyard, as a three-chambered structure, each roof a little lower as it approaches the east, reminiscent of its 12th-century origin. It has a south porch and a considerable bell-tower, both of timber, the latter with two-light belfry windows to each face, the tower completed by corner urns and a short pyramidal roof, also of timber. The nave is of stone and in addition to the porch towards the west, has a large three-light uncusped square-headed

window with a hood moulding ; in the west corner close to the roof is a small two-light window to the gallery. The second or middle chamber is slightly lower in elevation and is extended forward into the yard, forming an aisle, placed under a roof continuous with the main structure, which contains a dormer window. The lower part of this south aisle is of stone, the upper half of timber and plaster, the struts vertical, interspersed by two windows, a two-light and a three-light, both with square heads. The east wall of this aisle has a four-light window, the outer lights of less height. The chancel is of stone, again a little less in elevation than the middle chamber. On the south side is a priest's doorway with a pointed head set in a square frame, and a two-light cusped Tudor-shaped window, together with a three-light window to the east, the east wall completed by a flat coping. The drawing does not however indicate the stonework or the materials used for the roofing. In the vestry is a print from a rough painting of the church from the south which corroborates the drawing made by Rickman.

During the eighteen-twenties, owing to pressure from the bishop as to the necessary repairs, the church was not only restored but almost rebuilt. The first proposal to take down the old steeple as far as the clock and rebuild on the old plan with timber and brick was not accepted, and a Mr. Edgecombe was called in and empowered to restore the church ; this he proceeded to do, and if we take Ormerod's description and Rickman's drawing and compare them with what now represents Stoak church, we realise how exceedingly mischievous was this rebuilding and restoration undertaken without knowledge or reverence. In the debit account we have to include the destruction of the timber tower and porch, the enriched 12th-century doorway, the whole of the south side of the nave, the chancel arch, the timber and plaster Bunbury chapel, the priest's doorway in the chancel,

the west gallery, the screen, as well as the indications of the three-chambered 12th-century plan and superstructure. He cannot, I believe, be blamed for the disappearance of the font, for Mr. J. W. Ellis states in these *Transactions* for 1901 that "visiting Stoke and not finding the ancient font, I made enquiry from the Vicar, the Rev. R. W. Pritchard, who informed me that the old font was destroyed many years ago by some workmen stupidly lighting a fire in it, while the church was under repair."

We will now examine what additions Edgecombe made to the church and what he left of the old fabric. He built a stone tower at the west end in place of the timber steeple, which for its period is not without merit; it is completed by battlementing but not of the true Cheshire type. The south side of the nave was entirely rebuilt, consisting of a wall divided by four closely-set buttresses with a window between each, two of two-light flanked by two of one-light, all square-headed; a small part of the original walling was retained towards the east, which had an inscription embedded in it, part of which was destroyed by inserting the cill of a window. The second chamber was transformed, including the Bunbury aisle, and turned into a double transept, the southern one built upon the foundations of the Bunbury aisle; he roofed this transept inside on a plan which endeavoured to combine all the various roofs together, rather like the roof of a circus; this he was compelled to do after having destroyed the chancel arch. Edgecombe's work on the chancel was confined to the destruction of the priest's doorway.

He left the north wall of the nave and the nave roof, together with the shell of the chancel; possibly the bell-frame may be that used in the earlier timber tower, as its construction is peculiar. There are three bells dated 1631, 1615 and 1642. The north wall retains the blocked-up plain semi-circular doorway described by Ormerod,

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above which is a panel inscribed "William Heaward : William Roe : Churchwardens, 1691." Other wardens' names appear on the chancel wall, dated 1695. The nave roof is in four bays, measuring 32 feet in length by 21 feet 10 ins. in width. It is arch-braced, with hammer-beams, simple, unmoulded and of good workmanship. The principals, arch-braces and four purlins are original. In construction it has a curved collar with struts on the upper side, well shaped and curved arch-braces housed into upright posts and both morticed and tenoned into the hammers. These are supported by curved braces springing from wall-posts. There are six rafters to a bay, with curved wind-braces. The new work includes ridge, rafters, and plastering where the ashlar-pieces stand above the wall-plate.

Fragments of the screen remain in front of the west gallery ; this has for the most part been re-erected in varnished deal. The panels consist of eight pieces measuring 26 ins. by 8 ins. joined together in pairs to form panels, two other pieces measure 26 ins. by $5\frac{1}{2}$ ins. ; they are all $\frac{5}{8}$ of an inch in thickness. Each panel contains two rows of two lights divided by a battled transom ; they formed part of the wainscot of the chancel screen of which there are no other remains.

The church has fortunately preserved to it much of its post-reformation woodwork, including a 17th-century Holy Table and altar rails with twisted legs and balusters, a portion of the chancel seating against the wall, two excellent chairs, a panelled pulpit and a fine inscribed chest. There are numerous wooden heraldic painted memorial boards made by the Randle Holmes of Chester for the Bunbury family ; they are now being allowed to decay, some of them lumbered into the west gallery.

WHITEGATE. This was originally the "capella extra portas" without the gates of the Cistercian abbey of Vale

Royal, a usual feature of this order, built for the convenience of women and other persons who were not allowed within the gates of the monastery. It would be one of the later works to be undertaken and, as progress was slow, may be allocated to the 14th century. However, there is a possibility that the temporary building erected for the use of the brethren near the abbey, and occupied by them in 1281, when they moved from Darnall, and which continued to be their habitation during the time of the first four abbots, may have formed the nucleus of the chapel.

It is difficult to state when Whitegate became a parish church. We have already seen the notice from Gastrell (see pages 11-12) on the subject, which may be supplemented by further extracts from Brownbill's edition of the Ledger Book of Vale Royal and Lyson's *Cheshire*. In one of the Holme MSS. (Harl. MS. 2060) are a number of notes and transcripts taken from the ledger book, including a grant by John, abbot of Vale Royal, to Ralph Dawn, vicar of Over (instituted 1525), which names the "parish church dedicated in the honour of our blessed Lady situate at the outer gate of our monastery." "Richard Banion, vicar of Whitegate (instituted 1545), 55 years of age, saith that Vale Royal is in the parish of Whitegate, and that the tenements of Thomas Mercer, Hughe Streete and others named in the bill are encroached lands up to the time of Abbot Stratford, Abbot Buckley and Abbot Hardware, who had the tithes" (p. 187).

Lyson states (p. 816) that "The ancient parish church of Whitegate stood at the Abbey-gate of the monastery, having been built and made parochial at an early date, for the convenience of the tenants and inhabitants of the demesne of the abbey, but as this had been done by the authority of the pope's bull, the vicar of Over, after the Reformation, disputed its claim to parochial

rights, upon which the said tenants and inhabitants having petitioned Parliament, and stated the grievances and inconveniences to which they should be subject, if it should be then deemed part of the parish of Over, an act was passed in the year 1541, by which Whitegate was made a parish church for the tenants and inhabitants of the demesne of the late monastery of Vale Royal, and it was enacted that they should be discharged of further resort or repair to the church of Over, and that the vicar of Over should be discharged of the cure of the said tenants and inhabitants. Thomas Cholmondeley Esq. of Vale Royal is impropriator of the great tithes and patron of the vicarage (1810)."

As we have already seen, Gastrell says in 1715 that "this church is built of wood and plaister and is now ruinous." Judging from other timber-framed churches in the county, it would have a fairly wide nave, as at present, with narrow aisles, the chancel probably enclosed within the main roof, as at Lower Peover. This is suggested by the wardens' note, 1607, for a partition between nave and chancel, owing no doubt to the destruction of the Rood-screen.

About the year 1728 an extensive reconstruction took place, when the aisles were widened to admit of galleries, the aisle walls being raised to the height of the nave. This rebuilding was in brick, a plain version of the classic mode of the time. There is an old picture in the vestry showing the south side. It has three large semi-circular headed windows in the centre, flanked on either side by round-headed doorways, the whole completed by a deep and heavy cornice and parapet of brick. At the east end is a shallow brick apse, and at the west a plain brick tower, taking the place of the earlier timber bell-cot. This rebuilding closely resembles the exterior of Church Minshull, rebuilt a few years earlier. What was within is not recorded, but from an examination it is probable

that the timber arcade was retained, bereft of its arch-braces, and the roof ceiled over with plaster ; this would give ample room for the galleries. At the east end the circular arch was probably constructed for admission into the apsidal sanctuary.

This church remained until 1875, when the usual drastic Victorian rebuilding took place, the classic work demolished, and a mongrel gothic substituted. The aisle walls were lowered, the apse abolished, a short chancel built, the tower removed, its place being taken by a poor thin internal tower with nothing to recommend it. The roof was entirely reconstructed, some of the old timbers re-used, but all that remained of the old fabric was once again the piers of the wooden arcades, including the south doorway with its door, part of the 1728 reconstruction. At the same time the opportunity was taken to denude the church of all its old fittings, the modern furniture being of pitch pine. The timber arcades have now new boxed cappings with poorly constructed arching above. The eight piers are however mediæval, and have stood in position since the 15th century ; they are $12\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter, of octagonal shape, with uneven facets, 6 and $4\frac{3}{4}$ alternating ; they are 10 feet in height to the modern capping, and stand upon stone bases 14 ins. in depth, with deeply curved chamfers, completed by a bull-nose moulding. At the west end of the north arcade is an extra pier, but this is modern.

I am indebted to W. Fergusson Irvine for permission to reproduce the drawing of Stoak church.

FRED H. CROSSLEY.