

St. Andrew's Church,

Cobham.

Surrey

By H. W. P.

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WITH APPENDIX.

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St. Andrew's Church, Cobham.

THE earliest record of a church in Cobham, or, as the parish was called, "Coveham," in Domesday Book, is in 1224, when a certain "Michael" was rector, and we have the names of succeeding incumbents until the present time, sixty-four in number, which can be seen on the two tablets in the church by the vestry door.

In the year 1466, when the Abbey of Chertsey appropriated the rectory and founded the vicarage of Cobham, or "Coveham," that body endowed it with a house and gardens, and fourteen marks, out of which, according to Manning and Bray's History, the See of Winton, the Priory of Winton, and the Archdeacon of Surrey received small annual fees: Queen Anne's Bounty contributed in later years, and Sir William Perkins gave £400 in 1723, out of which fund a farm at Hedley was purchased for £370. This was afterwards exchanged for thirty-seven acres of land in Cobham, now partly sold, but formerly known as the glebe: other benefactions have followed, and the present income of the living is about £350 gross.

I find a note shewing that in 1657 the Patroness of the living was Mistress Sutton, a widow; it was then apparently worth £9. 6s. 8d. per annum. There is also a record among the appointments of incumbents of one Joseph Mason, "alias" Spicer, in 1389.

The Rev. John Simpkinson, who was vicar of the parish, and who, with his wife and son are buried in the vault beneath the chancel, became owner of the living in 1809, and it passed into the hands of Mr. Charles Combe, owner of Cobham Park, about fifty years ago.

The following is extracted from the Surrey Archæological Society's Report of their visit to the church in 1866, when the Rev. E. H. Loring was vicar.

“ The church is dedicated to St. Andrew, but no record exists of the date of its foundation, Domesday Book makes no mention of it, but the simplicity and massiveness of its architecture point to a very early period.

“ The grandly plain arch opening from the tower into the West end of the nave, the ornamental capitals of the piers, the broad, flat label above, and the deeply splayed windows, corroborate this opinion ; the outer doorway of the tower on the Western side belongs to a later period.

“ The tower, which is Norman, is built of rubble, in Pudding stone, three feet six inches in thickness, and standing on the surface without foundation, has two floors, in the first of which is one window, and opposite to it a deep square recess, the use of which is unknown.

“ The second chamber of the tower in which the bells hang is the more finished of the two, having stone corbels supporting the wall-plates on which the spire stands, and in each of the four walls a window, divided into two compartments by a central shaft, and having a bold moulding round it.

“ The next portion of the church in respect of age is the doorway in the South aisle. It is of later date, and is more elaborate in design, and has more ornament, having both the zigzag and billet mouldings with a detached pillar on each side of its outer face. There was probably no aisle in the original building, but, although this door has been removed from its former site, it is adapted to its original use, as the entrance door of the church.

“ The oak tracery in the porch is a piece of the old chancel screen ; it is fourteenth century work. The iron work on the South door is not original, but reproduced from fragments found in various parts of the church.

“ The North-East chantry, built about 1200, is next worthy of inspection. It, like the tower, has rubble walls built on the surface of the ground, but its pointed arches indicate a later date. By a Bull of Pope Innocent in 1292, all the tithes in Cobham Church were conferred on Chertsey Abbey, and this chantry was probably built by them or by some layman for the chanting of masses for the souls of their departed.

“The windows in this part of the building were probably lancet-shaped, one of which may be seen on the outside of the North wall. The present handsome ‘ogee’ windows are of much later date, and the lancets were probably cut out to make room for them. The roof of the chantry is of oak, massive and strong, but for some unaccountable reason the ridge of it is out of the centre of the building.”

Among the old brasses is a palimpsest, described by Stephenson as probably spoil from a monastery or chantry at the time of the Reformation. The date on it is 1530. Manning also describes this, stating that it was discovered in a chest in the church, and that it is in memory of James Sutton, “sometime Bayle of this Lordshyppe.” On the reverse side there is a half length figure of an ecclesiastic with hands upraised, holding a chalice or sacramental cup.

On the South wall of the sanctuary there is a small and ancient brass depicting the Nativity. The old solid brass candelabra suspended from the roof also deserves attention.

The present bells consist of a beautiful ring of six, the latest addition enabling over 300 more changes to be rung than formerly, namely:—

Tenor Bell	...	...	...	1902
Tenor Bell	...	...	...	1773
IVth	...	...	...	1687
IIIrd	...	...	...	1687
IInd	...	...	...	1767
Treble	...	...	...	1687

In the reign of Edward VI the Churchwardens received from the Commissioners, among other articles, a pewter chalice, but this has disappeared long ago. The present Communion plate consists of seven pieces, silver and silver gilt, gifts from 1856 onwards.

In 1826 the church was enlarged at a cost of £800, and among the donors were Prince Leopold, Harvey Combe, Lady Molesworth, who each gave £100, and Miss Saltonsall, who gave £50.

As late as 1855 it was resolved at a vestry meeting that the church and contents should be insured for £1000. The

resolution was carried after the enlargement and repairs were effected in 1854-55, which cost £1600. Further restoration took place in 1863, involving another expenditure of £500; in addition to these, the East wall of the chancel was decorated in memory of the late Vicar, Cecil Beadon Young, in 1890. The organ was enlarged and a new vestry built by the patron in 1900, a chancel screen presented by the Trollope family in 1901, the roof restored in 1902, and the bells recast and a new tenor bell provided in 1903. The insurance, which does not always meet with the attention it deserves, has now mounted up to £12,300; all the windows are of stained glass, some of particular merit.

Gas was introduced into the church in 1870, superseded by electric lighting in 1914.

The Minutes of some of the Vestry Meetings connected with the church may be of interest, as extracted from the Vestry book of the Parish Church:—

June 30th, 1799.—At a meeting of the Committee appointed to regulate the Pews in the Church, it is ordered that in future all Gentlemen's Livery Men Servants shall sit in the Gallery, on the south side of the Organ, that all women servants be placed in a pew on the left side next the Gallery and the two opposite ones, and also all women strangers be placed there, and in the next adjoining pew on the left hand, that all Farmers' servants, apprentices, journeymen and boys and girls sit in the right hand Chancel, the people in the workhouse in the left Chancel; that Wm. Atkins be appointed Beadle to attend the inhabitants to their pews, and that he be provided with a coat and hat, and that each pew have a lock fixed as soon as convenient.

August 4th, 1853.—Copy of letter to the Vicar from General Wood, Owner of Cobham Court, as to the ownership of the North Chancel (side chapel):—

“ My Dear Sir,

“ I have laid your note of the 28th June before my Son. We shall be ready at any time to convey the North Chancel in Cobham Church to the Vicar and Churchwardens for the time being, to be appropriated as free sittings for the Poor for ever, and will execute the conveyance of same whenever the Committee of Vestry forward to me the conveyance.

“ Very Sincerely Yours, THOS. WOOD.”

Nothing further seems to have been done in this matter, which was brought forward again at a Vestry meeting in November, 1870; the rights and liabilities whatever they are, remain with the Owner of Cobham Court, who pays an annual sum of £25 to the Vicar.

June 15th, 1854.—At a Vestry meeting held at the White Lion Hotel it was resolved that the Churchwardens be hereby authorised and empowered to stop up the gate in the Church yard Wall opposite to Pyports House, and the two paths leading thereto from Church Stile House and the Western entrance of the Church respectively, the expense thereof to be defrayed out of the Church rates.

Up to this date the Vestry meetings were held at the different Public Houses alternately; subsequent meetings were held at the Vestry room.

December 14th, 1855.—At a Vestry meeting it was resolved that two Notts stoves should be purchased and erected in the Parish Church, the expense of doing which shall be raised by subscription. (This was probably the first attempt to warm the sacred edifice in any way.)

May 23rd, 1863.—At a Vestry meeting it was resolved that the proposition for the improvement of the Church be approved, namely: North Aisle to be enlarged to harmonise with the South Aisle, the Gallery in the North Aisle to be removed.

A new Chancel Arch to be built in place of the one then existing, and the Chancel ornamented.

The cost to be defrayed by the voluntary contributions, no part of the charges to be defrayed out of the Church rate.

Committee formed to carry out this work:—

Chas. Combe.	The Vicar.
Chas. Buxton.	Geo. Freeland.
Fred Young.	P. Stanhope.
Thomas Cawter.	

£500 was subscribed at that Meeting.

1865.—At a Vestry Meeting on the 2nd Sept., 1865, the Committee were empowered to remove the Organ and Gallery from the Western end of the Nave, and accept Miss Molesworth's offer to improve the Organ and place it in a chamber over the Vestry at her sole expense.

H. W. P.

Cobham War Memorial and the Dedication.

BY THE VICAR.



WHEN we call to mind how God's purpose to bring good out of evil—even the evil of a war demonstrably generated by the wickedness of men—visibly emerged from the darkness, securing defeat and downfall for the greatest criminals involved, no wonder the spirit of our little community was deeply stirred with feelings of gratitude and exultation.

No other event in the history of our parish has evoked the depth and unity of feeling, with eager desire to express it, which were shewn (on Sunday afternoon, 14th December, 1919) when our Cobham War Memorial was so solemnly and touchingly dedicated by our kind friend, Bishop Bury. Such a manifestation was not of course surprising. We came together—all sorts and conditions of men and women—with one heart and one mind to celebrate a unique occurrence. We met to set apart the north Chantry—the oldest bit of our ancient church (see page 2)—as a Shrine of Remembrance for all time. This Memorial Chapel consecrates to God the devotion of no less than ninety-two lives of our own kith and kin—Cobham men—who died in shielding the land they loved and in saving the menaced freedom of the world.

Now sacrifice of some sort was exacted by the war from most of us, but these held back nothing. And just because they gave their ALL, we have felt it supremely fitting and right that the record of their names should appear for ever in the House of God of their own parish—the historic home of our national Faith in this particular place. Those names will speak from their worthy and beautiful setting, not to us only, but to generations yet unborn, of fidelity perfected and victory achieved. The souls of the faithful are in the hand of God. We believe that for all of them the Father of Spirits has work waiting to be done in other worlds than ours, to which they have won promotion. But to us who remain it certainly belongs, so far as in us lies, to secure in abiding honour their remembrance on earth.

The men among them whom we specially mourn and would commemorate went from this place and are therefore

our representatives in a peculiar sense, and it is good for us to think of them as they were—whether wittingly or not—the champions of a great Moral Idea, apart from which no noble life either personal or national is possible to men. This thought alone creates the splendour which swallows up war's horror and helps to redeem its crime. Our best consolation, as we think of our fallen, will always be to reflect on the certain fact that they fought and fell for a cause akin to the very highest for which life has ever been laid down, and that the cause for which they died prevailed.

We all feel that the harmoniously beautiful marble-work, executed by Messrs. A. Moon & Sons, of Guildford, and which is of polished statuary and Jaune Lamartine marble with three alabaster panels and mosaic borders, bronze metal wreath and inscriptions: "In grateful remembrance of men from this Parish who in the Great War gave up their own lives that others might live in Freedom"; "This Chantry was restored as a Memorial Chapel by the people of Cobham, to the Glory of God, Anno Domini 1919," which appeared in the Chapel a few days before the Service of Dedication, worthily crowns all the other admirable efforts of Mr. E. B. Nevinson to make the Chantry eloquent of the spirit of grateful remembrance which possesses the whole parish.

In carrying out this rather considerable work exceptional obstacles have had to be met, which only those whose immediate duty it was to overcome them can fully realise. And I express only a feeling that is universal in congratulating our architect on the happiness of the talent he has shown and in thanking him for the unsparing pains he has taken to bring our labour of love to a conclusion so satisfactory to all who have an eye for craftsmanship.

The Bishop's moving address was charged with feeling, and must have done all that words could to comfort those present whose minds were inevitably oppressed with a poignant sense of personal loss. Mr. Hopper did greatly with the organ, and Chopin's eloquent March, as well as the fine leading of the choir, aided the impressiveness of the simple service. The ringers introduced it with a muffled peal and did not fail at the close to sound their message of gladness conquering

sorrow through the faith of Christ. Altogether, it is safe to say, that the great congregation felt it was good to be there, and many would no doubt echo the words of one whose attendance meant no little effort—"I would not have missed that service for *anything in the world!*"

When taking up the floor of the Chantry (mentioned on page 2) several pieces of old tombstones were found, the most interesting being fragments of a slab of about the same date as the Chantry (A.D. 1200), possibly the Founder's tomb.

At some previous alteration all the windows and the inner rings of the arches into chancel and North aisle were removed; one of the original jambs of the window on the North aisle is still beneath the plaster. In the fitting up of the chantry as a Memorial Chapel the Late Decorated Period was chosen as giving greater scope for detail in stone, wood, and iron-work; the idea of the two Marias at the foot of the Cross was taken from an old sculpture discovered at Worcester Cathedral, and that of the iron screens from the superb grilles at Siempa; the Italian walnut wood floor was made from waste from the rifle stocks made during the war.

The cost of the restoration of the Chantry, which had not been used for many centuries, and the exquisite Memorial Tablet was about £1600, in addition to the following gifts:—

The Stone Screen at West Entrance	...	Mr. Combe (patron).
The Oak Reredos	... ..	Mrs. Flemming and Family.
The Altar	... ..	Mrs. Howard.
The Altar Cross and Ornaments	...	Mrs. Combe.
The Wing Panelling of Reredos, and Altar Rails	... ..	Mrs. Hale.
The Oak Lining to Sedalia	... ..	Messrs. Nevinson and Newton.
The Brass Lectern	... ..	Mr. L. H. Bentall.
The Carved Oak Prayer Desk	...	Mr. H. W. Price.
The Communion Plate	... ..	Mr. and Mrs. Peel.
The Service Books	... ..	Mr. & Mrs. Stockings.
Altar Linen	... ..	Miss Dawson.
Kneeling Mat, at Altar Rails	... ..	Members of G.F.S.
Other Worked Mats	... ..	Mrs. Cartwright and Mrs. Deare.
The Alms Dish	... ..	Miss Husband.
The Alms Bags	... ..	Mrs. Hooley.
Biographical Register	... ..	Mrs. Kitching.

