

Notes on the Churches  
OF  
Aldermaston,  
Padworth, Englefield  
and Tidmarsh

BY  
CHARLES E. KEYSER, M.A., F.S.A.

TELEGRAMS & STATION,  
ALDERMASTON.  
TELEPHONE 4 WOOLHAMPTON.

ALDERMASTON COURT,  
N<sup>R</sup> READING.

Presented to the Revd Dr  
A H Cooke

With the kindest regards of  
The Author

August 1915.

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PARTLY READ BEFORE THE BERKSHIRE ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY,  
APRIL 6TH, 1911.

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## Notes on the Churches of Aldermaston, Padworth, Englefield and Tidmarsh.

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FOR some years past I have been endeavouring to justify my position as President of the Berkshire Archæological Society by bringing to the notice of its members a brief description of some of the most important, or remote, churches in the County. It has not been my ambition to give too detailed an account of the several edifices, but to treat the subject as if one were actually in the church, and there pointing out the salient features, together with any information as to its history, which may have been gleaned from any previous accounts which have been written. I will ask you therefore to view this lecture in this light, and to feel that by the aid of the excellent lantern slides prepared for me as usual by Mr. Marcus Adams, you will, in a comparatively short time, be conducted round the churches, which I have selected for my paper this afternoon. In choosing for our discourse the churches of Aldermaston, Padworth, Englefield and Tidmarsh, I shall, I know, lay myself open to the remark that I am traversing ground which has already been trodden by learned archæologists in the immediate past, and I can only therefore hope that, as an acute and fairly accurate observer, I may possibly be able to bring to your notice some details which have not been commented upon by previous writers. Let us now imagine that we have started on our excursion and have arrived at Aldermaston Church, approached by the private drive leading up to the Court. The history of this ancient place has already been fully written, and accounts of the Manor, and the early houses and families connected with this village have appeared in the *Topographer*, *British Archæological Association Journal*, *Transactions of the Newbury District Field Club*, *Nash's Mansions*, *J. P. Neale's views of the Seats of Noblemen and Gentlemen*, *Jones' views of the Seats, Castles and Mansions*, etc., and elsewhere, and I have since through

the assistance of my archæological friends been able to obtain mainly from the Record Office and Bodleian Library at Oxford, much additional information, which has been partly communicated to our Parish Magazine, but which I hope to be able some day to publish in more ample form. In 1898 I read a paper on Aldermaston Church before the Royal Archæological Institute, which was published in the Journal, p.p. 367—396, for that year. As this gives a very detailed account of the church, I shall be obliged to take it as the basis of my description to-day. I do not, however, intend to overload this paper with the ancient history of the Parishes we shall travel through, as I trust some notes on Padworth and Englefield collated by Miss Sharp, of Ufton Court, will find a place in the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Archæological Journal at an early date.

Aldermaston The ancient history of Aldermaston may be briefly summed up as follows. At the time of the Norman invasion it was one of the many estates of Earl Harold, and after his death at the battle of Hastings, was seized by William the Conqueror, and held by him, William Rufus and Henry I. as a hunting ground, and possibly an outlying portion of the honour of Windsor. Henry I. granted this and several other manors to one of his knights, Sir Robert Achard, and the property remained in the hands of his descendants passing through the female line to the Delamares and Forsters for nearly 700 years. Their chief residence seems at first to have been at Spars-holt, near Wantage, but at least as early as the beginning of the 15th century they had an important mansion here, and Sir Thomas Delamare who was High Sheriff in 16th of Edward IV. is described as of Aldermaston. A stately brick edifice was built here by Sir Humfrey Forster, the first baronet, in 1636, and this was unfortunately mainly destroyed by fire in 1843 and entirely removed and rebuilt on a new site in 1849. The fine blocks of chimneys, relics of a much earlier mansion, the old staircase, some panelling, mantel pieces, and a considerable amount of heraldic glass has been saved, and may be seen in the present modern house. Many of the Delamares and Forsters served the office of High Sheriff of the County, and several represented the County in Parliament as Knights of the Shire, one Sir Humfrey Forster in 1597, resigning his seat for the County in order that he might become the representative for Reading. The last Sir Humfrey Forster, who was member for the County in several Parliaments, died in 1711, and the property then descended to Elizabeth Pert, his sister's daughter, who married as her second husband Lord Stawell of Somerton, and who left an only

daughter surviving him, who married as her second husband Mr. Ralph Congreve. The property remained in this family till after the death of Mr. William Congreve in 1843, when it was sold to Mr. Higford Burr, whose son sold it to Mr. Charles E. Keyser, the present owner, in 1893.

The advowson of the Church of Aldermaston, with the tithes, and other possessions was given in 1166 by William Achard to the Alien Priory of Sherborne (now called Pamber), which was a cell to the great Abbey of Cerisy in Normandy; and tradition relates that a Monk used to ride over every Sunday on a palfrey provided by the Lord of the Manor, to perform the services of the church. On the other hand Vicars seem to have been regularly appointed since the year 1298, and it is more than likely that the Monks nominated one of their own brethren to this office in order that they might enjoy the whole of the emoluments of the living. We find, however, as a significant evidence of the many wars being waged between England and France, that the presentation to the living was constantly being exercised by the Crown. When the Alien Monasteries were suppressed the property of Sherborne Priory seems at first to have been granted to form part of the endowment of Eton College, but in 1461 it was given to the hospital, Domus Dei, at Southampton. After the dissolution of the religious foundations, it appears to have been granted to Queen's College, Oxford, who leased the advowson of Aldermaston for 500 years to William Forster in 1567. Mr. W. Congreve purchased the reversionary rights, and it is now attached to the estate. The living is a donative, a charge on the property having been established for the endowment of the Incumbent. The Parish Church dedicated to St. Mary, stands close to the site of the old Manor House, the ancient brick wall of about the 1636 date, separating the churchyard on the south and east sides from the "pleasaunce" attached to the Mansion. It was built at some distance from the village, situate just outside the old park gates, and with its ancient Inn still commemorating the Forsters by its sign, the Hind's Head, the crest of that family. At the time of the Domesday Survey a church is mentioned as being in existence here, but no part, apparently, of the present edifice is earlier than the Norman period. It consists (fig. 1), as we now see it, of a west tower with low shingle spire, nave with south transept or chapel, and chancel with vestry on the south side. There is no division between the nave and chancel, and it is uncertain where the chancel screen originally stood. As will be noted the church is most irregular in



its form, there being no centre line, the narrowest part being in the middle, opposite to the transept or chapel, and it has clearly been enlarged and altered at several different periods.

The approximate dimensions are as follows: Full length, internal measurement, from east wall to the interior west wall of the tower, is 103 feet. The tower is 11 feet east to west by 10 feet 2 inches north to south. The nave is 57 feet in length to present step to the chancel by 20 feet in breadth opposite the transept, and 25 feet at the west end. The chancel is 30 feet in length by 22 feet in breadth; the transept or chapel, 18 feet 3 inches from north to south by 15 feet 3 inches east to west, and the vestry 12 feet 8 inches north to south by 15 feet east to west. The earliest part of the church seems to be the eastern portion of the nave facing the transept, and the narrowest section of the church. This is clearly the original Norman, as a doorway of that period remains closed up on the north side. The first enlargement appears to have been towards the east during the Early English period; and there are some indications, which will shortly be referred to, of the church having extended further to the east than it does now. Towards the latter part of the thirteenth, or early in the fourteenth, century the church was extended towards the west, and the transept or chantry chapel was added on the south side. The tower arch is of Decorated date, but the west window is of the fifteenth century, and probably the tower was reconstructed at that period, and the fine Norman doorway reinserted in the west wall. In the latter part of the seventeenth century the vestry was added, no doubt over a new vault for the Forster family, and a new south door to the chancel inserted; and at the beginning of the last century the restoration of the church was taken in hand, with the usual disastrous results attendant thereupon at that degenerate period. The roofs were underdrawn with plaster ceilings: solid deal battens were placed against the walls, with laths, and 4 inches of mortar fixed over them; and in some instances, where, as in the chancel, the walls have settled outwards, reducing the width of the church by nearly 2 feet.\* The floors had been laid with similar deal battens with plain stained boards nailed over them. A gallery remained at the west end projecting some distance into the nave, and entirely hiding the view of the tower

\* *Dovercourt Church in Essex, also in 1897 undergoing restoration, has been treated in an exactly similar fashion. A date, 1811, chalked in several places on the original walls, seems to indicate the date at which this beautifying process was carried out.*

arch and the west window. A tortoise stove occupied the centre of the nave, with an iron pipe carried up to and through the roof. Such was the state of the church in 1893, well and reverently cared for by the vicar and churchwardens, but too much like a barn to inspire that feeling of awe and reverence for the Divine object for which our sacred temples were erected. Within the arch between the chapel and nave had formerly been situated the squire's pew, approached by a staircase in the east wall of the chapel. This fortunately had been removed some years ago.

It has not been my custom to refer at any length to modern restorations. It will be sufficient to state that everything undertaken here was carried out under the strictest supervision. The west gallery and various accumulations on the walls were removed, and everything of antiquarian interest most carefully preserved. Six new windows by Mr. C. E. Kempe have been placed in the chancel, and three in the nave and one in the chapel by Mr. P. H. Newman. A very elaborate scheme of wall decoration has also been executed by the skilled hand of Mr. P. H. Newman. The roof has been repaired, a new ringers' gallery erected in the tower, the floor has been repaved throughout, and with other much needed additions it is hoped that the church is now thoroughly equipped and in a sound condition both within and without.

Let us now make our perambulation of the church starting as usual in the interior of the chancel (*fig. 2*). The east window has three lancets within a plain containing arch, the central one being loftier than that on either side. They have chamfered heads and are separated by plain chamfered mullions. In this window were two very interesting panels of glass, which clearly were not in their proper position, and eight shields of arms, exhibiting the various alliances of the Forster family. These were equally out of place, two of them having been put in upside down, an evident proof that they had been brought from elsewhere, and carelessly fixed in here by the local glazier. This glass has all been carefully repaired and inserted in more suitable situations. On the north of the chancel are two large widely splayed lancets. In the sill of the east one were found traces of a water drain, and a piscina has been inserted here, though probably on inadequate authority, as it is exceedingly unusual to find a piscina on the north side of the church. The head of the western lancet is composed of old tiles, possibly Roman and brought from Silchester. Some alteration seems to have taken place with regard to these lancets, as on the exterior side some moulded



stone fragments now form the angle of the sill, with remains of decoration in red and black still visible on them.

In the eastern lancet has been inserted with suitable surroundings one of the early panels from the east window. Within a circular medallion (fig. 3a) is a representation of the Annunciation. St. Gabriel is on the west, with a yellow cloak having a kind of feathering on the upper part and green under garment; the right wing is painted red, white, and yellow, while the left wing is coloured white and yellow, and is extended over the scroll, with the words "Ave Maria Gra," which he holds in his left hand, while the right is raised in attitude of benediction. He has bare feet and a crimson nimbus. The Blessed Virgin has a white kerchief over her head, red nimbus, yellow dress and red cloak, and holds a book in her left hand, while her right is upraised. The Holy Dove, painted white, is descending towards her left ear. The ground on which they are standing is green. A scroll border in white on a black ground is carried across the centre of the medallion. The general groundwork is a very rich blue. In the western lancet (fig. 3b) is inserted the second panel within an octagonal border, and representing the Coronation of the Virgin. The Deity, to the east, with golden crown ornamented with three strawberry leaves, and brown hair, white vestment and red cloak, and with bare feet on either side of the orb, is seated at one end of a yellow settee, with left hand holding a book, and His right placing a crown on the head of the Virgin, who is also seated, with light hair, yellow dress, and green cloak, and both hands clasped and upraised in devotional attitude. There is a small portion of green below the figures, but the general groundwork is the same rich blue as on the other panel. The date of these is probably the latter half of the thirteenth century.

On the south side of the chancel near the east end is a semi-circular-headed brick arch opening to the vestry, and probably dating from about 1660. Ashmole, in *History and Antiquities of Berkshire*, states that "on the south side of the Chancel is a Chapel, having a vault under the same lately made." It is probable, therefore, that an earlier building was reconstructed at this period. Above the arch was found in the wall the hoodmoulding of the window or doorway formerly existing here, and apparently of the Decorated period.

On the south of the chancel was a large plain Palladian window, set within the original Decorated containing arch. The base of the mullion still remained in the sill, and the turn of the arch of the

original window could be clearly made out. It was therefore thought that here an attempt might be made to restore the original, and a segmental two-light window of Late Decorated character has been constructed. Farther west, and now to the west of the step leading up to the chancel, but probably within the former chancel, is one of the curiosities of the church, viz., a low and high side-window on either side. On the south the containing arch of the early low window remains, but a debased semicircular-headed light has been inserted; while the upper light, now a plain oblong has also been altered: indeed, the whole south wall of the chancel appears to have been reconstructed at some comparatively recent period. During the restoration a circular space was found in the wall, probably for the staircase leading up to the roodloft.

On the north (fig. 4) the low side-window has a cinquefoiled head, and appears to be of Late Decorated date. The upper window has a plain semicircular light, apparently an insertion of the early part of the sixteenth century. Both are set within plain square openings having a wooden frame or lintel across the upper part, partially old. The chancel roof dated probably from the 1660 period, with the exception of the tie-beams and king-posts of the early structure. These, three in number, have been carefully preserved, and a low-pitched oak-panelled ceiling has been introduced below the higher-pitched roof.

The head of the east window is formed by another tie-beam continued in the wall to the wall-plate of the north and south walls; and it seems possible, as has been suggested, that the chancel has been curtailed, and the east wall and window reconstructed. The pulpit is of varnished oak, a very good specimen of Jacobean work, with nicely-carved panels and sounding-board. A boss in the form of a rose showing remains of gilding and colour, now fixed to the centre of the sounding-board, appears to have belonged to one of the earlier roofs.

The vestry on the south side of the chancel has been recently (in 1898) restored. It is entered through a semicircular-headed brick arch, and was added or altered, as has already been suggested, partly to cover a vault of the Forster family, about the year 1660. It is composed of brick plastered over, with a high-pitched roof, and nicely moulded wall-plate, a two-light window on the south, and single lancet on the east and west. In the head of the south window is a Hebrew inscription within a halo. There is also in the upper part of the eastern light a patchwork shield with the Royal,



Achard, and Kingsmill coats-of-arms, probably coeval with the chapel. Hanging up in the east window is a small circular medallion in Flemish glass with a representation of the Crucifixion, presented by Mr. Walter Money, F.S.A. A tablet recording various benefactions to the church is here preserved.

On the north of the nave, opposite the chapel or transept, is a large two-light window of Late Decorated character with flowing tracery and a quatrefoil in the head (fig. 5). The lintel of the containing arch is of wood and apparently old. Here have been reinserted the eight armorial shields (fig. 6) removed from the east window. Six of them have the various heraldic bearings assumed by the Forsters, viz., Achard, Delamare, Popham, Harpsden, St. Martyn, Zouch of Deene, Milbourne, and one other—Roches quartering Brocas of Beaurepaire, but the tinctures are incorrectly rendered. The other two shields impale the arms of Sandys of the Vyne, and prove conclusively that this glass was put in by Sir Humfrey Forster, the son of Sir George Forster, who married a daughter of Lord Sandys of the Vyne, Hampshire. He was a man of considerable importance, and a member of the body-guard of Henry VIII., who was entertained by him at Aldermaston in 1540. He had a residence in London, and was buried at St. Martins in the Fields, where there was formerly a brass to his memory. He received a most sumptuous funeral, full particulars of which have been preserved. Each shield is enclosed within a circular border or wreath, and is a fair specimen of the heraldic glass of this period. In the quatrefoil in the head of the window are preserved some fragments of old glass, formerly in the south window of the Chapel, namely the head of a bishop (probably St. Nicholas), and portions of heraldic and ornamental patterns.

A little to the west of this window is a late Norman doorway now closed up. It has a segmental arch in the inner wall, and a lower chamfered arch on the interior side of the outer wall. The recess in the wall has been utilised for a seat, and a small oval window has been pierced through the head of the wall blocking the doorway to light the occupant of this favoured situation. To the west of the doorway is a small niche for lamp or figure, and a similar one remains in the opposite wall on the south side. It is doubtful if these are in their original position. Above the Norman doorway has been inserted a stone corbel head of a bearded male figure, probably of the Norman period, discovered in the wall during the restoration. The roof above this portion is high-pitched and old, but it was in a bad



state, and had not, it appeared, been ever open to the nave. It was therefore carefully repaired, and a low-pitched panelled oak ceiling, similar to that over the chancel, introduced below it.

Some nice oak panelling, formerly in the chancel, now forms a dado to the western portion of the nave. It is said to have been brought from Ufton Court, and is of late sixteenth or early seventeenth century date. To the west of the Norman doorway, and at the east end of the broader part of the nave, is another low side-window, almost identical with that in the chancel, with cinquefoiled arch and flat timber lintel to the containing arch. On the verge are painted a series of chocolate or deep red crescents, and some traces of these appear within the window head, thus proving the early date of these wooden frames. The situation of this low side-window is certainly unusual. It seems to have been inserted to enable any one from outside to get a view of the painting of St. Christopher on the south wall of the chapel, which can be well seen from this position. To the west again is a large and rather singular window within square-headed containing arch, having two cinquefoiled ogee-headed lancets. It is probably of early fourteenth century date.

On the south side, but not quite facing it, is another large two-light square-headed window, of good decorated character, and of early fourteenth century date. The roof over this part is wagon-shaped. It was formerly concealed by the whitewash, but this has been removed; and this interesting late fifteenth century work now adds an attractive feature to the church.

The tower (fig. 7) arch is probably of the Decorated period, with two chamfered orders, the inner dying into the jambs, and the outer carried down without impost to the ground. There is a solid oak framing formerly, though apparently not now, supporting the timber work within the tower. The west window is of Perpendicular character, of two lights, with large quatrefoil in the head. On the north side of the tower is a small four-centred arched doorway, opening to a newel staircase, leading up to the belfry of late fifteenth century date. There are eight bells—two dated 1681, one 1787, two recast 1860, and one presented in 1896, and two in 1900. A board with the Royal Arms of Charles I., with date 1632, in excellent preservation, is fixed to the nave wall over the tower arch.

The south transept (fig. 8) seems to have been a chantry or the lady chapel, and to have been for many years specially attached to the adjoining court or manor house. It has been the burial place of many of the former lords of the manor, and their monuments will shortly

be described. It opens to the nave by an obtusely-pointed arch, which was thought to be of Transitional Norman date; but, on the removal of the yellow wash, it was found that the upper part of the arch was of wood, and a brick arch had been thrown across the wall above it to support the roofs. The jambs and the lower portion of the arch remained, and have been carefully preserved, and are probably of late thirteenth century date, and of the same period as the rest of the chapel. It is traditionally reported that some years ago this arch fell down, seriously injuring the beautiful monument erected below it. The arch has been restored in stone in the style of the lower portion, which remains *in situ*.

The chapel has a nice two-light south window of good Early Decorated character, and a single trefoil-headed lancet in the east and west walls. That on the west has been filled in with the armorial bearings of the owners of the Aldermaston Estate, Achard, Delamare, Forster, Stawell, Congreve, Higford Burr and Keyser. The Forster and Achard shields were presented by Mr. Walter Money, F.S.A. The latter was originally in the old house, and shows the effect of the fire in 1843. There is a large niche for an image in the east wall near the south side, and a trefoil-headed piscina in the south wall of the same date as the rest of the chapel. The roof is of the same date as that over the eastern portion of the nave, and has been treated at the restoration in the same way.

In the corner of the chapel are the two portions of the old 15th century rood beam, recently recovered from the estate timber yard. They still retain traces of their original decoration, and it is hoped it will be possible to reinstate them in their original situation.

An ancient wooden triptych now stands above the Communion Table. It represents the story of the Nativity with the adoration of the Shepherds and the offerings of the Magi, and is said to be the work of Adrian von Orlei, a painter in the Low Countries, who flourished between the years 1480 and 1540. This has been recently presented to the church, as has a beautiful twelve light bronze candelabra, traditionally reported to have been brought from France, and a large plaster cast of a sculpture from a church in Italy, with a representation of the Annunciation and the Marriage and Coronation of the Blessed Virgin. This has been fixed against the east wall of the chapel.

The whole of the chapel, except the portion occupied by the figure of St. Christopher, has been decorated with double masonry lines in Indian red, and with a rose or some other conventional

flower on a stalk within each compartment. This ornamentation has been executed on the window splays, and at the back and sides of the piscina and niche for image. On the lower part of the jambs of the south window is a pattern of red blotches, not uncommon on arches of this same date. The decoration seems to date from about 1300.

On the south wall to the east of the window, and in full view from the low side-window in the nave, is a very large and early portraiture of St. Christopher (fig. 9). He is represented beneath a triangular-headed canopy in bands of red and yellow with a cinque-foiled fringe in red. He is apparently bare headed, with cloak and tunic outlined in red, and bare below the knees. He has the Infant Saviour held to the west of him on his left hand. Our Saviour, with dark hair, holds the orb in His left hand, and is giving the benediction with the right. St. Christopher is advancing westward, and holds a curious sort of eel or fish spear with teeth on the lower part in his right hand. An eel and two or three fish are disporting themselves in the water, and a mermaid, with deep crimson hair, is introduced on the west side of the picture. The painting is a very early representation of this Saint, probably not later than 1350. A still earlier one was found not long ago at the church of Stanford Dingley in the same neighbourhood, which unfortunately has been destroyed. Part of a scalloped border in red and white alternately remains below the picture.

On the opposite side of the window is a later painting (fig. 10) executed over the masonry pattern, and unluckily imperfect. We have here a very rich canopy with finials in yellow ochre, surmounting a chapel or other edifice, with two windows or compartments and a central shaft or pillar in deep red. The underside of the canopy has two pendants, and is painted a delicate pink. On the lower part is an altar with embattled verge, in front of which can be made out the head and shoulders, apparently, of the kneeling figure of a young man with yellow hair and cloak, low red cap with ostrich feathers, and the nimbus. Above can be discerned the wings and head of an angel descending with a mitre to the kneeling figure. It is uncertain to whom the painting refers though probably it commemorates the consecration of St. Nicholas or the miraculous restoration of his episcopal robes, after he had been unfrocked for boxing Arius on the ear at the Council of Nice in the year 325. This incident is represented by Paul Veronese, and other early painters, but not, it is believed, in mural painting elsewhere in



England. The date of this Aldermaston picture is probably late in the fifteenth century. On the east wall above the image recess are three scenes, possibly alluding to St. Nicholas, painted over the masonry pattern. In the lower tier are two ships, apparently tossed by the waves, with figures visible within them. In the next tier are two ecclesiastics with croziers, and above again two knights in armour, and what may be an altar. May this be intended to portray the aid of St. Nicholas being invoked, his appearance to the distressed mariners, and the grateful travellers making a thank-offering at his shrine? It is somewhat indistinct, and probably of fifteenth century date. The whole has a powdering of crimson cinquefoils, and a nice scroll border in red. A much earlier portraiture of St. Nicholas, and the miracle of the restoring the three students to life, still remain at the neighbouring church of Padworth.

During the restoration in 1896, colouring was found, more or less distinct throughout the church, on the jambs of all the windows and the arch opening to the chapel. On the arch itself is a kind of festoon ornament in red, and at least two courses of decoration on the splay; a very nice scroll border in red remains on the north wall of the nave near the west end, and parts of other early designs elsewhere on the walls. There is an early text much defaced within a red ornamental border, probably of sixteenth century date, on the north wall of the nave at the east end, and a similar one over the low side-window. Three sets of the Commandments painted over each other were found over the blocked north doorway, and between the low side and adjoining window a record, twice depicted, of a sum of money bequeathed to the parish by Messrs. Blackman and Holliman in 1721.

With regard to the monuments in the church, it may at first sight seem curious that, considering the importance of the family residing within a stone's throw of the church, we do not find more memorials of the early members, who no doubt were regular worshippers in the church in the days of old.

We must, however, remember that Aldermaston was only one of the residences of the Achards and Delamares, and that at an early date the rectory and other privileges annexed to the church were presented to the priory of Sherborne. It is therefore probable that the beautiful church of Sparsholt was from the earliest times selected as the final resting-place of the lords of Aldermaston; and we accordingly find there, under rich crocketed canopies, a cross-legged effigy no doubt portraying an early member of the

Achard family, as well as wooden effigies of a knight and his two wives, probably commemorating the last of the original stock.

In many of the windows is the Achard shield (*or a bend fusily sable*), and there can be no doubt from the excellence of the architectural features, mainly late Norman and decorated, of the care and expenditure incurred by the lords of the manor on their parish church, which is one of the most interesting in the county. The Delamares appear to have been great benefactors to the Hospital of St. Mary and John the Baptist at Basingstoke, and in the Chapel now called the Holy Ghosts Chapel were some beautiful monuments to members of this family. We do not therefore find any memorial at Aldermaston prior to the middle of the fourteenth century, the earliest being a large blue marble stone on the floor of the south transept or chapel. At three of the corners is a shield in brass with the arms of Achard quartering those of Delamare (*gules two lions passant in pale argent*). The fourth shield has been torn away, as has a small brass plate from the centre of the stone, no doubt commemorating the name of the deceased. There is no record as to who was here interred, but from the armorial shields, it seems reasonable to conclude that here were laid to rest the remains of one of the first members of the Delamare family who came to reside at Aldermaston.

The next monument in point of date is very much later, and is the noble altar tomb to Sir George Forster\* and Elizabeth his wife, the granddaughter and coheiress of Sir Thomas, the last of the Delamares, which stands in the south chapel beneath the arch opening to the nave. It is perhaps one of the most elegant and beautiful monuments of its period, and the wonderful attention shown to the most minute details, and the excellence of every portion of the carving, make it a work of art worthy of the most careful examination, and of a more graphic description than the writer is able to confer upon it. The whole of the monument and effigies is composed of alabaster of the finest quality. The effigies are of large size: (fig. 11A) that of the lady, who occupies the right or south side, being 6 feet 3 inches; while that of her husband is 6 feet 1 inch in length. They rest on a table tomb 6 feet 6 inches in length by 4 feet 3 inches in breadth and 3 feet in height. This is set on a stone plinth standing up about

\* This Sir George was the son of Sir Humfrey Forster, of Harpsden, near Henley-on-Thames. He was a distinguished soldier and a Knight of the Order of the Bath. He received a special summons to attend on King Henry VIII. at the Field of the Cloth of Gold.



4 inches above the present floor, and with a margin of about 7 inches all round the tomb. The lady (fig. 12) lies with her head on two pillows, supported by an angel on either side. She has a kerchief in three folds round her hair, a long cloak carried in graceful folds to her feet, fastened by a chain with a rose as a pendant across the chest. Her dress, also carried down to the feet, is cut with a square opening below the throat, showing the upper part of an under garment, or possibly a frill to the dress. This has slashed sleeves probably of velvet, with lace frills partly covering the hands. Another thin vestment, probably of silk, is shown, in some way fastened at the throat. She has a heart-shaped amulet attached to a triple chain on the breast, and a girdle round the waist, with a buckle or fastening on the left side, to which was perhaps attached an ornament similar to that worn by the lady on the west face of the tomb. Her hands, now mainly broken away, are clasped on her breast. Her feet are shown encased in broad-toed shoes similar to those of her husband. A little dog wearing a collar is introduced on the north side, tugging at the bottom of her cloak. By her side lies her husband (fig. 13) in complete armour. His head is bare, and rests on his tilting helm with the hind's head bearing a collar with chain and fetterlock attached as the crest. A cable band is carried round below the crest, and to this is attached the mantling, no doubt of silk, and in this instance unusually large. It is spread out in very elegant fashion, the folds with two tassels on either side being carried down nearly to the waist on each side of the knight. The interior of the helmet is shown with the folds of the material, doubtless silk, forming the lining, probably to prevent the chafing of the metal. A very pretty border is displayed on the lower rim of the helmet, and the buckle with which it is fastened is also portrayed. The effigy presents us with a most complete specimen of the armour of this Transitional period. He has the steel cuirass, with the raised epaulieres fastened by a buckle on each side. The arm guards and elbow pieces of plate are clearly defined. The haubergeon, of link mail, appears under the cuissarts or thigh pieces, which are fastened by five buckles to the cuirass at the waist, and are folded back in front. The legs are encased in mail, with large genouillieres or knee guards. The sollerets are square-toed and also of metal. Most of his sword, which is suspended at his left side from a belt attached to the back of the waist, is broken away. His gauntlets, also much damaged, lie on the tomb by his left knee, while his dagger is laid by his right side. He does not carry a shield; but



on the cuirass on the right side is a loop, probably of leather, for the strap carried over the right shoulder as a support to the shield on the breast, as shown in the figures of the weepers below. His feet rest on a buck or stag, both the antlers being now broken away. His hands are bare, and clasped in attitude of prayer on his breast. He wears a very beautiful and remarkable collar of SS, with a portcullis and Tudor rose pendant, on which his hands are resting. It is probable that some colour and gilding was used to beautify parts at any rate of these figures, and traces are still apparent on the head-dress of the lady and the collar of SS of the knight.

The table tomb is divided on the north and south sides into eight compartments, with beautiful crocketed double canopies and central finial to each, and with a banded shaft forming a division between each compartment. On the north side are eight figures of knights, all in plate armour and varied in their attitudes. They all carry a shield on the left arm fastened by a strap over the right shoulder. Nos. 1 and 5 from the east hold the sword in their hands; the others have their swords in the scabbards at their sides. Nos. 1, 3, 5 and 6 have flat caps probably with plumes, the others being bareheaded. The western one is the most singular: He is represented as cross-legged and carrying a tilting helm in his right hand. The position of the hands is varied in each instance. The armour of the several figures is a miniature imitation of that of the effigy of Sir George. On the east side are three similar canopied compartments. The central one is now unoccupied, while in that on either side is the figure of a knight similar to those on the north.\* On the south side are eight compartments similar to those on the north. There has been a female figure within each, but the fifth from the east has been removed. The effigies are all slightly varied in their attire and the pose of their hands, &c.; but they also are, in the main, miniature representations of the figure of the Lady Elizabeth above them.

On the west side (fig. 110), within an oblong panel, is a large armorial shield from which the tinctures have disappeared. It has formerly been surrounded by a circular frame or garter, but the sides have been broken off. There has been a raised inscription thrown out by colouring, of which the words "Monsyr Forster" alone remain. Above the shield is a tilting helm with the crest, probably

\* Neale, in his notice of this monument, in the *Views of Seats, &c.*, Vol. IV., New Series, states "that there are also at the foot three more sons." Was this an assumption, or has the figure been removed since his time?

the hind's head with a ducal crown round the collar and the chain and fetterlock attached to it. There is the flowing mantling fastened by a cable band to the upper part, and spread out in four pieces with large tassels at the terminations.

On the south kneels, on two cushions, a lady with right hand raised. Her costume is similar to that of the main effigy, and she has a girdle round the waist, with a circular object attached to it by a chain. At her feet is a helmet with mantling and goat's head for a crest. On the opposite (north) side, also kneeling on two cushions, is the figure of a knight in armour somewhat different to that of Sir George. He has a garment open at the sides over the armour and down to the thighs—the tabard. His hands are broken away. He is bareheaded, and his helmet with mantling and the hind's head crest, similar to that under the head of Sir George, is placed on the ground in front of him. It seems probable that these two figures on the west face of the tomb represent Sir Humfrey Forster, the eldest son and heir of Sir George, and his wife, the daughter of Lord Sandys of the Vyne, who have already been mentioned as having put in the armorial shields in old glass now placed in the north window of the nave facing this monument. It has been thought by some that the figures round the tomb represent the children of Sir George and his lady, and the statement of Leland, in his notice of Sir George and Lady Elizabeth, that they had twenty children would support this contention.

In addition to the kneeling figures at the west face, whom we assume to be the eldest son and his lady, there are, including the missing figures, eleven more sons and eight daughters, which would make up the required number. It may, however, be possible that Leland, who probably saw this monument soon after its erection, may have jumped to the conclusion that these figures represented the children of the deceased, and not, as we usually interpret them, "weepers." In most of the series assumed to be "weepers" we find religious personages introduced, and we should have expected this to be the case here where there are so large a number of figures. It is possible, therefore, that the assertion that they are the portraits of the members of the family is correct. At the angles of the monument are engaged cable shafts of Italian character, and round the verge of the upper slab on which the figures rest is the following inscription, commencing at the west end of the south side:—



“ Here lieth Sir george forster knyght son and heyre of humfray forster esquier coson and one of the heyres of Sir stephyn popham | knyght and elizabeth wif of the Same sir george daughtur and heire of John dalamare esquier | son and heire of thomas dalamare knyght wiche elizabeth dyed the vii day of december in the yere of our lord god M<sup>o</sup>CCCC<sup>o</sup> | XXV<sup>th</sup> and wiche syr george dye in the yere of our lord god .”

The last date is left in blank, and no provision had been made to complete the inscription in raised letters, as in the rest of the legend. There are traces of colouring between the letters. The canopies above the smaller figures have been richly painted with blue and gold, and the backs of the several compartments have been similarly decorated. The monument is known to have been erected in the lifetime of Sir George, who died in 1533, and may justly claim to be one of the finest examples of monumental art to be found in any parish church in England.\*

On the tie-beam across the chapel is an iron bracket and spike, on which is fixed a helmet and crest said to have belonged to Sir George Forster. It has been carefully examined, and is pronounced to belong mainly to the period of the commencement of the sixteenth century, the vizor being possibly of rather later date. The crest, the hind's head, is of wood, and has been painted a delicate pink. It is somewhat worm-eaten, but otherwise in good preservation. Another of these wooden crests remains at Cobham Church, Kent, but it is believed they are very uncommon. The banner of Sir George Forster also hangs from the king-post above the tie-beam. It does not seem to be so early as his times. It has his name and the following armorial bearings quarterly, viz.: (1) Forster, (2) Harpsden, (3) Popham, (4) Zouch of Deene.

On the floor of the chapel, close to the south side of the monument of Sir George, is a large blue stone with outlines of the figures of a civilian and lady with scrolls from their mouths, formerly represented in brass, but now removed, a goodly array of sons and

\* In the Rutland Chapel, on the north side of the nave of St. George's Chapel, Windsor, is the monument of Sir George Manners, Lord Roos, and his lady, who was the daughter of the Duchess of Exeter, and niece of King Edward IV. She died in 1526, in the same year as the Lady Elizabeth Forster. This monument resembles in a remarkable manner the one at Aldermaston. The costumes of the main effigies are almost identical, and among the weepers or children is a small cross-legged knight corresponding with the figure at Aldermaston. Is it presumptuous to assume that these two monuments were executed by, or at any rate under the supervision of, the same artist?



daughters being now only shown in outline. The following inscription still remains (fig. 14A):

“Here lyeth Willm Forster Esquier Corde of Aldermaston  
sonne and heyre of | Syr humffraye Forster knyght and  
Jane his wyffe one of the daughters of Syr | Anthony  
hungarforde of Downe Amney knyght w<sup>ch</sup> Willm deceased  
y<sup>e</sup> 1<sup>th</sup> daye of | January Anno dni 1574 and his said wyffe  
the                    daye                    Anno dni.”

There have been four large shields at the corners, but that at the south-east corner is lost. At the south-west is the shield of William Forster, divided into six compartments with the following arms: (1) Forster, (2) Popham, (3) Zouch of Deene, (4) Delamare, (5) Archard, and (6) Forster. On the other upper shield (fig. 15A) these coats-of-arms impale those of his wife with no less than three rows of quarterings, three coats in each row. The arms of Hungerford appear in the first field, and those of Courtenay are also included. The shield of the lady (fig. 15B) with the same quarterings remains below her effigy on the north-east corner of the slab. The brass figures were about 24 inches in height.

On a large ledger stone of polished black marble now let into the floor, but formerly, according to Ashmole, “on a raised monument adjoining to the South Wall of the said Chappel,” is a brass plate with the following inscription (fig. 14B):

DEDICATED TO THE PRECIOUS MEMORIE OF FOURE VIRTUOUS  
SISTERS DAUGHTERS OF S<sup>R</sup>. HUMPHREY FORSTER B<sup>T</sup>.; AND OF  
ANNA HIS WIFE, VIZ: ANNA, WHO DYED MAY THE 16  
1638 AGED 18 YEARES 5 MONTHES, MARY DYED SEPTEM:  
BER THE 9<sup>TH</sup> 1638 AGED 14 YEARES AND TEN MONTHES  
BRIDGETT DYED MAY THE 29<sup>TH</sup> 1637 AGED 10 YEARES  
AND ONE MONETH AND MARGARETT WHO DYED FEB:  
RUARY THE 19<sup>TH</sup> 1623 AGED ONE YEARE & 6 MONETHS

LIKE BORNE LIKE NEW BORNE HERE LIKE DEAD T<sup>X</sup> LVE,  
FOUR VIRGINE SISTERS, DECK'D WITH PIETIE,  
BEAUTIE, AND OTHER GRACES, WHICH COMMEND,  
AND MAKE THEM ALL LIKE BLESSED IN THEIR END.

Above, a square brass plate has been removed, mentioned by Ashmole as “having thereon engraven, the Pictures of four young Maidens, each less in Stature than the other.” They were the daughters of the Humphrey and Anne Forster who built the fine

mansion in 1636, which was unfortunately destroyed by fire in 1843.

On a large black marble ledger stone to the east of this is an inscription to the above named "the Ladie Anne Forster," who died in 1673. There are also stones with inscriptions to Ann daughter of William Forester died 1654, Rebekah daughter of Sir Humphrey and Judeth Forester, died 1676, John Forester died 1674, and Anne Congreve "Lady of this Manor," died 1780. Against the south wall is the large altar tomb to Mr. Ralph Congreve, who married the Hon. Charlotte Stawell, the last representative of the Forsters, and who died in 1775. On the north of the chancel is a large monument erected to the memory of the Hon. William Stawell, only son of Lord Stawell of Somerton, who died in 1740 (his mother died and was buried near here in 1748), by the Hon. Charlotte Congreve in 1760. She died in 1762 and there is an inscription on a sepulchral urn above :

On y<sup>e</sup> 24<sup>th</sup> of July 1762, Died  
The Hon<sup>ble</sup> Charlotte Congreve  
Whose affection as a Wife, and  
Whose sincerity as a Friend  
Deserve the most lasting Remembrance.

Let into the south wall of the chancel, are two stones, formerly over the entrance to the vault under the vestry recording the names of several of the Forsters, including Sir Humphrey who built the mansion destroyed in 1843, who died between the years 1660 and 1683. There is a large black marble slab under the Communion Table to the memory of Robert Dixon, buried here in 1723.

"He was Minister of Aldermaston

"43 years

"Att y<sup>e</sup> same time

"Rector of Woolhampton

"28 years."

He founded four almshouses in the village in 1706.

In the churchyard are numerous old headstones. One has a date 1683, and the following legend :

STAY LOVING FRIENDS  
AND THINK ON ME  
AS I AM NOW  
SO YOU MUST BE.

Let us now briefly point out what remains of interest on the exterior. The church walls are composed of rough materials—flints, &c., and are covered with a coating of rough-cast of a

yellowish colour, which has been carefully preserved. The roof is formed of red tiles, and is high-pitched throughout. The Decorated window (fig. 16) on the south of the nave has a square label, and those on the south of the chapel, and north of nave facing it, have the usual arched hood moulding.

The window on the north side of the nave has a continuous hoodmould carried round each of the two lights. The small, high side-window on the north is set within a square frame with spandril spaces on either side of the head of the main light. There are nice angle buttresses at the east end of the chancel, and two large buttresses on the north of the chancel and nave, erected within recent times to support the walls which have given way on this side.

The north doorway, now blocked up, has a plain semicircular arch, with chamfered edge to the arch and jambs, and stops at the base of the jambs. The west window has a hoodmould terminating on the head of a gentleman on the south, and a lady with horned head-dress on the north. They probably represent one of the Delamares and his lady.

The west doorway (fig. 17) is a very good specimen of Norman work, and is figured in Lyson's *Magna Britannia*. It has two reveals with a hollow and bold cable moulding on the outer order. This rests on a massive chamfered abacus, with a shallow pattern of saltires within squares scratched on the upper part. The shafts are ornamented, the north with the chevron, the south with the cable, pattern. On the capitals on either side are two doves in relief plumbing, apparently of the same date as the rest of the arch. A shallow ornament similar to that on the abacus is incised above them. The inner order and jambs are plain. On both the outer and inner jambs are numerous small crosses, probably of a votive character, and commemorating promises of gifts to the church by former residents, when about to embark on a journey or other dangerous undertaking. They are to be found on most Norman doorways, and sometimes, as in the case of one at St. Margaret Roding, of an elaborate character. This doorway probably dates from the time of Henry I. or *circa* 1130, and is a good specimen of the Norman style, though not so ornate as those at Padworth, Bucklebury, and Tidmarsh in the same neighbourhood. It has clearly been shifted from its original situation, and the voussoirs of the outer order have been carelessly put together, so that the cable is not continuous, as it was of course originally designed to be.



A pretty walk across the fields and through Lady Wood of about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles, or a drive somewhat farther round along the lane, celebrated for an important skirmish during the great civil war between the cavaliers of Prince Rupert and the Parliamentary Forces, will bring us to Padworth Church, where in the porch is a tablet put up in 1894 to the nameless dead who lie here, supposed to have been killed in a skirmish on the 21st of September, 1643. I have not been able to discover much early history connected with Padworth, but have recently been allowed to see a work on the parish written by the Rector and Miss Sharp, which I hope will shortly be published. In Lyson's *Magna Britannia* we are informed that "the Manor was, at an early period, in the family of Coudray, who held it by the service of finding a sailor to manage the ropes of the Queen's vessel whenever she should pass over into Normandy. The Coudrays continued to possess this Manor in 1465." According to Miss Sharp, in her excellent history of Ufton Court, p. 44, "Peter Cowdray in 1524 was the last lord of Padworth of his name. At his death his property was divided between his three daughters—Joan, who married Peter Kydewelle, Elizabeth, wife of — Poulet, and Margery, wife of William Hythe. The shares of Joan and Elizabeth eventually passed to the Brightwell family, and that of the third sister, Margery, was finally purchased by Sir Humfrey Foster, grandson of Sir George Foster, of Aldermaston." In the year 1534 Francis, the third son of William Parkyns, of Ufton Court, was living at Padworth. "In that year the following incident took place, as has been found recorded among the proceedings of the Star Chamber Court. The occasion of it seems to have been a long-standing dispute between the Parkyns family and Sir Humfrey Foster, of Aldermaston, as to fealty or service, which he claimed as tenant in capite of the Manor in Padworth, but which they refused to acknowledge. At last Sir Humfrey's irritation seems to have passed all bounds of moderation." And then we get an amusing account of his visit to Padworth between the hours of five and six in the morning, his savage assault upon the said Francis Parkyns, whom he then dragged against his will to Ufton Court, which he entered in the same unceremonious manner, and finding Richard, the brother of Francis, in his bedroom, assailed him with the most violent language, and after assaulting him threatened to run him through with his sword, and was only prevented from doing so by the prayers and supplications of Richard Parkyns' wife. Formal complaint was

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duly made against Sir Humfrey Foster, who was High Sheriff of the county at the time, to Sir Thomas Englefield, Hugh Faringdon, Abbot of Reading, and other justices, but it is not known how the incident, which was probably much exaggerated, terminated. It is interesting to work out from the monuments in the Church the somewhat irregular descent of the property from the Brightwells to Major C. W. Darby Griffith, the present owner.

Let us now return to the Church. (Fig. 18.) This, dedicated to St. John the Baptist, is a small but very interesting structure about  $51\frac{1}{2}$  feet in length by 19 feet in breadth. It consists of a west turret, nave with vestry and porch on the south side, chancel and eastern apse. The main structure is entirely of Norman date, of the best period, between 1130 and 1150, with the addition of the western turret, and the alteration of the windows, probably in the sixteenth century. The two doorways and chancel arch are very fine examples of this style, and the eastern semi-circular apse is one of four now remaining in the county, the other three being at Finchampstead, Remenham, and St. Leonard's, Wallingford, this last having been destroyed at the time of the great civil war and rather badly reconstructed in the year 1850. The walls of the Church are probably composed of flint, and have an external coating of rough-cast, which is at present rather white, but will no doubt be favourably toned down by the action of the weather. The Church has been restored, in 1890, but the maltreatment alluded to by the compiler of the last edition of Murray's guide was due to previous renovations, and not to the recent restoration.

Let us now commence our survey of the Church, starting as usual in the interior of the chancel. The east window of the apse is a plain semicircular light in the Norman style, and was renewed at the time of the last restoration. While this was in progress the original window was found walled up. This must have been closed up at an early date as on the surface of the stone filling up the opening was found a painting of the Crucifixion, which unfortunately could not be preserved. On the north side is a two-light window within a segmental headed containing arch, probably of early 16th century date. In the south wall is a small piscina with semicircular arch and wooden shelf, probably original, with the exception of the basin which is modern. There is a plain aumbrey in the north wall, which may also date from the Norman period. On the north and east sides are two of the original Consecration Crosses painted on the wall, with a Maltese Cross, the colour gone,



on a red ground. The vault and walls of the apse are plastered over and quite plain. The altar table has the original altar stone, but the five crosses are not now discernible. On the floor are collected some old encaustic glazed tiles with foliage and other patterns. There are also three large blue ledger stones to members of the Brightwell family, that on north with the following coat of arms, on a cross five fusils or lozenges, impaling on a chevron five pheons between three trefoils slipped, and below the inscription to Samuel Brightwell, son and heir to Thomas Brightwell, who died October 10th, 1679. On the next stone is an inscription in Latin to Susanna, the relict of the above named Samuel Brightwell, who died on March 26th, 1712, aged 81, and a further inscription in English to her son Loftus Brightwell and Mary his wife. He died in 1738, aged 77. On the stone on the south side is an inscription to Anna, the eldest daughter and first born child of Samuel Brightwell, who died March 13th, 1684.

The apse is divided from the western bay of the Chancel by a plain arch with plain responds, this western portion being about six inches wider than the chord of the apse. It has a plain barrel vault, and on north and south is a plain semi-circular arch, within which is a two-light window probably an insertion of the 16th century. As at Compton in Surrey, Elkstone, Gloucestershire, Darenth, Kent, etc., there is a very considerable space between the vault and the roof above. There is a large ledger stone on the floor, but the inscription is now defaced.

The Chancel arch (fig. 19) is a fine and lofty specimen of Norman work. It is plain on its eastern face, on the west it has two recessed orders, on the outer a hollow and small pointed moulding, and bold engaged roll on the angle, on the inner a bold engaged roll on the angle. These rest on a large chamfered abacus and engaged shafts to outer, and semi-circular responds to the inner order, all with richly carved capitals. On the outer capital (fig. 20) on north is foliage with a bunch at the angle, and beaded scroll coming from the mouth of a head on either face. There is a band of beaded cable below. On the inner capital on north is some very rich foliage, perhaps a representation of the Tree of Life and Spiritual Knowledge, which we find on so many of the Norman tympana, on the south face, and a bunch at each angle, and a band of beaded cable below. On the (fig. 21) inner capital on the south side are large leaves, and bunch of foliage at angle and cable band below; on the outer capital



is a head at the angle, with dragon on either side with open jaws close to its ear, a beaded scroll forming the beard and covering the rest of the capital. There is a beaded cable band below. There is a similar design on the capital of the Chancel arch at Long Wittenham, on the tympana at Leckhamstead Church, Buckinghamshire, and St. Sepulchre's, Northampton, and elsewhere. The interpretation is not very clear, though it seems to be the intention to portray the evil influences which are always at work to draw away people from their religious duties, and tempt them to do evil.

As at Avington in this same County, the interior of the nave is severely plain. There is a three-light window on each side, probably an insertion in the 16th century, and a plain semi-circular arched window, claimed to be an original one, at the west end. The roof is wagon shaped and apparently a part of the 16th century restoration, as are also the massive timbers supporting the present west tower. On the north and south of the nave near the east end and under the turret is an original Consecration Cross, similar to that on the east wall of the apse. A great deal of early decoration was found on the Chancel arch and elsewhere, but too fragmentary to be deemed worthy of preservation. On the east wall on south side of the Chancel arch is a large painting (fig. 22). Under a trefoiled canopy with some masonry pattern, and formerly two shields above, is a nearly full length figure of a Bishop. He has a low mitre, a pastoral staff, and is apparently giving the benediction. Some red and yellow still remain, but the decoration is rather faint. Below on a smaller scale is a tent with red and white canopy thrown over a central pole. On the south is a Bishop with low mitre and pastoral staff, within the tent are three figures, one with a cap with uplifted hands, and on the north is the figure of a Civilian with low hat and hand upraised in astonishment. This of course is an illustration of the Miracle of St. Nicholas raising the three students to life, and the large figure of the Bishop is no doubt intended to portray St. Nicholas. Remains of a piscina were found in the south wall adjoining the painting. It may perhaps be in connection with the peculiar tenure of the Manor by the Cowdray's, that St. Nicholas, the patron saint of sailors, was here represented, and his aid was no doubt invoked whenever the Lord of the Manor had to fulfil the duties of his responsible office. These paintings appear to have been executed in the latter part of the 12th century. On the south wall is part of another painting with traces of a hound, apparently of the same date. Above the Chancel arch is a small semi-circular

headed opening with some slight remains of decoration, forming a means of entry to the space between the Chancel roofs. At the west end is a large board with list of benefactions to the Church, and the names of John Davies, Rector, Ralph Faulkner, Churchwarden, and Francis Prior, Overseer, A.D. 1787. There are numerous monuments and mural tablets. A large monumental urn at the west end, with long inscription to Mary, wife of Loftus Brockwell, only surviving child of Henry Sayer of Hounslow, and granddaughter and coheir of Francis Style of Little Missenden. She died January 4th, 1711. At the bottom of the inscription is this sentence :—

“Abi, Lector, luge et disce.”

“Go on your way reader, shed a sympathetic tear and take a lesson from me.”

On the north wall is a large tablet with the very laudatory inscription, to Thomas son of Loftus Brightwell, who died in 1721 at the early age of 16 years.

The north and south doorways have plain interior arches. There were five bells, No. 3 of pre-Reformation date, with invocation “Sancta Maria ora pro nobis” ; No. 1 with date from 1654 ; No. 2, 1660 ; No. 4, 1816 ; and No. 5, 1597. They were recast in 1890. There was formerly a fine old font here, which has disappeared. A sketch of it was made by a Mr. Suckling between the years 1821-1839, and is preserved among the Harleian Manuscripts at the British Museum. It is represented as having a plain circular bowl on a low circular stem and base. In the vestry are preserved various relics of the old Church found during the restoration in 1890. A fragment of the beam of the old oak Chancel screen, carved as “an ornamental cornice with an embattled moulding” was found under one of the pews in the nave. It has a rectangular opening in which was no doubt inserted the base of the Crucifix or of the figure of St. John or the Virgin, forming the representation of the Holy Rood, which was either affixed to the top of the screen or hung from the beam above.

The exterior of the Church has been coated with rather white roughcast (fig. 23). The roofs of the nave, chancel, and spire are tiled, and the turret is faced with wooden shingles. The south doorway (fig. 24) within a modern porch is a large and fine specimen of Norman workmanship. The arch has a series of leaves, the antique pattern, on the chamfer of the hoodmould, and two recessed orders. On the outer is a deep hollow, and bold roll ornamented



with a chevron design on the angle. This is supported on a chamfered abacus, and detached shaft with large capital enriched with foliage and cable band below. The base of the east shaft has been renewed. The inner order has two shallow grooves round the arch and plain jambs. There are various scratchings, but no votive crosses are discernible. On the floor of the porch is a plain coffin-shaped stone much worn. The north doorway is also fine semi-circular headed with chamfered hoodmould, and two orders almost exactly corresponding with those of the south doorway. The east shaft is new, there is bunch foliage on the west capital, the east is much mutilated. The three-light windows on north and south of the nave have square labels, those on north and south of Chancel have been renewed. Below that on the south is part of the sill and jamb of an early blocked up window.

A drive of about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles will bring us to Englefield, but to any one making this a day's expedition, a slight detour *via* Ufton Court and Sulhamstead Abbots will be well worth undertaking. To view Ufton an application in writing must be made to Miss Sharp, who is most kind in allowing an inspection of this remarkable old house, with its many early associations. At Sulhamstead Abbots the Church retains some transitional Norman arches, a good Norman font, the remains of mural paintings, and some early crosses worked into the walls, and is well worthy of a visit. However we have no time to delay even for these attractions, but must make our way direct to Englefield. It will be impossible here to attempt to give more than an outline of the history of this ancient place. A battle between Ethelwulf, the father of Alfred the Great, and the Danes is said to have been fought here A.D. 871, just before the more decisive engagement at Ashdown, but the Englefield family seem already to have been settled here, and as early as the reign of King Egbert in 803, mention is made of them, and it is also recorded that at this early period an oratory or chantry was in existence in the Parish. Many distinguished members of this family may be noted among the Sheriffs of the County and knights of the shire, and early in the 16th century, Sir Thomas Englefield was speaker of the House of Commons, and his son Sir Thomas a Justice of the Common Pleas. His grandson Sir Francis was attainted of High Treason, as he had endeavoured to bring about the escape of Mary Queen of Scots, and the estates were forfeited and granted to Sir Francis Walsingham, from whom they descended through the Earl of Clanrickarde, the great Marquis of

Sulhamstead  
Abbots

Englefield



Winchester and the Wrightes, to the family of our esteemed Lord Lieutenant, Mr. J. Herbert Benyon, and his most popular and energetic lady, the present owners of the estate. It is stated in Lyson's *Magna Britannia* that Elias Ashmole, the Antiquary, and founder of the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, came to reside here in 1647, though this is not mentioned in a memoir of his life published as a preface to his history and antiquities of Berkshire in 1736. It is however there stated that owing to his loyalty to the late king, his estates at Bradfield were forfeited, but restored to him. The Parsonage at Englefield was granted to Reading Abbey in the time of Henry I. by William Englefield, and continued in the possession of the Abbey down to the time of the dissolution of the Monasteries. A short account of Englefield is given in the *Transactions of the Newbury District Field Club*, Vol. II. pp. 96—105. As at Aldermaston and Padworth, the house stands close to the Church, and one of the chief historical events connected with it is the visit of Queen Elizabeth to Sir Francis Walsingham, when the present long gallery was said to have been constructed to enable the Queen to alight at the second storey, from the high road, which then passed just at the back of the house.

The Parish Church dedicated to St. Mark (fig. 25) consists of a tower and spire at the north west, nave, vestry on the north side, south aisle and porch, chancel and north chapel. It was somewhat drastically restored under the superintendence of Sir Gilbert Scott in 1857, and the tower and spire were added in 1868. The earliest part of the Church seems to date from about the year 1200, when the Norman was giving way to the lancet or Early English style, and the arcade between the nave and aisle, the eastern triple window of the south aisle, the several doorways and font are good examples of this transitional period. The nave and chancel have been re-built, but the chapel on the north side of the chancel, founded by Sir Thomas Englefield in 1514, remains as a fair example of the late perpendicular style of architecture. In commencing our survey of the Church it will be convenient to take up our stand in the chapel founded by Sir Thomas Englefield in the year 1514. In the latter part of the 17th century, when Ashmole compiled his notes of this Church, there was an inscription in black letters in glass in the north window, "This chapel was builded in the year of our Lord, MV<sup>o</sup>XIIII." but this has now disappeared. The windows of the chapel, one on east and one on north side, are of three lights square-headed, and now have oak mullions. The roof is low pitched with

ALDERMASTON CHURCH.



FIG. 1.

FROM THE NORTH-EAST.

ALDERMASTON CHURCH.



Fig. 2.

INTERIOR, LOOKING EAST.



ALDERMASTON CHURCH.

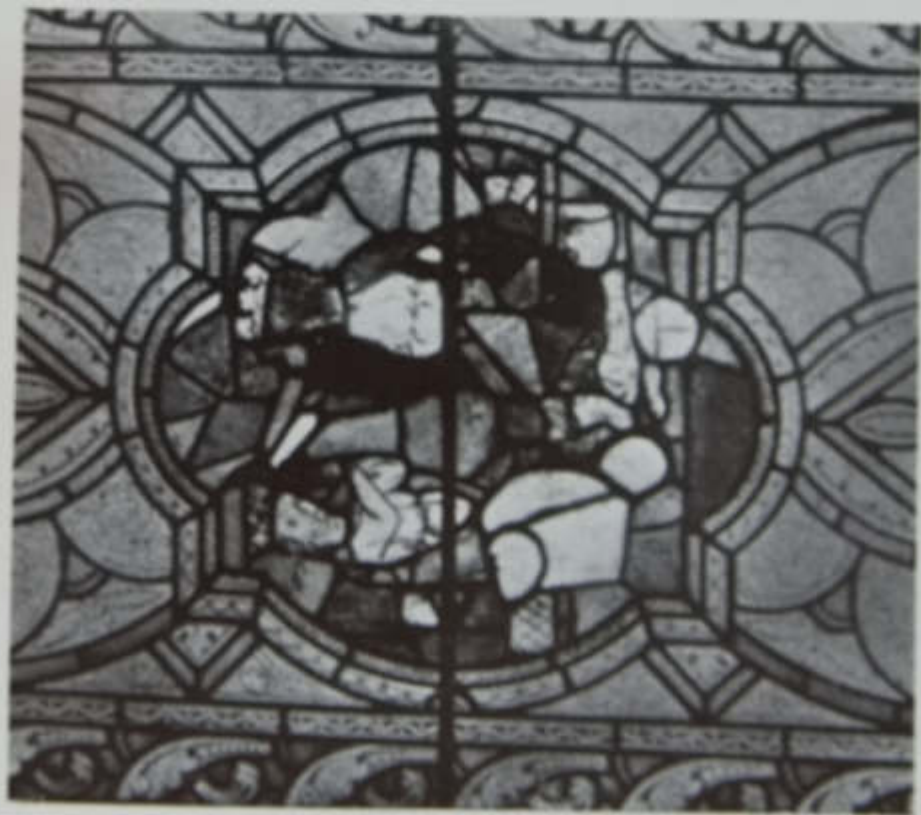


FIG. 3b. THE CORONATION OF THE VIRGIN.



FIG. 3a. THE ANNUNCIATION.

ALDERMASTON CHURCH.



FIG. 4. LOW-SIDE AND HIGH-SIDE WINDOWS AND PULPIT.

ALDERMASTON CHURCH.

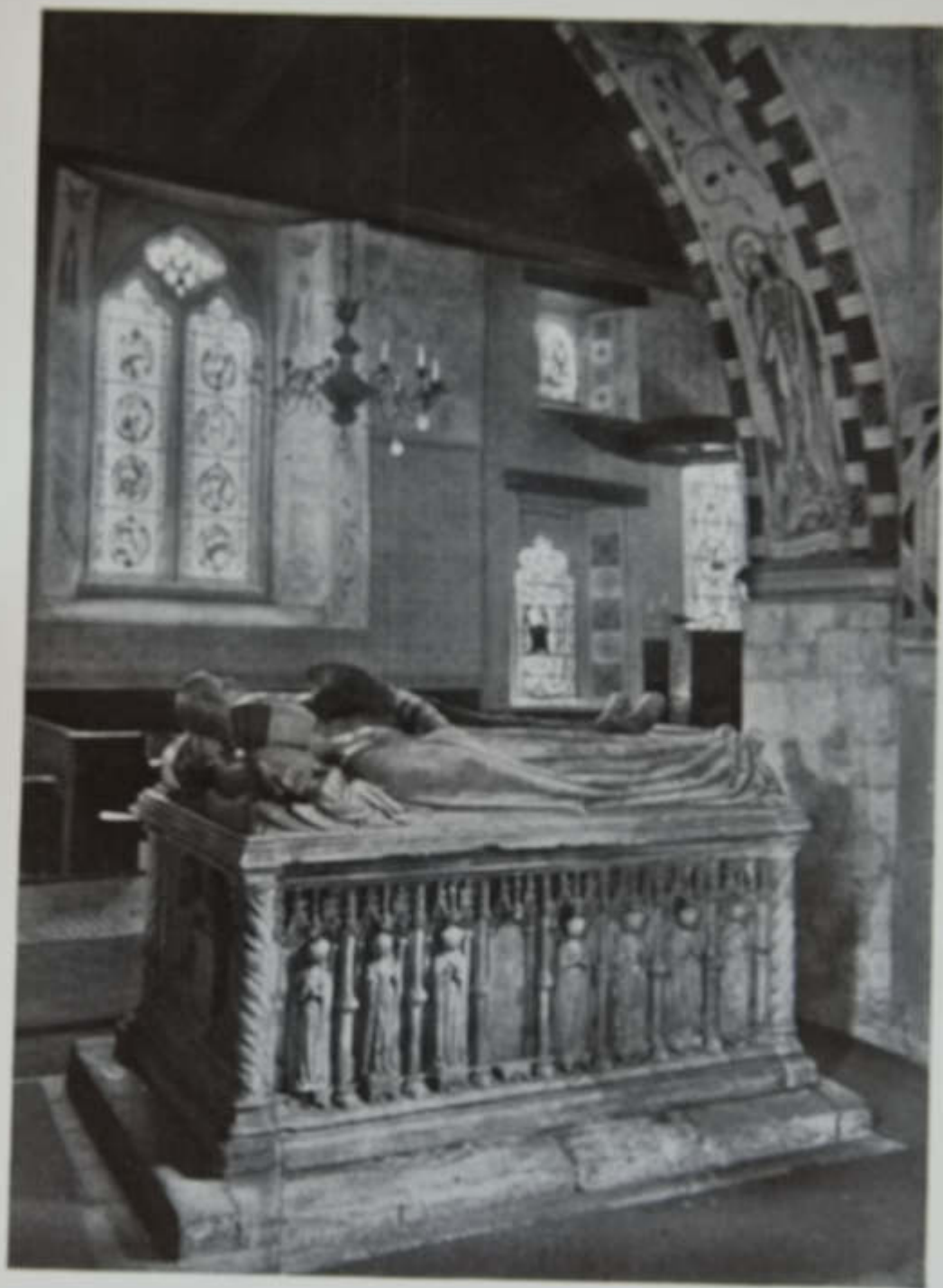


FIG. 5. VIEW FROM SOUTH CHAPEL.



ALDERMASTON CHURCH.

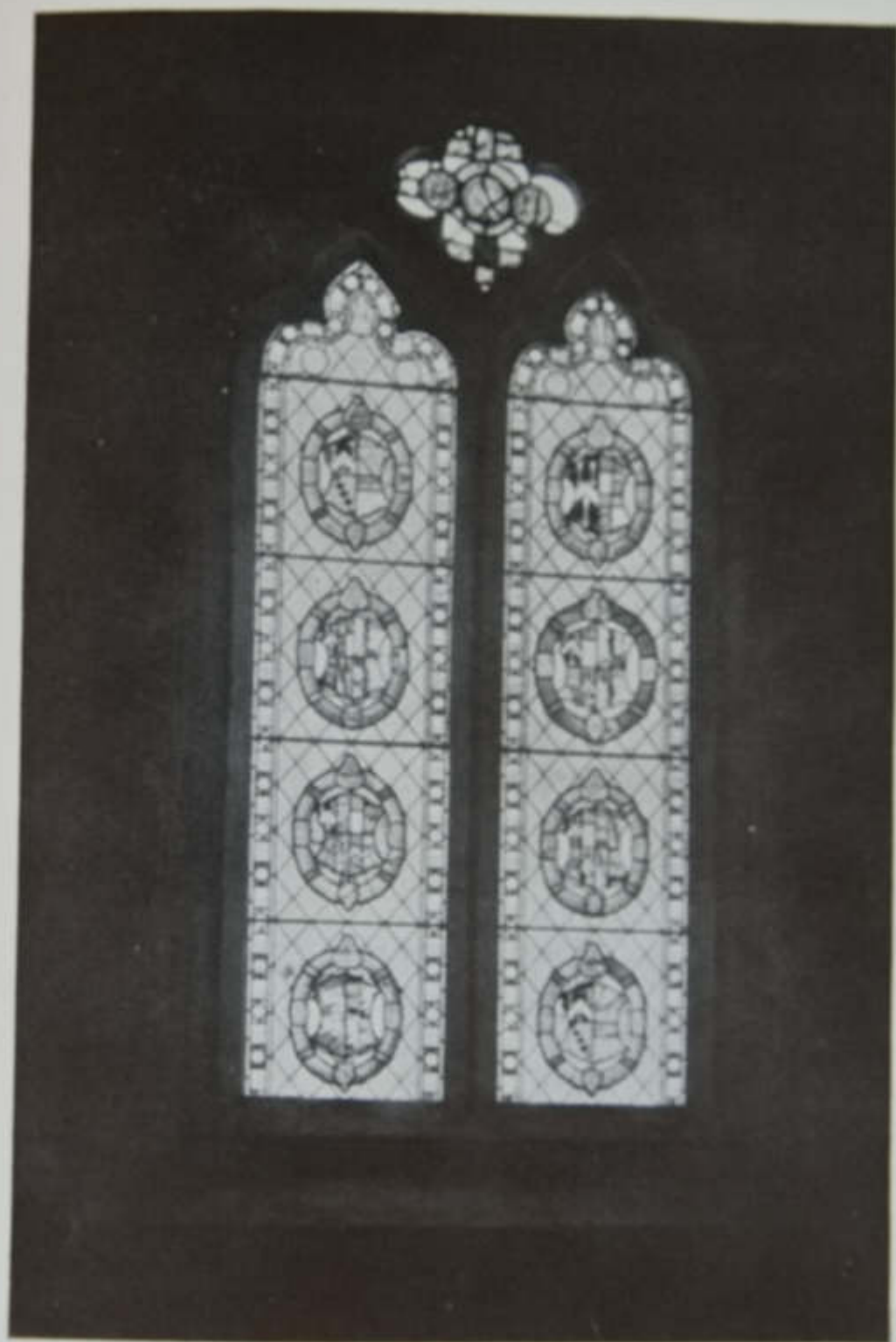


Fig. 6. ARMORIAL SHIELDS IN NORTH WINDOW.

ALDERMASTON CHURCH.

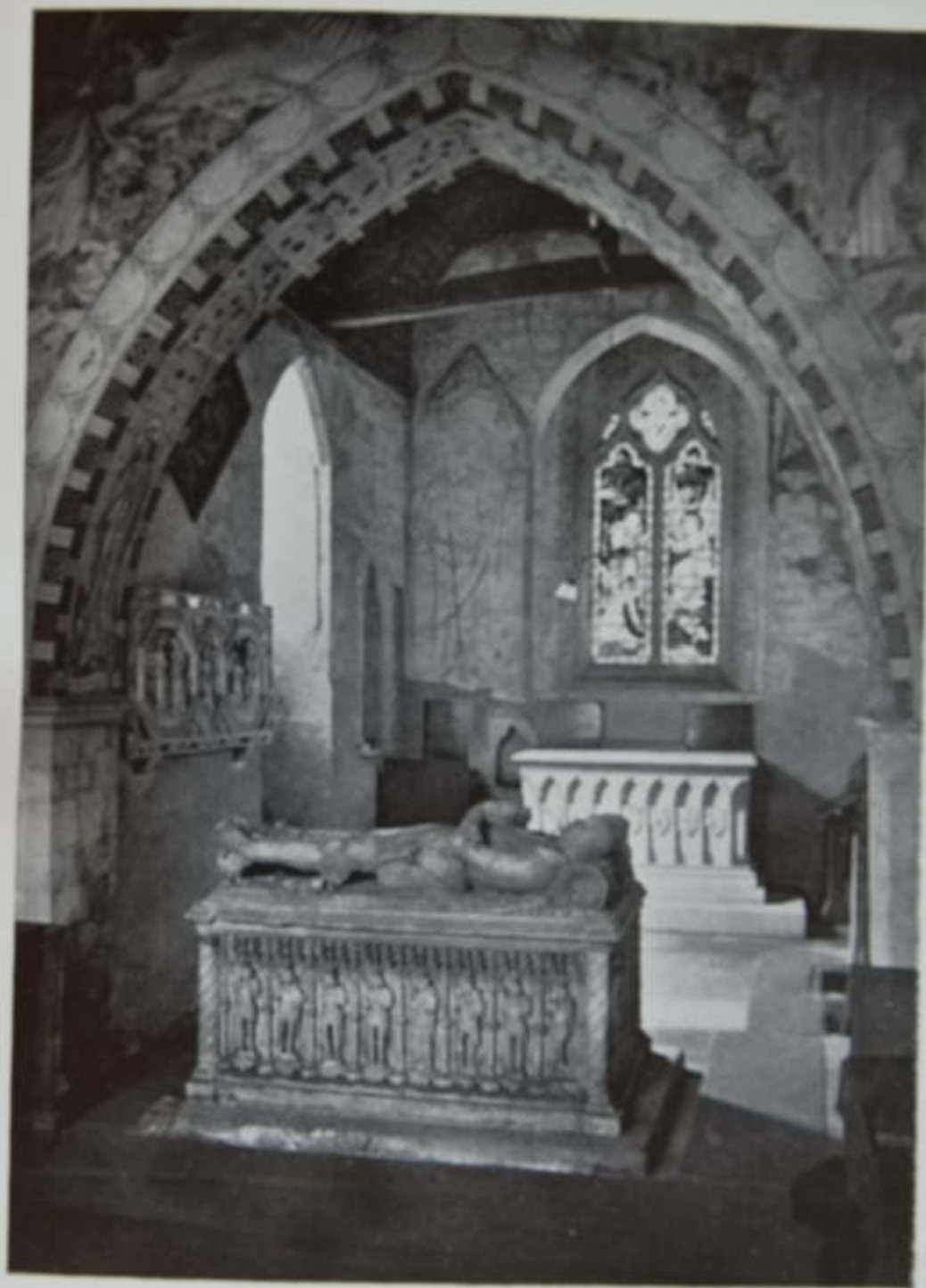


FIG. 8.

THE SOUTH CHAPEL.

ALDERMASTON CHURCH.



FIG. 9.

ST. CHRISTOPHER.



ALDERMABTON CHURCH.



Fig. 10.

THE CONSECRATION OF ST. NICHOLAS.

ALDERMASTON CHURCH.



FIG. 11a.

EFFIGIES OF SIR GEORGE AND LADY ELIZABETH FORSTER.



FIG. 11b.

FIGURES OF SIR HUMFREY FORSTER AND LADY.



Fig. 12.

EFFIGIES OF LADY ELIZABETH FORSTER AND DAUGHTERS.



ALDERMASTON CHURCH.



Fig. 13.

EFFIGIES OF SIR GEORGE FORBSTER AND SONS.

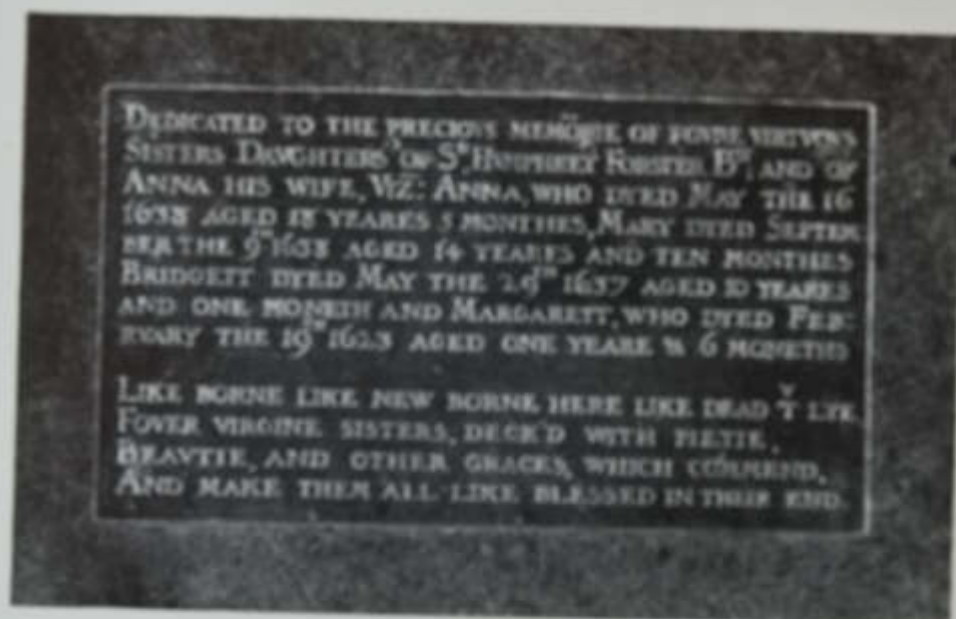


FIG. 14b.

BRASS TO DAUGHTERS OF SIR HUMPHREY FORSTER, BART.

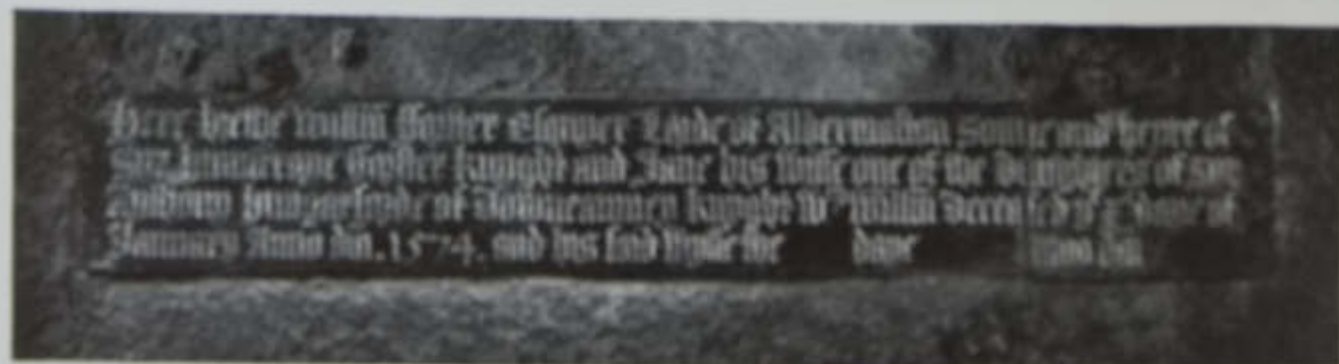


FIG. 14a.

BRASS INSCRIPTION TO WILLIAM AND JANE FORSTER.

ALDERMASTON CHURCH.



Fig. 15b.  
SHIELD OF JANE HUNGARFORDE.

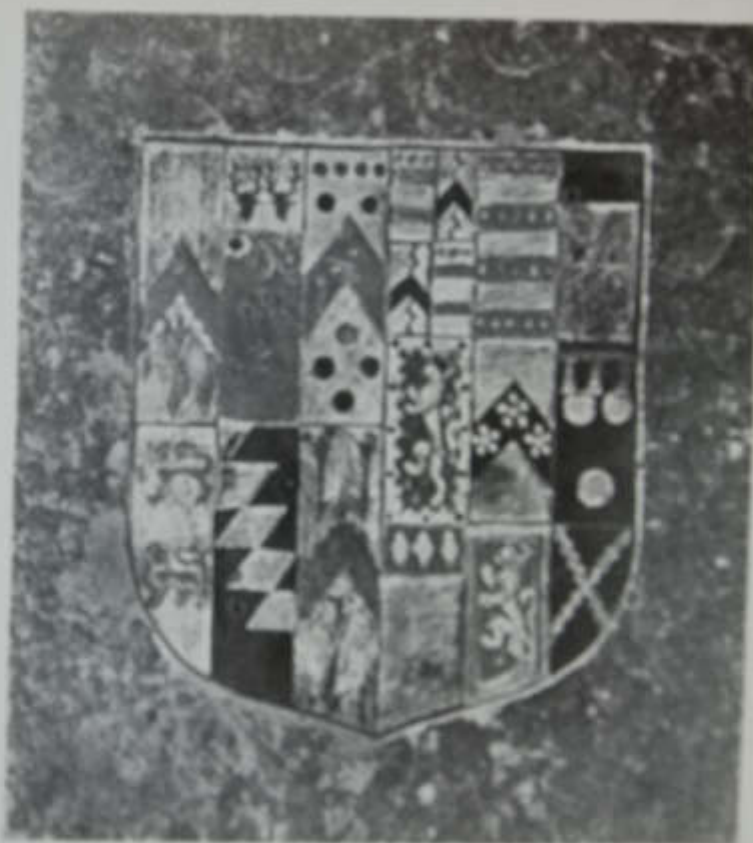


Fig. 15a.  
SHIELD OF FORSTER IMPALING HUNGERFORD.



ALDERMASTON CHURCH.



FIG. 16.

FROM THE SOUTH WEST.

ALDERMASTON CHURCH.

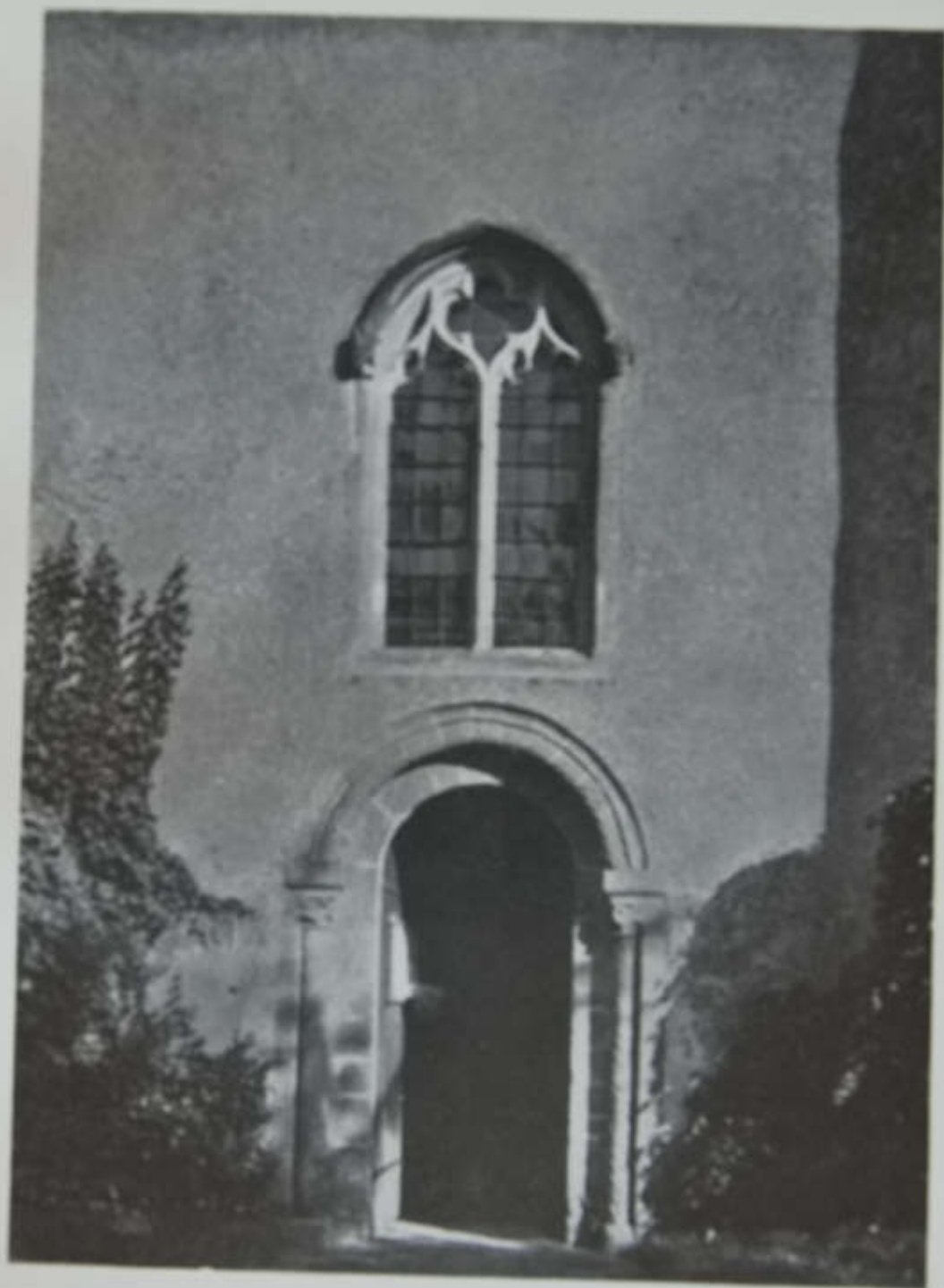


FIG. 17.

WEST DOORWAY AND WINDOW.



FIG. 17a.

CAPITAL OF WEST DOORWAY.



PADWORTH CHURCH.



FIG. 18.

FROM THE SOUTH.

PADWORTH CHURCH.



FIG. 10.

CHANCEL ARCH.

PADWORTH CHURCH.



Fig. 20.

CAPITALS OF CHANCEL ARCH, NORTH SIDE.



PADWORTH CHURCH.



Fig. 21.

CAPITALS OF CHANCEL ARCH, SOUTH SIDE.

PADWORTH CHURCH.



FIG. 22.

MURAL PAINTING OF ST. NICHOLAS.

PADWORTH CHURCH.



Fig. 24.

SOUTH DOORWAY.