

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

IGHTHAM : AN ACCOUNT BOOK 1750-54

A small, coverless book, the size of an exercise book, has come to light. It contained at one end, in faded brown ink, detailed accounts of the expenditure of William Halford, the Rector of Ightham, in Kent ; and at the other " the profits of the parsonage " for the years 1750-54.

The total profits in 1750 were £271 19s. 2½d., and they consisted of occasional fees, tithes, and moneys received from the sale of farm produce. The Rector sold peas (a gallon for 6d.), pea haulm, oats, wheat (4s. 3d. a bushel), barley (2s. a bushel), malt, oats, rye, chaff, dung, straw (in 1750 this brought in £10 17s.), a stack of hay, apples, walnuts, cyder, mead, onions, and clover seed. Among many other transactions, 18 ducks were sold for 8d. each, an old cow for £4, a pig 13s. 6d., a calf 8s., and 30 stone of pork for £2 15s. He received 13s. 6d. from Widow Linton for a copper pot, and 5s. from Dame Basset for " hogg meat ". His housekeeper, Mrs. Dryland, was in charge of the cows, and at intervals " milk and butter money " from her is included. At the end of the financial year he offset house expenses—garden produce, feed for horse and cows, dogmeat, straw for the thatch, and " wheat used in house and at Christmas ". After September, 1752, the sale of produce, except for apples, ceases, but Thomas Dodd then started to pay £53 yearly rent, and possibly took over the farm. In April, 1753, there is a curious entry : " Holly, for rent of parsonage, £5 ", which is repeated in 1754, but from the outgoings, life seems to have gone on there as before.

A Mr. Dawson was employed as curate at £40 yearly, and there is an entry : " Of Dawson, fees, 17s." The fee for burial was 2s., a wedding 5s., a christening 1s., banns 1s., a certificate 1s. The two largest tithe payers paid £18 6s. 6d. and £17 15s. 6d. ; others ranged from 1s. upwards. Seventeen acres of tithe wood brought in £10 4s. The Rector also received interest from sums of money, up to £100, which he lent.

From payments to the staff, it is clear that Mrs. Dryland received £5 a year, and she remained throughout the period. A maid and a manservant, who received £2 10s. a year each, were not content. Susan, Mary Hind, Betty Wells, Mary Haslam, and Mary Cook succeeded each other. Pol was paid 1s. for wheeling goods and 1s. wages, and then disappears. Cornelius was replaced by Tom, and Giles followed. Giles had clothes provided and 4s. " for his pocket ". Four months later his wages accumulated to 17s. 6d. Durling was employed on farm work on a piece work basis. He thrashed peas, wheat, barley,

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oats and clover, did gapping, grinding and other work. There is one entry "for two days' work 2s. 4d.". Nolton gathered apples for 1s. John Honey did mowing and haying (4s.) and Russell worked on the stack (4s.). Mowers mowed  $3\frac{1}{2}$  acres for 10s. A "moleketcher" was paid 2s. 6d. Savage ground a scythe for  $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. Will How thrashed walnuts for 6d. and one of his men was paid 6d. "for lost cows". In January, 1751 and 1752, Mr. Hubble was paid £14 16s. 6d. and £14 1s. for "carrying, tithe and work".

There are many payments for household gear. Pins and needles were expensive (needles 2s. 4d.). A large Witney blanket and quilt cost £2 6s. A frying-pan 1s. 8d., a looking-glass 4s., a china bowl 6s. 6d., "Delf ware and a teapot 1s. 1d.". There is also an interesting inventory on the cover of the book :

3 dozen oyled plates.	26 prs of sheets
9 oyled dishes.	6 fine table cloths
11 scoured dishes.	2 doz. napkins
30 scoured plates.	2 doz. coarse towels.
Doz. white knives and forks.	1 doz. fine towels.
6 ditto desert k. and forks.	9 kitchen table cloths.
	8 prs. of pillow 'coats'
	2 squabbs, 1 bolster
	1 blue pillow
	5 cushions blue.

In the winter of 1753, there must have been trouble with the water supply. There are five entries for water at 6d. a barrel, one for well digging of 10s. 2d., and four entries for washing shirts—one of six shirts for 1s. 6d. Only one dozen candles is mentioned, but the Rector paid his "house bill" regularly, when it exceeded £1, and many items must have been included in this. Coal and firewood were bought ; coal cost £3 12s. for three chauldrons.

Food must have been plentiful and varied. Fish included cod, shrimps, mackerel (2s. 6d.), lobster (2s. 6d.), and salmon (2s. 6d.). Six pigeons cost 1s., and 22 lb. of beef, 5s. 6d. Tongue and veal, 2s. 6d.,  $13\frac{1}{2}$  stone of pork, £1 10s.  $4\frac{1}{2}$ d. Lump sugar and candy were bought regularly, also cheese, pepper, salt, soap and "British oyl". Fifty oranges and lemons, with carriage, cost 2s. 4d. Cherries were bought in August, to dry, and "figgs" at Christmas. Tea was bought frequently, costing from 5s. to 7s. a lb., but 2 lb. of Bohea tea cost only 2s. 6d. There is one entry for coffee.

Beer was important. There is a note : "Brewed 4 bushels, great copper full and 2 pails boild off and the little one of small beer. 2 pails hopps  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lb." There are many entries for malt and "hopps". Three bushels of malt cost 10s. 6d. One entry for malt and hopps is for

£8 19s. Brandy was bought frequently. "4 galls brandy and tubb 19s. 6d.", 4 galls. rum and gin £1 4s., 18 bottled wine, £1 1s. "Mrs. Joynes for wine, 16s. 6d.". There is also an entry of "sugar for wine, 5s. 8d."

Seeds, beans and plants were bought for the garden, 50 cabbage plants costing 4½d., and a wheelbarrow 6s. 6d.

The Rector had a horse. There are entries for shoeing, curry comb and brush, saddle cloth, bridle and saddle (£1 13s.) and payments for keeping horse. He travelled extensively. He went frequently to Gravesend, Cheslehurst, Dulwich (or Dullige) and to London several times a year. He went to Rochester and Ashford: "Expenses to Ashford 6s. 1d., paid bills there £29 8s. 6½d." He went to the fairs at Ightham, Sevenoaks, Gravesend, and Mylton, and in London paid yearly "tenths at the Temple, £1 12s. 2d.". One wonders why he paid 10s. 6d. to the bell ringers at Chislehurst in 1753, and 7s. for poor rate there in 1755.

At Ightham he paid regularly land tax and window money, poor rate, insurance and for highways. In May, 1754, he paid King's Tax of £1 10s. His election expenses in 1754 were 8s. 4½d.

There is a short inventory of his linen on the cover: "20 shirts, 9 pairs of sleeves, 8 silk hands., 5 linnen hands., 14 necks, 14 stocks, 7 bands", and many entries for clothes, including garters, gloves, lawn for stocks, "capps", and yarn for stockings. He bought, from Harrison of Ightham, among many other articles, velvet breeches for £1 10s., a surtout coat for £2 8s. He bought 4 wigs during the period, each costing about two guineas, two "waste-cotes", a silk purse and buckles, three hats, lawn for stocks, and leather breeches (14s.). A coat and breeches from Bartlet cost £1 10s., and the coat was widened for 8d.

He paid his barber 2s. quarterly, and the barber kept to "old Christmas Day" and "old Lady Day". He sent letters as far afield as Lancashire. His sight was not good. There are several entries for "spectakeles" and the writing deteriorates. At Christmas he bought almanacks. He frequently bought magazines and "news". He subscribed £1 18s. to a Hebrew Concordance, and bought two vols., *History of the Bible* for £3 3s. He also paid 1s. for a Hellfire Pamphlet.

Each year at Christmas he gave "boxes", of money (especially to the Court Lodge servants), also tobacco, pipes and wheat. In December, 1750, there was Musick at Tonbridge; morris dancers were paid 2s. 6d.

The Rector lived until 1760. On the cover of the little book he made a note:

"If I should die suddenly, look under the sill in the closet by the kitchen door at ye Parsonage for a stone quart pot."

Over one hundred years later, in 1888, the Rector of the day added, in a neat, flowing hand :

“ Had the step raised. Result nil. Evidently research had previously been made, judging by looseness of step, and soil.”

JOAN CONSTANT.

PLUMSTEAD : ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH

A postscript to *Arch. Cant.*, LX, p. 23, by F. C. ELLISTON-ERWOOD, F.S.A.

My notes on the church of St. Nicholas, Plumstead, ended with the record of its partial destruction, in 1945, by a German rocket. The damage was almost entirely confined to the most ancient portions of the fabric : the thirteenth century transept was shattered, the old nave (twelfth century) was badly shaken and its roof lifted, and the fine modern chapel with its excellent vaulted ceiling was totally destroyed. Other parts of the fabric both old and new were also damaged, but not beyond repair, and by boarding up the fifteenth century nave arcade, the rest of the church was made available for worship. Insufficient protection, however, appears to have been given to the parts of the structure not usable, which resulted in further damage by weather and vandals, especially to the wall monuments and the floor, and the state of the building after ten years of such neglect was an indescribable mess of rotting wood, bird droppings and broken monuments and masonry.

In 1956 more hopeful news indicated that restoration work was about to commence, and now, thanks to the energy and skill of Messrs. Thos. F. Ford & Partners, F.R.I.B.A., the architects for the project, a notable salvage operation was achieved, and though some parts, as was feared, were beyond repair, the greater part was saved. In this work some new details of the earlier building came to light and suspected matters were confirmed. The main architectural story as put forward in my paper remains valid, some aspects of it being further proven. There is no object in repeating what is already in print and available, but to commemorate the millenary of the church's foundation, and to complete the architectural story, these few notes are set down. They may be of particular value to those who only know the church as it is today.

The plans prepared to illustrate the article in *Arch. Cant.* in 1947 require no amendment. Most of the new information was imbedded in the standing walls or was observed when other walls had to be cleared. To assist in the understanding of these matters, an elevation of the interior face of the south wall (the oldest part of the fabric) has been

prepared, with its numerous features lettered and numbered, to which reference should be made (Fig. 1).

The greatest loss has been in the total removal of the thirteenth century transept. It must be admitted that the fabric of this part was in a deplorable condition and had it survived the explosion it would have been a source of trouble and expense in future years. Not only had there been considerable repairs and patchings throughout the centuries but the original work was not beyond criticism. The size and position of this transept has been marked out by a paved area and a shallow recess has been constructed below the transept arch which now contains the table tomb "A4" removed from near the existing chancel. The arch "A1" is entirely new but the western respond "A2" is original but badly scarred. At "A3" is one of the unsolved matters of this part briefly referred to on page 21. When discovered in 1907 it was clearly a passageway from the transept to the chancel, behind the respond of the chancel arch, but two restorations have reduced it to an oddly constructed recess with parallel splayed sides, and quite meaningless. Photographs showing this feature as it was first discovered and its first restoration are printed in the *Woolwich Antiquarian Society's Proceedings*, XVIII, pp. 108 and 114. No trace of the southern respond of the chancel arch remains at 'G' nor of the earlier one at "H" though here the slight bend in the wall indicates the line of the twelfth century chancel.

"B" and "B1" are two windows in the bad gothic style of the early nineteenth century and call for no comment, save that "B1" was moved 1 ft. to the west to allow room for the reconstruction of "C".

"C1" is the original twelfth century window that has been known for many years, while "C" is the one that was thought to be there, ought to be in that position and which many observers thought they could distinguish under the plaster. The force of the explosion shook the plaster from the wall and there revealed was the sought-for window. It has been damaged on its western side and it was to enable the window to be opened out and repaired that the removal of "B1" was undertaken.

"D" is the internal rere-arch and the line of the inner arch opening of the fourteenth century blocked doorway that was found behind a buttress in 1907. It was discovered when the plaster was shaken from the wall. So indeed was "F" which is one more puzzling feature. A large drawing is given which shows a distorted arch of twelve voussoirs of which the centre four are smaller than the flanking ones. Its span is about 4 ft. and the crown of the arch is just over 11 ft. from the floor level, which incidentally is about 2 ft. lower than the outside ground level. It would seem to be the arch of a doorway which was destroyed

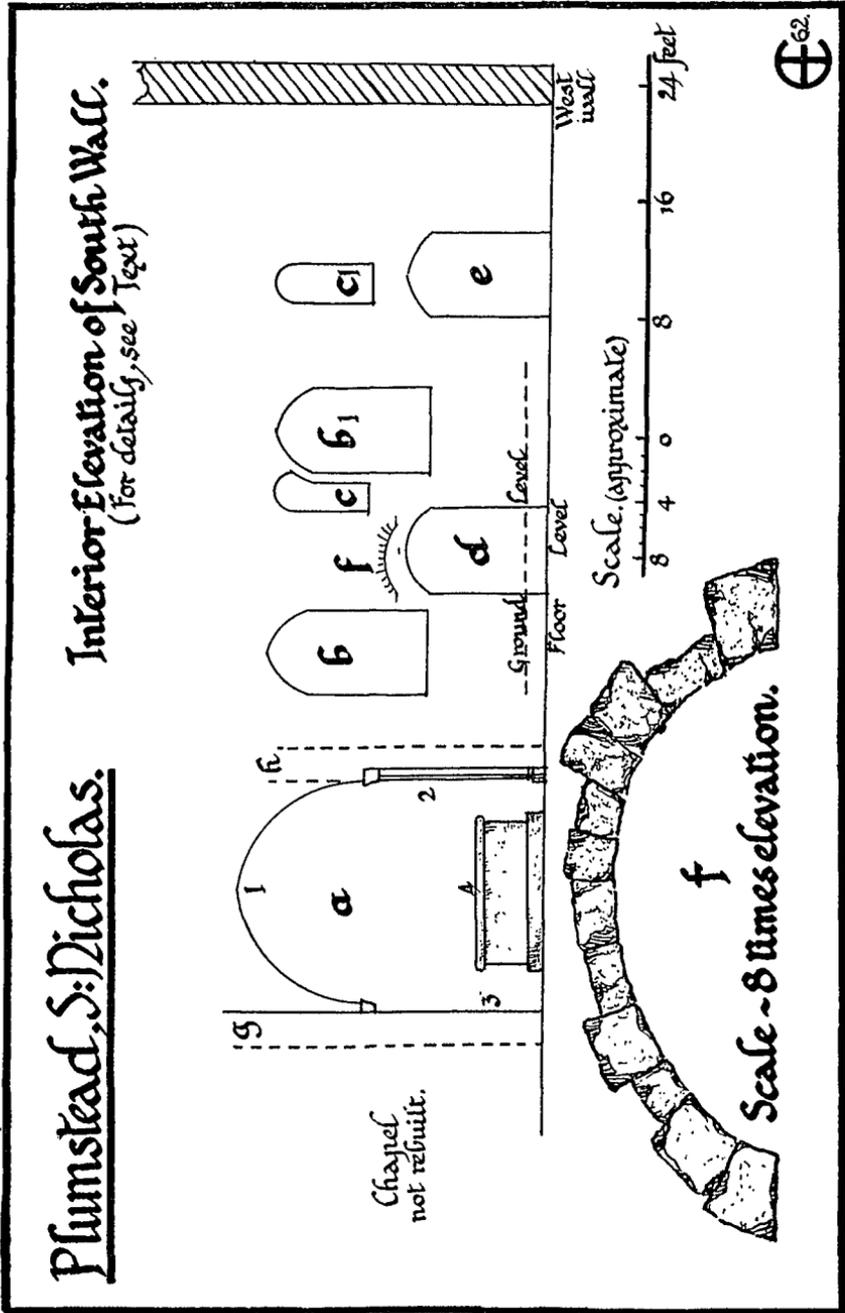


FIG. 1. Plumstead, S. Nicholas.

to make room for "D" but its narrow width and its great height raise doubts. Its proportions have suggested to some a pre-conquest date, but there does not appear the least indication of Saxon technique. The surface of the arch stones had been "pecked" to form a key for plastering and any information that might be obtained from the dressing of the stones does not exist. The shape of the arch, too, is peculiar; is it intentional or due to pressure or some movement in the wall? Presumably its date is pre-fourteenth century but beyond that it is difficult to go. "E" is the existing porch entrance and calls for no comment. The porch has been rebuilt on its original lines.

One other fact referring to this part of the church remains to be recorded. On Plate III of my paper in *Arch. Cant.* is a photograph of the west respond of a thirteenth century doorway into the contemporary chancel. It was discovered in 1907 and was preserved *in situ* under an iron grating. For some time in 1957 it could not be found, but later on was discovered in its correct position but buried beneath a compost of paper, cigarette ends, caramel wrappings, orange peel, earth, leaves and building rubbish. It has been once again cleared and those interested will find it under a heavy concrete slab which may tax their efforts to lift, though rings for this purpose are provided. It has suffered a little damage but is still intelligible.

The west wall of the original church is still standing and was but little damaged, though its plaster was shaken off the rere-arch of the fifteenth century doorway which was uncovered and preserved, as are the vestiges of a pair(?) of lancet windows. What is, however, of more interest is that the outside rendering of rough-cast on this wall was also shaken, revealing the wall under it. Again it was of indifferent workmanship and had been frequently patched with all kinds of miscellaneous material. But by far the most interesting thing was that the walling between the tower and the west window was constructed entirely of cubes of Reigate stone with one or two blocks of Caen stone scattered through the mass. This was very odd for nowhere else in the walling are these stones used. The stones were coursed but the bond was weak and the whole was plastered. It would seem that when Churchwarden Gossage built his new tower in 1664 over the western bay of the nave he had to take down part of the west wall which was afterwards repaired in the manner described. But from whence did the stone come? It was not new and bore evidences of previous use. The only source that I can think of is the Abbey of Lesnes, a couple of miles to the east and which had lain in ruins for a century. From my experience in excavating that abbey, it is evident that many tons of stone had been taken from there, and some at least came to Plumstead. This re-use of plundered material is often quoted as a fact though evidence is generally lacking. That this was more than probable at Plumstead

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may be confirmed by the fact that pavement tiles were found under the floor of the parish church exactly similar in pattern to some found on the abbey site.

### COBHAM : ROMAN VILLA

The report in the last *Arch. Cant.* contains a misprint on page 102 where the date at the beginning of the bottom line should be A.D. 250, and not 350.

Our member, Mr. A. P. Detsicas, kindly informs me that the Samian potter Carantinus is now thought to have been somewhat later than indicated by Oswald and Pryce, and should be placed about A.D. 150-90. This accords with the character of the coarse ware found in association at Cobham.

As Pit III was recognized to contain Antonine pottery, the revised dating of the Samian sherd does not affect any of the stated conclusions regarding the pit or the significance of its contents.

P. J. TESTER.

### COLOUR SLIDES

Among the many sets of coloured slides of archæological subjects published at the present time, a special word of welcome must be given to those made by Pictorial Coloured Slides sponsored by our member, Mr. B. J. Philp, of West Wickham. Those of antiquities in the Dorset County Museum, Devizes Museum and Rochester Museum include many well known objects and many not so well known ; they are of good quality and reasonably priced.

R.F.J.

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