

WINGHAM CHURCH.

COMMUNICATED BY ARTHUR HUSSEY AND A. H. TAYLOR.

A DOCUMENT¹ has been discovered in the Record Office, London, by Mr. A. H. Taylor, which throws an interesting light on the history of Wingham Church. The wooden pillars between the nave and the south aisle of the latter have often been remarked on, but never hitherto accounted for, and this petition affords a sufficiently obvious explanation of their presence.

In the petition, which is addressed to Queen Mary and her consort King Philip, the leading inhabitants of Wingham complain that a certain Canterbury brewer, by falsely representing that the nave had suddenly fallen down (about 1541) had in 1555 obtained license to collect for the re-building of the same, and had misappropriated all the money contributed. What actually happened to the building, and the exact extent of the damage it sustained it is not possible to ascertain; but the parishioners in their petition emphatically deny the Canterbury brewer's allegations that the whole nave had collapsed. The petitioners beg their Majesties to cancel the license for collecting and to order an inquiry into the administration of the funds to be instituted with a view to bringing the defaulters to justice. The Walshe who signed the petition has not been identified. He may have been some Government official, or perhaps the attorney who drafted the document. At any rate, the name is not known to have any local association.

¹ In a Volume entitled "Lists and Indexes," xiii, Proceedings in the Court of Star Chamber, Vol. I, 1485-1558, p. 313.

Plts	Defts	Subject	
Sir Henry Palmer and other inhabitants of Wingham	George Foggard Simon Stanley	Misconduct in collection of money for repair of Wingham Church	Kent

P. and M., Bundle V. No. 2.

It is notable that, at his Visitation in 1557, Archdeacon Harpesfield, who was not in the habit of overlooking serious defects, makes no mention of Wingham nave being in a ruinous state. But if the parishioners were already engaged on the needful repairs, the Archdeacon would have no occasion to issue orders on the subject.

The evidence of wills tends to show that the work of restoring the nave covered nearly thirty-five years of the sixteenth century. An earlier will, that of Thomas Roper, who left ten marcs to the reparation of the nave in 1493, since it was not immediately followed up by other similar bequests, probably refers only to some minor repairs; but from 1526 onward to 1560, there occurs a succession of bequests to the reparation, building, reedifying and covering (roofing) of the church—all proving that the nave had fallen into a very bad condition. By 1557 the north aisle seems to have disappeared altogether. On 10th July in that year Margaret Milles directed by will that her body should be buried “in the parish churchyard of Wingham in the north-side in the yle there” (Con. 26, fol. 171). Although the wording is somewhat obscure, it appears to mean that the testator’s desire was to be laid in the open in that part of the churchyard which occupied the site of the old north aisle, then no longer standing. To this day the north aisle of the nave has never been rebuilt. The present north wall of the nave, which takes the place of the old north arcade, is built of squared flints. Parts of the stone pillars are incorporated in the existing walls.

The following bequests are on record :—

William Kenton, 1526 : “Toward the building of Wingham Church 20 /-.” (A. 20, fol. 238.)

Thomas King, yeoman, 1539 :—“To the building up of the church, if it be builded again 40 /-.” (A.22, fol. 50.)

John Peerse of St. Paul’s, Canterbury, 1542 :—“Towards the covering of Wingham Church, £4, of the which in M^r Colyns hands 13-4d.” (A. 23, fol. 138.)

Robert Soly, 1547 :—“ To the reparation of the Church the 6–8d. which I lent unto the churchwardens to pay the mason ” (C. 23, fol. 6.)

Thomas at Well, 1555 :—“ To the building of the Parish church, 6–8d.” (C. 26, fol. 27.)

Henry Pender, yeoman, 1558 : “ Towards the building of the parish church, 40 /-.” (Con. 27, 218.)

Thomas Specheley, 1558 :—“ To the re-edifying of the church, 40 /-, whereof 20 /- when the sawyers shall begin to work, and the other 20 /- to be delivered at such time as the church shall be in rearing.” (C. 27, 39.)

Richard Nethersole, 1560 :—“ Towards the building of the church, 20 /-.” (C. 28, 72.)

The sum total of the above bequests amounts to £12 13s. 4d. ; the equivalent of about £300 at the present day ; but it is unlikely that this was all. One may assume that other benefactors gave in their lifetime and that further bequests were made by testators whose wills are no longer extant. And then there were the donations amounting to £224 (equal to over £4,000 at present day value), gathered by the specious-tongued brewer, Foggard, of Canterbury, and his accomplice. These contributions together might well have sufficed to have rebuilt the nave at Wingham with substantial stone arcades. But the subscriptions intended for the repairs and rebuilding never reached their proper destination, because they were embezzled. And the residue of the funds available only served to erect the existing makeshift colonnade of wooden posts, as being less costly than stonework. Thus the anomaly of the timber posts is at length adequately explained.

The accompanying photograph of the interior shows the row of oak pillars between the nave and the south aisle of the nave. The lithograph, from a drawing by William Burgess, is of peculiar interest. Unfortunately it is not dated, but it is believed to have been published about 1840-50. It shows the wooden posts, but whitened to look like stone, and the whole of the upper part of the colonnade together with the braces or supports, encased in stucco to

simulate a masonry arcade of semi-circular-headed arches, having prominent keystones, exaggerated in Renaissance affectation, and fictitious capitals with abaci of quasi-Roman-Doric form. These excrescences have been removed, presumably in the process of nineteenth century "restoration."

At the entrance of the chancel remains part of the old rood screen, viz., the north and south halves of the wainscote, cut down to the level of the middle rail, and deprived of doors or gates. Each half of the wainscote consists of two compartments of four panels apiece. The heads of the panels are occupied by tracery of a somewhat uncommon design, a cinquefoiled ogee between two half circles. The work dates from the reign of Richard II. Traces of the original vermilion colouring may be detected, especially on the southern half of the wainscote. The southern part is that here illustrated; and on the right of the picture may be noticed the base of the easternmost of the wooden posts above mentioned. It should, however, be told that this particular post is actually modern, but an exact copy, having been placed where it is only some thirty-five years ago, because the foot of the original post had become too much decayed for safety. While the work was being carried out, Mr. Arthur Hussey went and watched for any traces that might be uncovered of foundations of the original stone respond pier, but nothing was found.

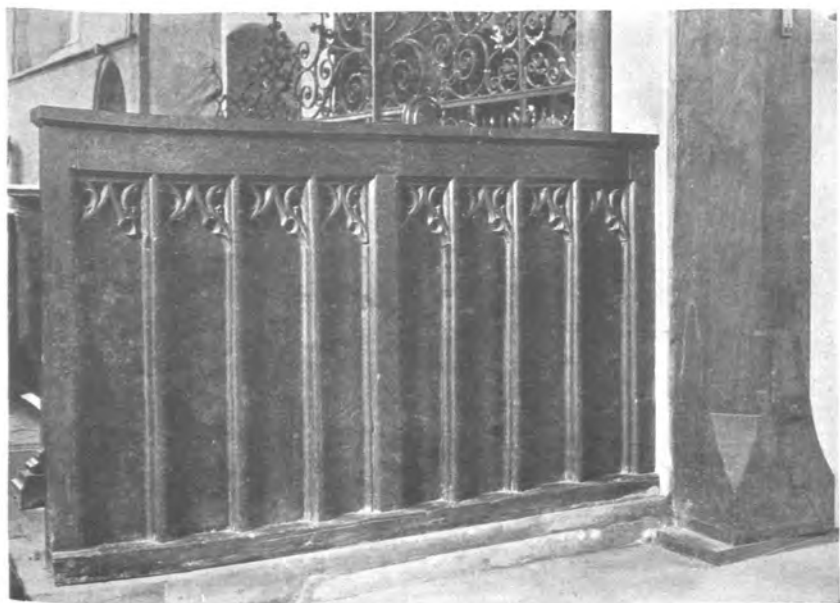
The late Sir Stephen Glynne, in his description of Wingham Church, which he visited before 1840, writes, "The chancel is . . . approached from the nave by a wood screen of the style of the seventeenth century, with twisted columns."

Again, in his article on "Kentish Rood-Screens" (*Arch. Cant.* Vol. XIV, p. 371) the late Canon Scott Robertson says that the chancel screen formerly at Wingham, was erected about 1682, and "had never been a rood-screen." It was "destroyed," he continues, "about ten years ago." This passage was published in 1882, and therefore the destruction referred to would possibly have coincided with the "restoration" in 1874-5. And yet it is difficult to reconcile Canon



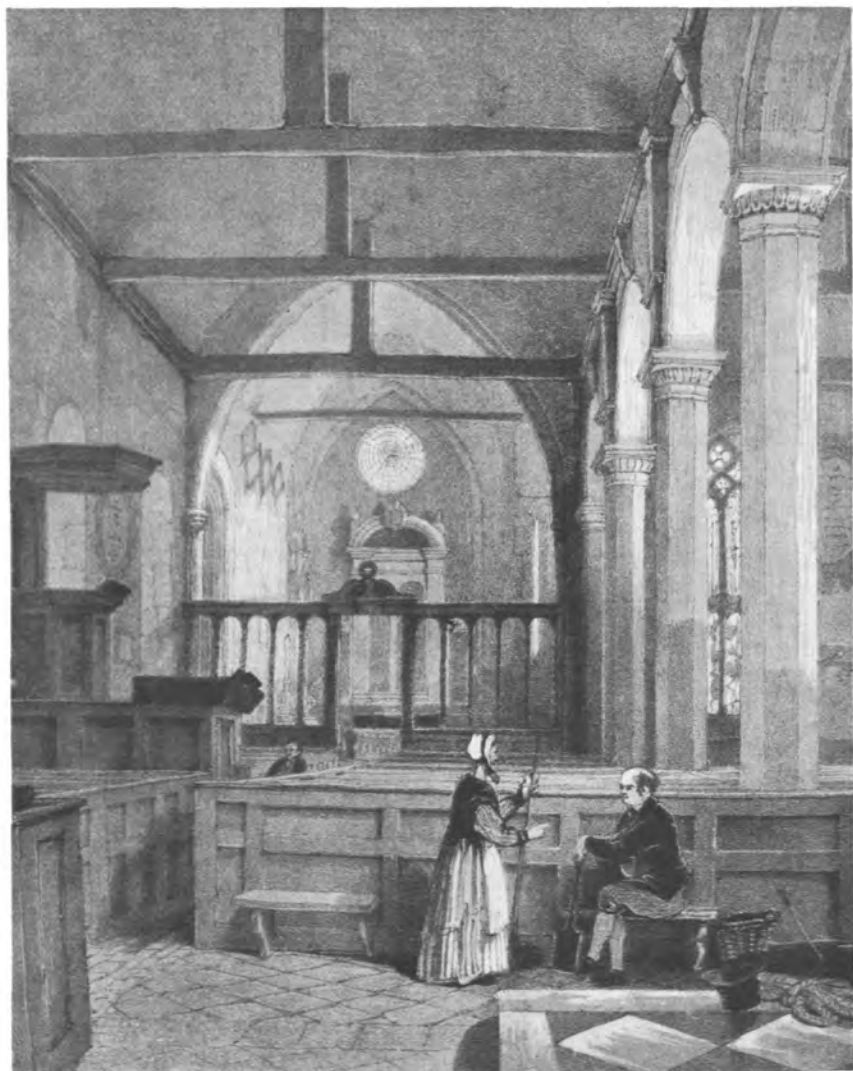
[Photo.: Rev. A. Collins]

Interior looking south-east, showing wooden pillars between nave and south aisle of nave.



[Photo.: Rev. A. Collins]

Southern half of rood-screen wainscote



WINGHAM CHURCH.

Interior looking east, from a lithograph published circa 1840-50 after a drawing by William Burgess.

Scott Robertson's statement with the fact that the screenwork which stands at the chancel entrance in Wingham Church at the present day,¹—screenwork which has every appearance of being in situ—could not possibly have stood where it does if a totally different screen, as described by Canon Scott Robertson, was occupying the position. The explanation appears to be that the medieval wainscote was never moved away from its place, but that the upper part of the medieval screen, viz., the fenestration and rood-loft, having been demolished in the interval between the Reformation and the Restoration, at some time in the latter epoch a new superstructure, with spiral columns, in the taste of the day, was set up on the top of the wainscote, to supply the place of the destroyed portions, and the old wainscote boxed in, as represented in the lithograph after William Burgess. These Restoration additions were in their turn all removed in the nineteenth century, either on the ground that they were found to have become worm-eaten, or else because they were regarded by the "restorers" as incongruous with the character of the building. Fortunately at the same time the ancient wainscote of the rood-screen was saved.

A passage in Archdeacon Harpesfield's Visitation below, viz., the third clause from the end, throws an interesting sidelight on the function of the rood-screen to define the limits of the domain of the Rector on the one hand and of the parishioners on the other.

In former days, from the erection of the College in Wingham Church by the founder, Archbishop Pecham, in 1286, until the suppression of the College in 1547, the latter, as Rector, was proprietor of the high quire, and was responsible for its maintenance. But after the suppression, the rectorship, with the responsibilities of upkeep and repair of the principal chancel, passed to a lay impropiator, Sir Henry Palmer (the same who is otherwise referred to as Mr. Palmer), the parishioners, as Harpesfield records, repudiating for themselves any obligation in the matter. In so doing they were quite logical and correct ; as also they

¹ Examined by Aymer Vallance, May, 1927.

were in insisting that the duty of maintenance and repair rested altogether with the lay rector. Their respective spheres were clearly demarcated by the rood-screen; the Rector's extending from the high altar westward so far as "the inner part of the choir door," i.e., the east face of the screen, but not including the screen; while the screen itself and all that lay to west of it was the sphere of the parishioners. That is why the Visitor commanded the parishioners and not the Rector to repair ravages of the previous reign in "the place where the Rood standeth," this being situated in the nave; and because he recognised that the entire structure of the rood-screen and loft, with the Great Rood and all its accessories, belonged to the parishioners, and as such were necessarily at their charge to maintain.

The east window, depicted in the lithograph as circular and as resembling nothing so much as a spider's web, could not possibly be ancient. Happily it has disappeared. The existing East window is modern, having been inserted at the "restoration." The chancel arch also is modern, of the same date, apparently, as the east window.

AYMER VALLANCE.

Here follows Mr. Taylor's verbatim transcript of the petition:—

TO OUR SOVERAIGNE LORDE AND LADYE, THE KYNGE AND THE
QUENES MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTIES.

In most humble wyse showethe unto yo^r Mat^{ies} yo^r trewe and faithfull Subjects Henrye Palmer Knyghte, Edwarde Warham, Henrye Jones and Mathewe Welles for themselves and in the behalfe of the p̄ishoners and Inhabytants of the p̄ishe of Wyngham in yo^r Mat^{ies} Countie of Kent.

That where one George ffoggarde of the Cytie of Cantureburye, bere brewer, beyinge confederate withe one Symon Stanley of Branwoode in the seid Countie, gentleman, have falsely and untruly devised sett forthe and exhibited unto yo^r Mat^{ies} in the name of yo^r Mat^{ies} said supplycants one bill of petition Comp'hendynge and sr'mysinge in the same, that where aboute xiiii or xv yeres nowe laste paste the p̄ishe church of Wyngham

aforesaid beinge ruinouse and decayed sodenly fell downe. And the most p'te therof utterly peryshed whereby God's dyvine s'vice then could not nor can not be therin mynistred without trouble and grevance to the said p̄ishners if wynde or rayne chaunce duringe the same tyme of dyvine s'vice. And that the re-edifynge therof wolde be so chargeable beyng but a pore p̄ishe, that the p̄ishoners of themselfs wer not able to reedyfie and buylde upp agayne the same churche without the ayde and helpe of there ffryndes neyghbours and other yo^r mat^{ies} subjects. And by the same false and untrew s^rmyse conteyned in the said supplicacon besought yo^r graces to graunte unto the said George ffoggarde (who by the said s^rmysed peticon was named and appoynted to be yo^r said supplycants trewe and lawfull procto^{rs}) a lycence under yo^r mat^{ies} greate Seale of Englande to aske gather and receive the almes charytie and devocon of yo^r subjects inhabytinge and dwelling within this yo^r graces Realme of Englande for and towards the re-edifynge and reparinge of the said p̄ishe Churche of Wyngham. To the which said bill or supplicacon so exhibyted in o^r names nether we yo^r said suppliants nether any other for us or in o^r behalfe wer ever therunto made previe. Wherupon yo^r mat^{ies} p̄cevyng the said decaye and myndyng the advauncement and contynuaunce of God'es dyvine s'vice (conceyvinge the said s^rmyse conteyned in the said supplicacon to be trewe) did by yo^r highnes lr̄s patents under the Great Seale of Englande bearing date at Westm: the viii daie of Decembre in the seconde and thirde yeres of yo^r mat^{ies} raignes lycence and authorise the same George ffoggarde or his deputie charytably to ask gather and receive the almes charitie and devocon of yo^r subjects throughe out this yo^r Graces realme for and towards the re-edifynge and repairinge of the said p̄ishe churche of Wingham. The same lycence to endure for one whole yere next aft^r the date thereof as by the same yo^r Graces lettres patents more at large it dothe and may appere to yo^r Mat^{ies}. Accordinge to the teno^r of w^{ch} said lettres patents the said George ffoggarde by his lettre of deputacon did authorise and assigne the said Symonde Stanley to execute by himselfe the whole teno^r purporte and effecte of the said lettres patents appoyntinge hym fard^r by his lettre of deputacon to gather for the p̄ishe churche and colledge of Wingham as by the same his lettre of deputacon maye also appere. By force of w^{ch} yo^r graces said lettres patents and the said letters

of deputacon the said George ffoggarde and Symon Stanley have gon abrode unto sundrie sheires counties and p̄ties of this yo^r graces realme of Englande. And by vertue of the same yo^r lr̄es patents and lettre of deputacon have asked gathered and receaved of yo^r lovinge subjects in sundrie p'ts of this yo^r realme the sōme of two hundrethe twentie and foure poundes as by their owne confessions taken upon their exāiacons had before S^r Edwarde Gage, Knight, James Gage, esquier and John Busshoppe, gentleman, Justices of the Peace within the Countie of Sussex (where the said ffoggarde and Stanley wer by the same Justices apprehended for their sundrie mysdemeaners in the collection of the said some) playnely apperithe.

At w^{ch} time of their gatheringe and collection in case any of yo^r subjects in cōsideracon of his owne meane estate or povertie or els for that then he dowted whether the same shulde be converted to soche godly use as was mencyoned in the said lr̄es patents or no did either give lesse then the same ffoggarde and Stanley were contented withall or did refuse to paie soche money as the same ffoggarde and Stanley did require to have, then wolde the said Symon Stanley thretten the same yo^r graces subjects and saye that he wer not yo^r highnes faithfull and lovinge subjects and that he wer not a trewe Catholik man. Affyrmynge with highe wordes and countenance that he wolde complayne to yo^r highnessies of their slacknes in p'formyng that yo^r Mat^{ies} comādemēte with other soche like threttenyng and fearefull wordes. By reason wherof they putt dyvers and sundrie of yo^r lovinge subjects in soche ffear that their wolde rather paye soache somes of money as they the said ffoggarde and Stanley requyred, then to abyde the adventure of soche trouble as by the false and untrewre reporte of the same Symond Stanley might otherwise ensure. Of w^{ch} gatheringe yo^r said suppliants wer never made previe untill nowe of late nor ever receaved accompte or paymēte of the said ccxxiii^{ll} craftely and in deceyte of yo^r said subjects as is aforesaid gathered. But the same ffoggarde and Stanley the same sōmes of money have converted employed and putt to their owne privat gayne and comodytie to the manefeste deceit bothe of yo^r mat^{ies} and of yo^r lovinge subjects.

In consideracon wherof yt maye pleas yo^r mat^{ies} not only to call in and frustrate the said lr̄es patents but also to directe yo^r Mat^{ies} gracious wrytes of sub pena to the said George

foggarde and Symon Stanley commaunding them p̄sonally t'appere before yo^r highnes' most honorable Counsille in yo^r graces highe co^rte of Starre Chambre at a certeyn daie and und^r a certeine payne to answer to the premysses and to stand a soche ord^r and direction as by their honorable wysdomes shall seme meet and convenyent.

WALSHE.

VISITATION OF WINGHAM CHURCH BY ARCHDEACON
HARPESFIELD, 1557.

Rectory :—Impropiator, Sir Henry Palmer.

Curate :—Dom. Robert Charles.

Churchwardens	{	William Oxinden, esquire.
		Richard Nethersole.
		Henry Johnes.
		Matthew Wells.

Parishioners : John Morrice, William Matthew, Edward Morrice,
Thomas Specheley.

First :—To take down the grave-stone now upon the altar, at this side Michaelmas next, and that so soon and conveniently as it may be, that there be another provided and an altar erected of full length.

To provide a pair of curtains of silk, and a canopy, against Lent.

To prepare an altar to be set up in the said chancel, at this side St. Michael.

To provide a Lamp, at this side of the Feast of St. Michael next coming.

To provide a meet Font to christen in, and to have a lock and a key to the same, at this side Alhallowtide next coming.

To provide a convenient book for christenings, weddings, and buryings, and duly observe the same.¹

That the parishioners there say that from the high altar to the inner part of the choir door, is the whole charge of Mr. Palmer to repair.

The parishioners have a commandment to repair both the aisles on the side of the chancel, and to repair the place where the Rood standeth, both glass windows and timber work, so as the parishioners do not come in, against St. Michael next coming.

¹ The Register of Wingham Church begins in the year 1568.

The reparations which are to be done on the charge of Mr. Palmer, to be done at this side of the Feast of Allhallows.

(Transcribed by Mr. Arthur Hussey from MS. Vol. in Cathedral Library, Canterbury.)

NOTE.—Grateful acknowledgments are due to Dr. F. E. Bromley, of Westbere, for his courtesy in lending for reproduction his copy of the old lithograph of Wingham Church interior ; to the Rev. Arthur H. Collins, M.A., Rector of Staple, who kindly went over expressly and took the requisite photographs ; and also to Mr. Arthur Hussey for many important facts.—ED.