

BOURNE PARK, NEAR CANTERBURY.

BY WALTER H. GODFREY, F.S.A., F.R.I.B.A.

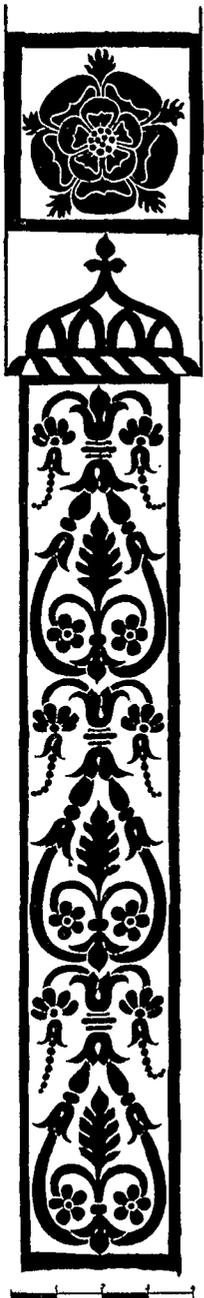
THE present mansion of Bourne Park is presumed to have been built by Lady Aucher, during the minority of her son Sir Hewitt, the last baronet, at the beginning of the eighteenth century. It is a fine building, typically Queen Anne in style, and contains among other features, a remarkable walnut staircase, of contemporary date, and a mantelpiece which is one of the most dexterous pieces in the "Chinese" manner extant. Of the earlier house nothing appears to be known with any certainty; but in fitting up the present building in 1927-28 for its new owner, Major Sir John Prestige, a few interesting objects came to light, and, since Sir John has kindly allowed me to present them to the museum, at Maidstone, it may be worth while to put them on record. At the same time some note may be made of one or two early fittings preserved in the house.

Matthew Bell, grandfather of the late owner, commenced a log-book, recording everything that happened in connection with the estate, and the information contained in this Manuscript *Book of Bourne* will increase in value as time passes. Mr. Bell briefly summarises the history of the property since Sir Anthony Aucher acquired it in the reign of Henry VIII. Sir Anthony was Marshall of Calais, Governor of Guisnes and Master of the Jewel House to Henry VIII., Edward VI. and Queen Mary, and he lost his life at the taking of Calais in 1558. His descendant, Sir Anthony, was created a baronet in 1666, and his two sons inherited the estate in turn, the younger, Sir Hewitt dying in 1726, when the title became extinct. His eldest sister Elizabeth married Dr. Corbett, and left five daughters, the eldest of whom married Stephen Beckingham. Matthew Bell bought the estate in 1844 from the widow of the Rev. J. C. Beckingham, who

had died in 1807. It may be worth mentioning that Bourne Park was tenanted in 1844 by Lord Albert Conyngham (afterwards Lord Londesborough), brother of the Marquess Conyngham, who presided over the first of the annual meetings of the Royal Archæological Institute, which was held in Canterbury in that year.

In 1848 Mr. Bell carried out certain repairs to the house, and, in removing a portion of decayed stonework, the workmen found that it was carved on the back with a coat of arms. Eventually the whole achievement of arms (four stones) was recovered, and proved to be that of Poynings. This seemed to give a clue to the source of some of the building material used in the erection of Bourne, for Westenhanger, which belonged to the Poynings family from c. 1325 to the time of Henry VIII., was partly demolished in 1701. We read in Grose's *Antiquities* that in that year, "for the lucre of £1,000 which was given for the materials then standing in this house (Westenhanger) three-quarters of it were pulled down." The presumption that Bourne Park employed part of the destroyed building makes the ascription of some of the features about to be described uncertain. They are, of course, quite as likely to have come from the old house at Bourne, which had just been demolished, and such features as the two fireplaces would more probably owe their preservation to the sentimental interest attaching to the old house, than to a desire to keep features which were brought from another house, and which were altogether out of date. The stones and timber that were defaced and worked into the newer structure may on the other hand have come from either source.

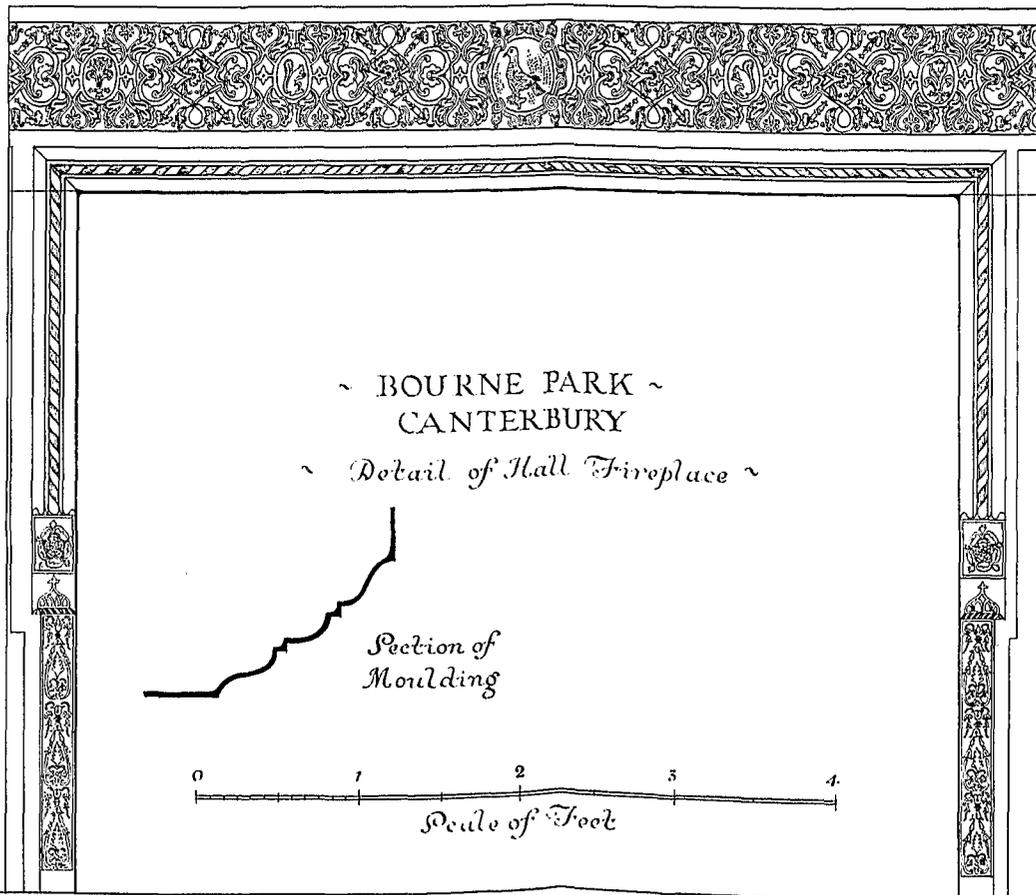
The most interesting early work is undoubtedly the marble sixteenth century fireplace in the hall. This is a remarkable example of the local style of ornament to be found at Chilham, both in fireplaces of the Castle and in the tombs in the Church, and another fine example is to be seen at Bridge Place, quite close to Bourne Park. The ornament is a regularly spaced



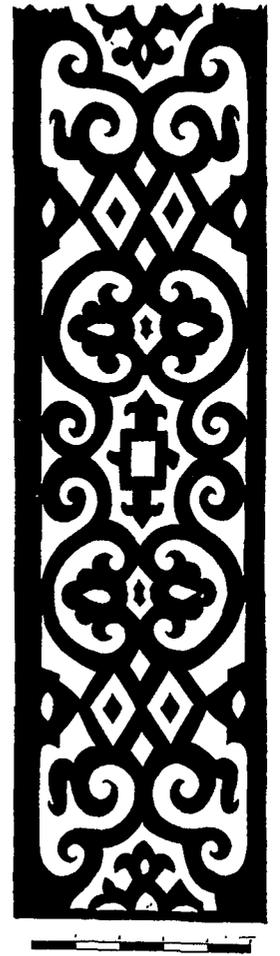
CARVED ORNAMENT ON JAMB.



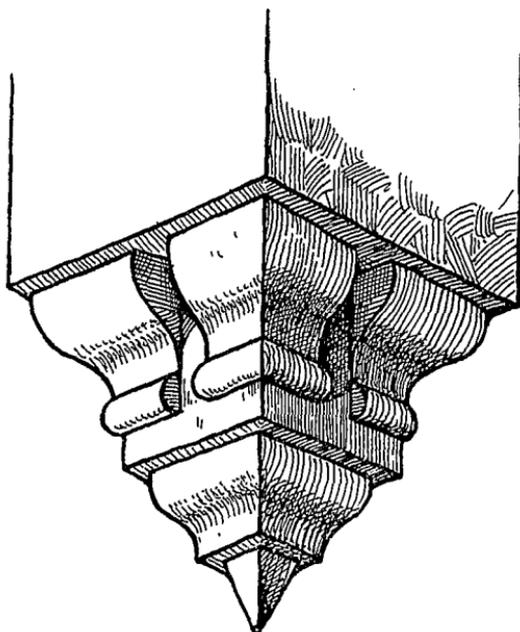
DETAIL OF CARVED ORNAMENT ON LINTEL OF FIREPLACE.



Drawn by E. F. Harvey from measurements by Walter H. Godfrey.



DETAIL OF PAINTED NEWEL.



BOURNE PARK.
PENDANT OF PAINTED NEWEL.

semi-floral type (resembling a modern wall-paper) with the interstices incised and left with a rough surface, while the design appears raised and polished. The frieze or lintel of the fireplace is a beautiful piece of work, with a falcon in a lunette in the centre, and two squirrels worked into other parts of the pattern. The mouldings are reminiscent of early sixteenth century

work, and have the spiral banding which is often seen in Tudor colour decoration, and the stops are adorned on each side with a Tudor rose. The rose is also prominent, alternating with a fern-like leaf, in the little freestone fireplace preserved in one of the basement rooms. The lintel of this fireplace looks almost as though it had been shortened, since there are portions of two roses in the centre. The work at Chilham, which resembles the marble fireplace, belongs to the first quarter of the seventeenth century, but nothing appears to be known as to its authorship, or the occasion for this special type of technique.

The Poynings' arms, already referred to, consist of a quarterly coat, 1 and 4 barry or and vert a bend gules (Poynings), 2 gules three leopards argent a bend azure (Fitzpaine), and 3 or three piles in chief azure (Bryan), within a circular band, perhaps meant to represent the Garter. On either side is a beast for supporter, a little difficult to identify; but apparently the sinister is a wolf, and the other

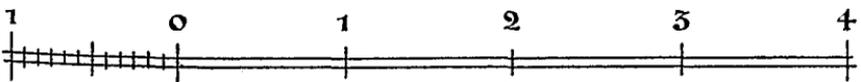
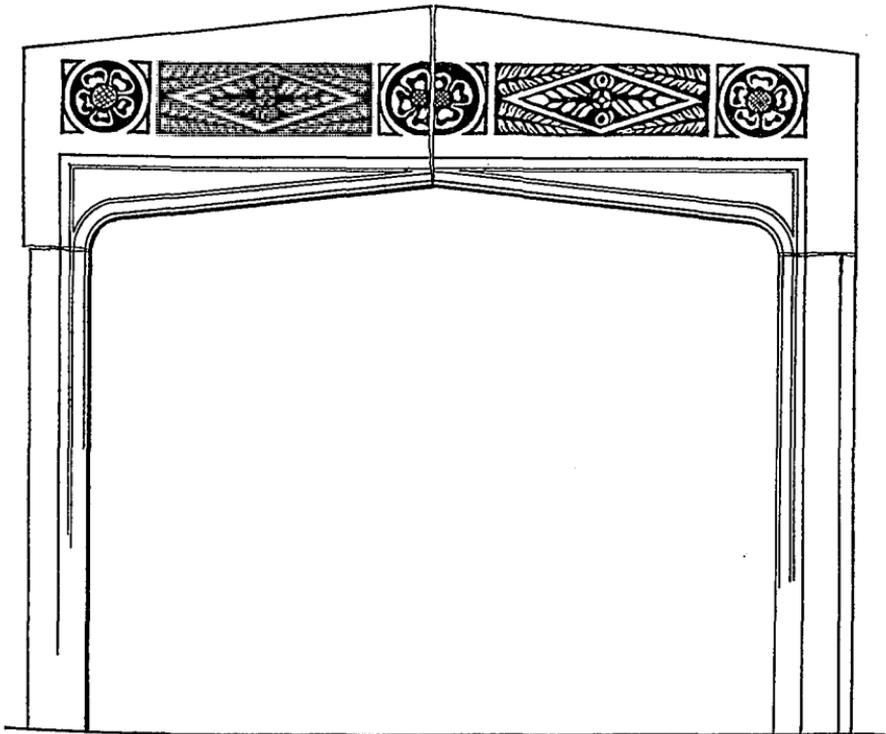
beast the unicorn of the Poynings' standard.¹ Below is a ribbon which appears to bear a motto, now indecipherable. Sir Edmund's use of supporters may have been due to his expectation of a peerage, which was not realised. The whole is a vigorous piece of carving; and the arms no doubt represent Sir Edmund Poynings, who became Chancellor of the Garter in 1517 and made alterations in Westenhanger between that date and his death in 1521.

One or two moulded bricks from the mullions and jambs of an Elizabethan brick window were found, and in one of the floors, acting as a joist, was discovered the newel-post of a stair, which, instead of being carved, had painted upon it in blue colour a running pattern of strapwork. One end was complete, with its charming pendant finial. In addition to these survivals were some moulded door-jambs, two of which were finished, towards the opening, with a large hollow, such as is used for modern swing-doors. It is possible they were employed with a door, which turned on pins, let into floor and beam sockets. One of these jambs has an elaborate stop to its mouldings, with a heart carved on the splayed panel of the stop. A similar ornament occurs on a doorway at Bridge Place.

The *Book of Bourne* contains a fund of information concerning all the changes in the house and estate, the discovery of antiquities, and the introduction of improvements, which should throw an interesting light for our descendants on the running of a large house in the nineteenth century. The most amusing passages are those in which Matthew Bell gives, with engaging candour, his opinions (as client) concerning men he consulted, such as Sir Gilbert Scott, who repaired the Church, and W. A. Nesfield who furnished designs for the gardens. Three tinted drawings of Nesfield's appear in the book, and some extensive observations of his on "landscape gardening," which Mr. Bell treats with much good humoured ridicule.

¹ General Fane Lambarde tells me that a seal of the sixth Earl of Northumberland (in which he quarters Poynings, FitzPaine and Bryan for the Poynings lordship) bears the same supporters in place of the Percy lion.

It is perhaps worth noting in conclusion that Sir John Prestige has made certain alterations, which bring the interior of the house back to what is much more nearly its old arrangement, and that he has replaced the somewhat



Scale of Feet

BOURNE PARK.—STONE FIREPLACE.

Drawn by E. F. Harvey.

ostentatious entrance doorway, which Mr. Bell inserted, with one of practically the date of the house, rescued from the recent demolition in Crutched Friars, London.

NOTE.—The illustrations were drawn by E. F. Harvey from sketches and measurements by the writer.—ED.