

## CHAPTER 3.

# THE CHURCH

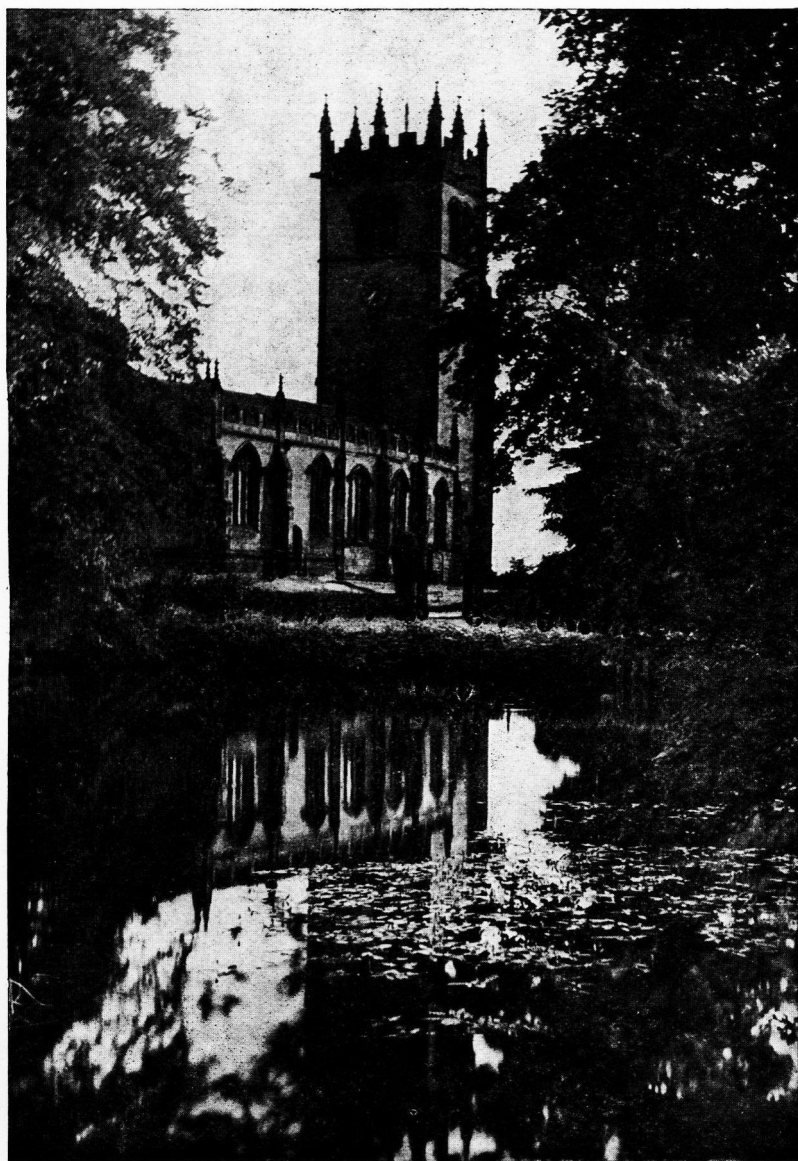
### (Part 1)

**G**AWSWORTH Church is a beautiful building in an incomparable setting. No matter from which direction the church is approached the view is delightful, and the charm of the situation is generally acclaimed as being one of the most beautiful in England.

Standing on rising ground, the church is approached by a flight of stone steps from the west, and a pleasant winding drive from the lych gate to the north. Immediately in front of the building are the silent pools, and the lanes leading to the site, apart from the famous avenue of limes, have a wealth of old trees, with sycamore, beech, oak and chestnut predominating.

It has been truly said that few who have ever visited this delightful locality but recall with pleasure the picturesque scene, in which the church forms the principal feature, presenting to the spectator an exceptional combination of pictorial effect in nature and art, surrounded as it is with the waters of the foreground, in which every line of the historic building is reflected. The mind in the warmth of its admiration is instinctively brought to thoughts of the past, and a desire to know something of its foundation and early history.

The present building, dedicated to St. James, is entirely fifteenth century, and save in minor detail remains exactly as it was remodelled in the Perpendicular style. The first church to be erected at Gawsworth was a chapel of ease to Prestbury, the Mother Church of Macclesfield and district, situated some six miles to the north in the Bollin Valley. Gawsworth appears to have obtained independence, and become a rectory



Gawsworth Tower.

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before the fifteenth century,<sup>1</sup> possibly as early as circa 1300. The existing building reveals no trace of the Norman structure, and in its fifteenth century remodelling several problems regarding the original plan remain unsolved. The nave is the oldest part dating from 1430, and is built of ironstone. The chancel and tower were added towards the end of the same century, and are constructed of pink sandstone. In plan the church consists of a nave and undivided chancel, south porch and western tower. Gawsworth has the widest nave of any church in the Diocese, being exactly 30 feet at the west end and only a little less at the east end; the total length of the combined nave and chancel being 78 feet.

The present structure is entirely fifteenth century. The actual dates are of importance. Most antiquaries are agreed that the present nave was added to the original Norman chancel about the year 1430. The tower followed about the year 1475, and the chancel possibly before the end of the century. Elias Ashmole, however, in his notes about Gawsworth, taken c. 1654 (Ashmole MSS 854, Bodleian Library), recorded copies of two interesting inscriptions which formerly existed in the church, both of which are now destroyed. The earliest is thus described:

<sup>1</sup> In the records of St. Werburgh's Abbey, at Chester, it is stated that on the 15th May, 1265, Simon de Whitchurch was elected the thirteenth abbot. He is named at considerable length in the chartulary. This election took place in the forty-second year of his age and twenty-second after his profession, and he died in 1289, aged sixty-nine, and was buried with great honours in the chapter-house. This name is of importance to us as being attached to the first official record we have of Gawsworth Church, which was dedicated to St. James. The deed was an agreement between the Abbot and John de Birchill relative to tithes, in 1279, in which the last-named person is styled "presb'r capellae de Gousworth." This would be in the reign of Edward I., hitherto being known as a "chapel," and, from certain architectural features of the earliest part of the building dating about the latter part of the eleventh century. Domesday and other records mention several chapels or chantries in the neighbourhood, such as Marton, Bosley, Rode, Siddington, Chelford &c. The first named was founded by Sir John Davenport in the thirteenth century, the last priest at the time of the Reformation being James Whitacres, who retired on a pension; and in the last named locality (Chelford) Edward Acton is recorded as "The preyst serving at Chelford in the pysshe of Ps'tburie." Gawsworth was also included in the same parish, of which Abbot Simon was impropriator. The career of this ecclesiastic, although a little chequered in the beginning, was marked by great energy of character. After his death the King retained the Abbey in his own hands for two years. About 108 years after a claim was made on Gawsworth by the authorities of St. Werburgh's relative to interments, the "morturies" and "oblations" being demanded as the "immemorial" right of Prestbury, and it was agreed with John Eaton, the then Rector of Gawsworth, on April the 17th, 1382, that in future he might bury his own parishioners, paying a moiety within ten days after each burial, but that any parishioner of Gawsworth might be buried, according to his own wish, at Prestbury, without any claim on the part of Gawsworth. (Lynch).

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“on the south wall of the Chancell were painted the Figures of Fitton and Baguley, both Rectors of this church (George Baguley 1470 to 1497 and Randle Fitton, LL.D. 1497 to 1536) but they were washed out in the tyme of Parson Brookes (1643 to 1650) and under them these Verses.

To Rectors all these two may be,  
Rare patterns of greate Piety;  
The Chancell fitton raised from ground,  
The Rectory did Baguley found;  
Such Rectors should be but such are  
Wonders these days they be so rare;  
For charitie with us growes cold,  
Worse in this age that 'twas of old;  
Yet good cause why, the clergies store  
Is threefold less than 'twas before.”

If the chancel was built by Randle Fitton it must have been immediately following his institution and induction to the living of Gawsworth in 1497. The author inclines to the opinion that the present tower and chancel are coeval, and date from about 1475.<sup>1</sup>

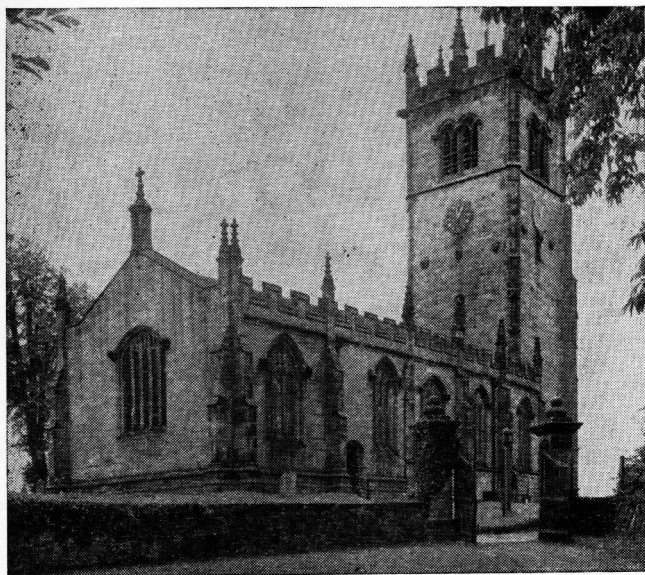
Joseph Lynch in his notes on Gawsworth, written in 1879, states: “The church would appear to have been considerably altered from its first form. The earliest part of the existing building is the nave, next to the tower for a distance of about 39 feet. There was formerly a screen beyond this point dividing the church. There are evidences that it was originally constructed with a nave, aisles and chancel.”

There can be very little agreement with Lynch concerning the existence of a conjectured aisle. The existing nave roof, which is the original one of 1430 or thereabouts, would have lacked balance if an arcade placed on the south side had reached up to its delicate members. There is little doubt that the original Norman chapel was not unlike the one which still survives in the yard at Prestbury, and when this became too small the present nave at Gawsworth was added, and its great width of 30 feet enabled the builders to place side altars at the north-east and south-east corners with windows above. This would agree with the positions of the piscinas in the north and south walls.

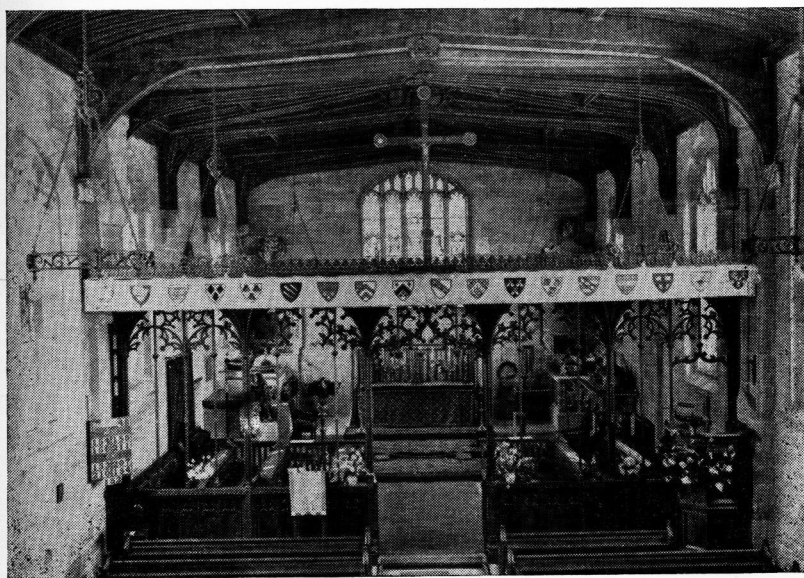
The structure of the nave is designed in three bays with large three-light windows with four centred rather flattened heads, the mullions running through. The frames have the Cheshire deep hollow both inside

<sup>1</sup> The church walls having become dirty, largely as a result of the heating pipes and radiators the whole of the interior was most thoroughly cleaned in 1954, and when this was completed the texture of the stone was revealed in its original colour. The ironstone blocks of masonry in the lower courses of the chancel, suggest that when the west wall was pierced to permit the introduction of the tower arch, the stone removed was re-used in the new chancel. This evidence seems to be conclusive proof that the tower and chancel are work of the same period—circa 1475.





Exterior from the North East.



Interior of the Church looking East.

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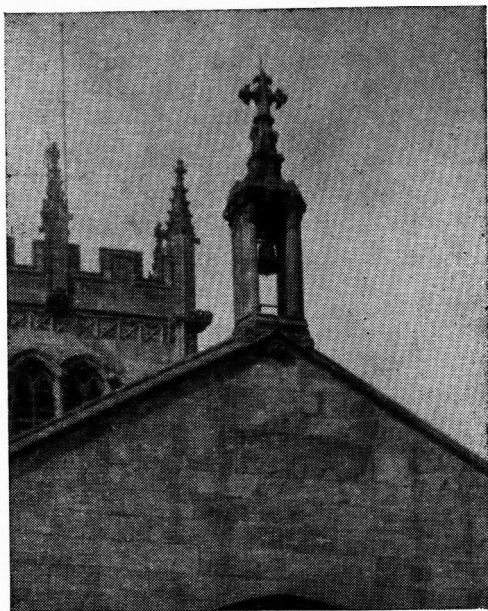
and out with steeply stepped weathered cill. There are variations of detail to be noticed in the nave. On the north side the buttresses have a single off-set, on the south side none. The windows vary in width and the northern mouldings differ from the southern, the windows also on the north being set lower down at the head than the south.

There are many differences in detail between the new chancel and the nave. The walling is not homogenous; after passing the diagonal buttresses the base mouldings alter and also the size of the windows. There is a difference in the roof levels but this is not shown on the battlements which continue at the same level but with narrower merlons. The string course of the nave which continued round the buttresses is omitted altogether. The nave windows average 8ft., the chancel 6ft. Both sets have three lights without transoms although they are 13ft. in height. The tracery of the chancel windows is set out at a lower level and is of simpler design, all however have hood-moulds. The framing is different, the hollows are omitted and on the inside a simple splay is used, the stepped cills are however continued. The total height of the southern facade is 27ft., the bays averaging 12ft. across.

The buttresses are 27in. in projection and 18in. in width, they vary, some have no off-set only the top slope, others have an off-set half way up. Although the diagonals of the first returns remain, the new chancel had angle buttresses facing each way; all buttresses finish in tall pinnacles set square, rising well above the parapets which are 45in. in height. The merlons are 42in. across and 24in. high, the embrasures 14in. across. There is a wealth of grotesque carving on label stops and gargoyles, the execution being above the average. Both nave and chancel have north and south doorways, the priest's chancel door to the north, the squire's door to the south. In the nave the south doorway is covered by a porch, unfortunately rebuilt in 1851 with the usual lack of understanding. It has a Tudor doorway set in a square frame with a niche above; the sides have two-light windows with low pointed heads. The diagonal buttresses finish in pinnacles and there are good base moulds. The parapet is deeply set, and does not look right, the second layer of masonry being a modern idea. It is plain with a continuous coping similar to the east-end gable.<sup>1</sup>

The tower is architecturally possibly the finest part of Gawsworth Church. It measures 98½ feet to the embattled parapet and over 104 feet to the terminal of the pinnacles—the texture of the sandstone used

<sup>1</sup> Architectural Report of the late Fred Crossley, F.S.A.



East End Sanctus Bell Cot and Cross.



Parish Stocks—situated against the North boundary wall of the Church. From a drawing, circa 1850.

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in its construction changes from dark red in the lower part to golden pink in the upper courses, and the rich colours of the stone are seen at their best in the glowing western light of a summer's evening. The west face consists of a four-centred low headed doorway set in a square frame with quatrefoils in the spandrels, and a deeply carved frieze above, over which is the bold string course continuing round the buttresses to the north and south faces of the tower.

The organ chamber is lighted by a fine three light window with elegant perpendicular tracery. Immediately above this is a tall narrow niche with a rich canopy, the lower portion of which supports a shield borne by a demi-angel, upon which are incised the following arms:

Quarterly, 1st & 4th de Orreby.

2nd, Argent a canton gules, overall on a bend azure  
three garbs or, FITTON.

3rd, Azure, three spades argent, BECHTON.

Above this niche appear three carved shields, displaying the arms of:

- (1) de Orreby impaling Fitton of Pownall;  
Parted per pale, three coats, the first Argent, two chevrons and a canton gules, de Orreby; the second, parted per fess, in chief argent, a bend azure, thereon three garbs or, a crescent for difference—FITTON; in base Argent, three birds heads sable erased, beaked or. ERDESWICK.
- (2) de Orreby impaling (?) Newton of Pownall;  
Parted per pale, two coats, the first de Orreby, the second (Argent) a lion rampant (sable). NEWTON.
- (3) de Orreby impaling Egerton;  
Parted per pale, two coats, the first de Orreby, the second Argent, a lion rampant gules, a pheon sable, EGERTON.

The bold string course below the belfry lights is continuous on all four sides, the belfry windows being double, each of two lights with separate hood moulds. There is a second frieze under the top string, and the heavy embattled parapet terminates with eight splendid pinnacles, elaborated with ball flower ornament.

The gargoyles, also eight in number, of great size depict devils in fearsome postures, their immense mouths ejecting the water from the cambered lead roof of the tower.

On the south side of the tower two shields, placed low—

(1) Argent, two bars gules, MAINWARING.

(2) Argent, two chevrons and a canton gules, de ORREBY.

Above the two light window of the ringers' chamber are three carved shields—

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- (1) de Orreby impaling Bechton.  
Parted per pale; two coats, the first de Orreby;  
the second Azure, three spades argent BECHTON
- (2) de Orreby impaling Fitton  
Parted per pale; two coats, the first de Orreby,  
the second Argent, a canton gules, over all on a  
bend azure, three garbs or, FITTON.
- (3) de Orreby impaling Weever.  
Parted per pale; two coats, the first de Orreby,  
the second Sable, two bars argent, on a canton  
of the first a garb of the second. WEEVER.

Immediately above the middle shield is a square quatre foiled window, repeated on the other faces of the tower but hidden on the west, east and north sides by the clock faces.

On the east side is a narrow doorway giving access to the nave roof, and half way up the tower three more carved shields of arms—

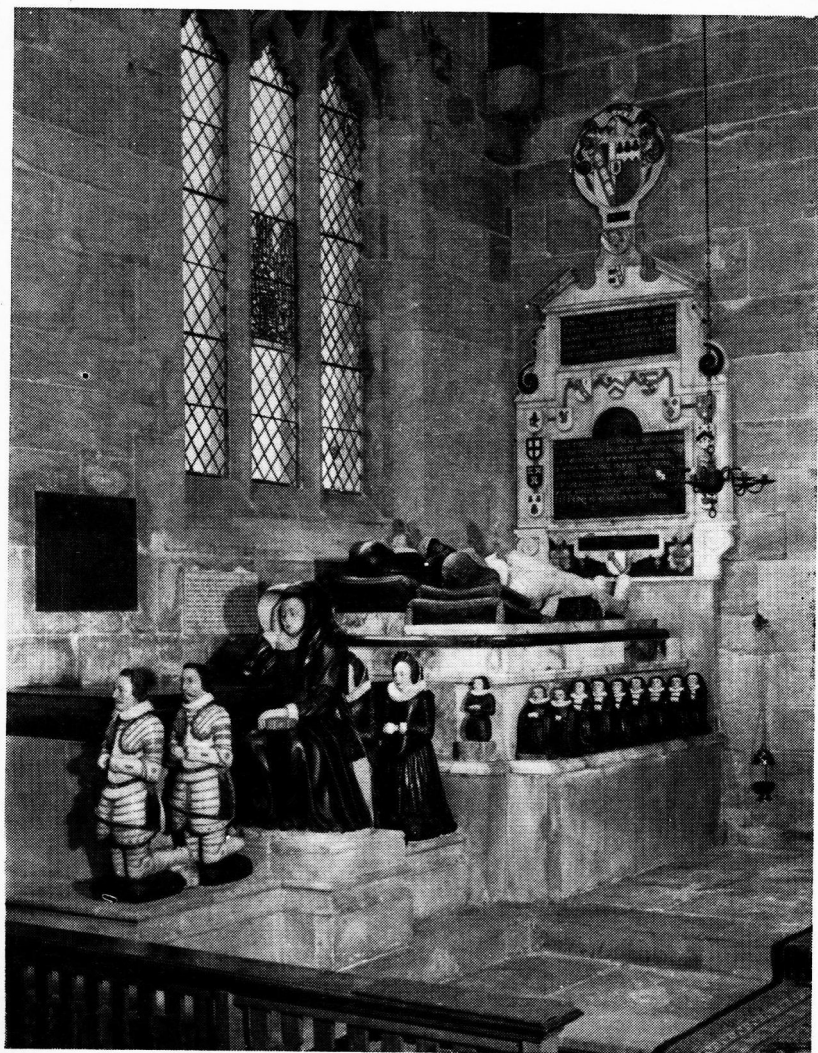
- (1) de Orreby impaling Davenport of Bromhall.  
Parted per pale; three coats, the first de Orreby;  
the second parted per fesse, in chief Argent on a  
chevron between three cross crosslets fitchie sable  
a crescent for difference. DAVENPORT. In base Sable  
a lion rampant or. BROMHALL.
- (2) Randle Blunderville.  
Azure three garbs or.
- (3) de Orreby impaling Pulford.  
Parted per pale; two coats, the first de Orreby, the  
second Sable a cross pratonce argent PULFORD.

The north face of the tower is enriched with two shields.

- (1) RODE. Argent two quatrefoils sable, a chief of the  
second.
- (2) ? Davenport of Boughton.  
(Argent) a chevron hurnette, with two lozenges in fesse,  
between three crosses botanny fitchie (sable).

The buttresses to the tower are diagonal with three offsets, and at the belfry stage form shafts for the corner pinnacles. Carved niches are placed in each buttress some 40 feet from ground level. The vice is placed in the south west corner with lighting slits on both faces. To accommodate the bold spiral staircase, the double belfry windows on the west and south faces of the tower are grouped a little out of centre. At the foot of the vice is found a medieval door, complete with its original wrought iron fittings. Another unusual feature found in the spiral staircase is an uncommon quarter round door, cleverly placed in the structure immediately before the ringers' chamber.





The Fitton Monuments in the Chancel looking North East.





The Fitton Monuments in the Chancel looking South East.

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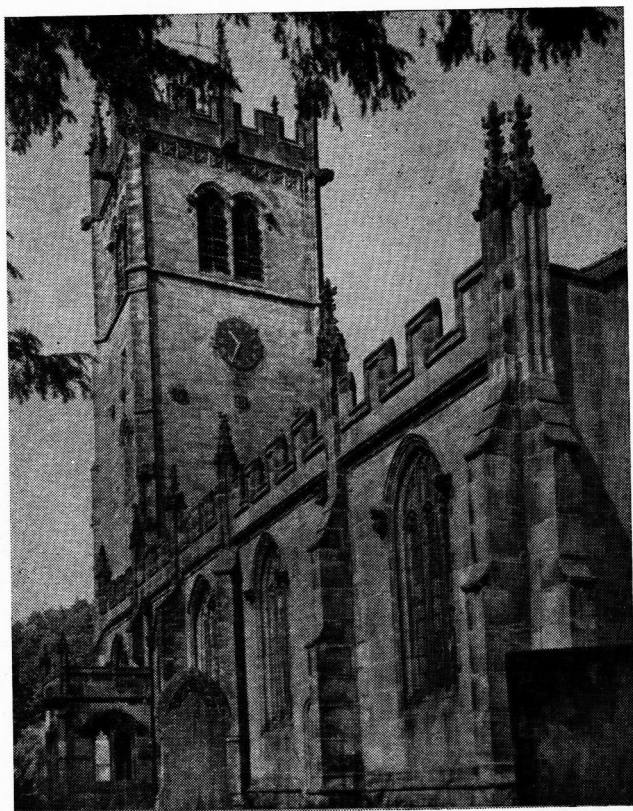
There is a ring of eight bells restored in 1956 and put into good order, dated and inscribed as follows:<sup>1</sup>

1. J.M. & R.T. Wardens 1907.
2. H.E.P. Rector 1907.
3. Mears & Stainbank Whitechapel Foundry London.  
Make a joyful noise unto God. 1776—1890.
4. Mears & Stainbank Whitechapel Foundry London.  
Peace and good neighbourhood. 1776—1890.
5. Mears & Stainbank Whitechapel Foundry London.  
Ring out the false, ring in the true. 1776—1890.
6. C. & G. Mears Founders London. 1857.
7. Mears & Stainbank Whitechapel Foundry London.  
Ring every bell and sweetly tell, 1776—1890.  
That Christ hath conquered death and hell.  
Tenor. Mears & Stainbank Whitechapel Foundry London.  
I to the church the living call 1776—1890.  
And to the grave do summon all.

The exterior of the church possesses an abundance of window drip-stones and the corbels depict most amusing examples of the art and humour of the medieval carver. They all deserve careful study as they depict the eccentricities, thoughts and customs of a by-gone age. By the north door may be seen the features of the village scold, the medieval sculptor having flawlessly cut in stone the likeness of a brawling woman with bottled nose and thin-lipped mouth,—probably a well-known character living in the village in the early fifteenth century. Other exterior carvings on the window corbels depict a mermaid complete in every detail, an unmistakable likeness of Father Christmas, with a bag of gifts slung over his shoulder; a jester, a baker, and an interpretation of Cheshire's famous legend of the bird and the baby.

There is no mistaking in the north west window the bold carving of a young drummer boy, and on the companion corbel the splendid carving of the bagpipe cherub. Inebriation is depicted in the head of a local celebrity of the day, who no doubt dozed off the effects of meat and mead with his tongue hanging out. The interpretation of the gluttonous figure with his immense stomach suggests a surfeit of rich living. Many of the other corbels interpret men and women of remarkable beauty, possibly members of the Fitton family in company with royalty and nobility. On the south corbel of the west window of the south porch may be seen the heads of Henry VII and his Queen, placed within the petals of a rose, suggesting the porch was first erected in 1485, and set up by the Fitton family to commemorate the termination of the Wars

<sup>1</sup> A more detailed account of the bells is provided at the end of this chapter on page 138.



Exterior from the South East.

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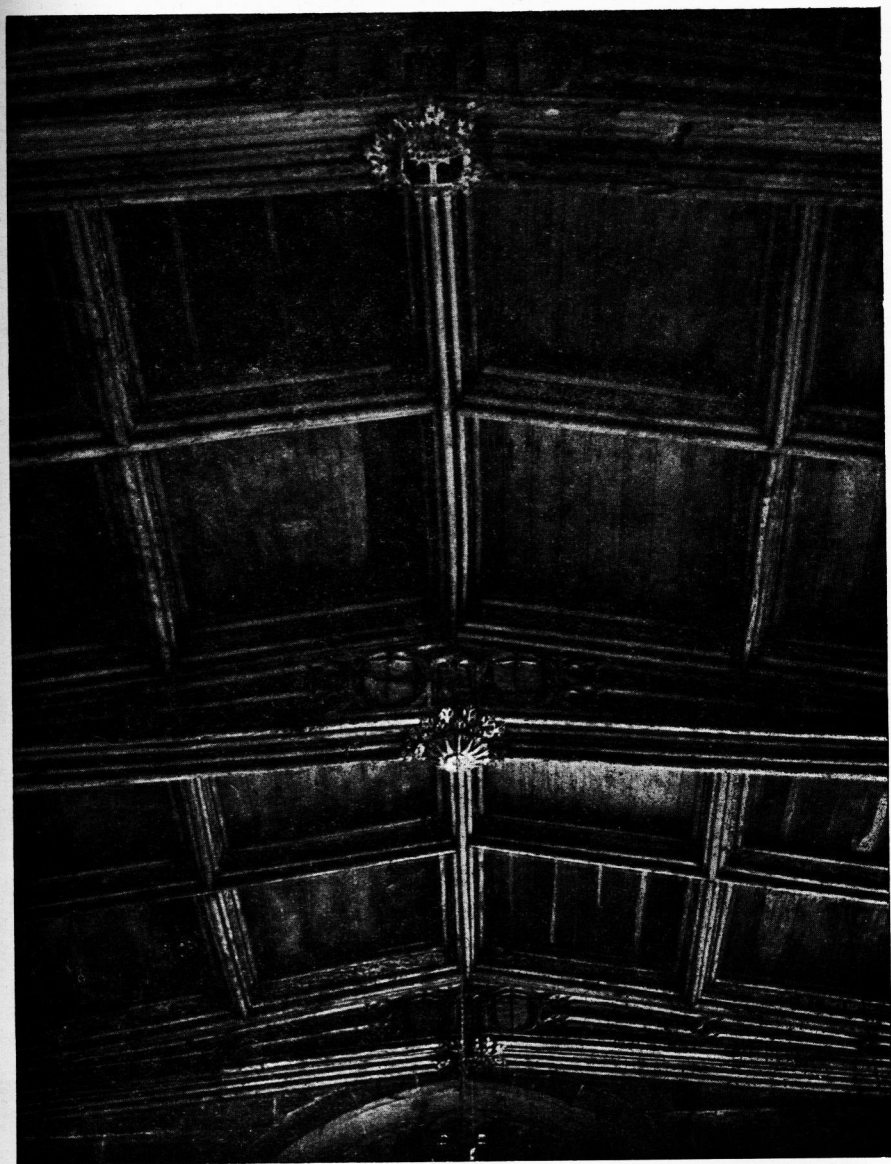
of the Roses. This charming porch was the only part of the old fabric to be taken down and unsympathetically rebuilt in the all too sweeping and vigorous smartening up of the church in 1851, much of it having to be repaired again as recently as 1956.

A conspicuous feature at the east end of the chancel roof is the lovely slender sanctus bell cote dating from 1430, and surmounted by a still more ancient stone cross, thought to have been placed originally at the east end of the present nave. The bell cote is of exceptional beauty, and at the elevation of the Host the bell is still rung by the Server.

The noble church roofs at Gawsworth are in good preservation, the splendid barrel beam roof over the nave, measuring forty-one feet three inches in length and twenty-nine feet three inches in width, being the only one of its kind in Cheshire. It is divided into three bays, the ridge and two purlins running across each bay, the intermediate rafters are barely distinguishable from the common rafters. There are five rafters on either side of the intermediate framework making eleven to a bay. All the timbering is moulded and there were originally six bosses on the purlins. The rafters are slightly curved between each purlin giving a slightly barrel form. The principals are cambered and deeply moulded on the lower edge with an excellent boss cut in the solid in the centre, the face sides being plain. The beams are housed into long wall-posts resting upon stone corbels from which spring stout curved braces, the lowest moulding of the principals being continued down the edge of the brace.

The roof was originally richly decorated in colour and gilt, traces of which may yet be seen on the face sides of the beams and braces.<sup>1</sup> On the face side of the three great principal beams are figures of angels and saints, which may be seen distinctly from the organ loft on a clear afternoon. The paintings are particularly clear in frosty weather and when snow lies on the ground. Trails and borders decorate the spandrels, and traces of gold and colour are to be observed upon the rafters, board-

<sup>1</sup> Careful photography of the pre-Reformation paintings on the west face of the cambered beams of the nave roof, particularly the great beam over the screen, reveals this beam to be painted with what appear to be figures of saints in glory with aureoles. The paintings on the west face of the middle beam over the nave are less easily defined, but the attitude of the figures still discernible indicates hands raised in supplication, or piety to a central figure which is no longer recognizable. A very old parishioner, Mark Pierson, remarked before his death, "On that second beam there were such animals and figures as never were in earth or water—fearful things I saw on that, Rector, fearful things."



15th Century Beam Roof of the Church.



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ing and bosses. The walls were also originally frescoed with figure subjects, and the church in pre-Reformation times must have presented a rich and glowing mosaic of colour.

The chancel roof, dating from the end of the fifteenth century, is in three bays, and measures 36 feet 6 inches in length and 29 feet 6 inches in width. It is a panelled camber-beam roof of the usual Cheshire type, each bay divided by an intermediate rafter with four purlins, making twelve panels of equal size. The ridge, purlins, and rafters are of the same scantling. These are well-moulded and along the sides of all the timbers runs an arabesque in the form of a delicate border of fretted enrichment. The wall-plates appear to have been renewed last century. The principals are cambered on both edges and are deeply moulded in hollows and rounds with a centre boss. One boss represents a chalice encompassed by clouds, and surrounded by twelve small delicate leaves. The face sides of the beams are enriched with blind tracery with a panel of chequering in the centre and a circle on either side containing shields. The beams are housed into strong moulded wall-posts resting upon new stone corbels from which spring elegantly curved braces, the lower moulding of the beams being continued down the braces and wall-posts. The spandrels of the braces are carved with tracery containing a shield within a circle.

Originally the church possessed five doorways in general use. Apart from the great west door which was reopened on Palm Sunday, 1954, having been closed earlier this century to permit the introduction of a heating radiator, and the south porch entrance, the doorway generally in use is the small one with a pointed head in the north wall. The oak door was renewed last century, and the ancient one it replaced was used until 1951 in the Old Rectory garden. Riddled with tack and nail holes from the securing of countless notices, it has now been put into the stable loft to prevent its entire collapse. Polehampton writing in 1924 said the original great west doors were in his day passing their old age in the ancient Tythe Barn, but no trace remains of these venerable specimens of antiquity in or around the Old Rectory precincts to-day.

The two chancel doors were walled up on the inside with the original doors in situ by Curate Massie in 1851, Polehampton reopening the priests door on the north side shortly after his arrival in Gawsworth in 1904. The south door or Squire's door could easily be put into use again but as the removal of the stonework would possibly make the



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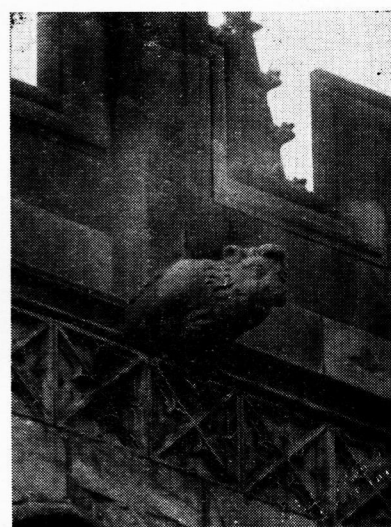
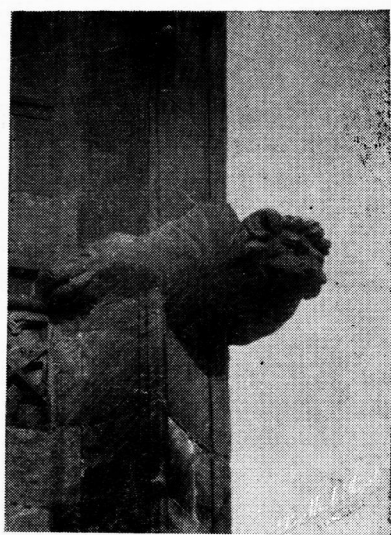
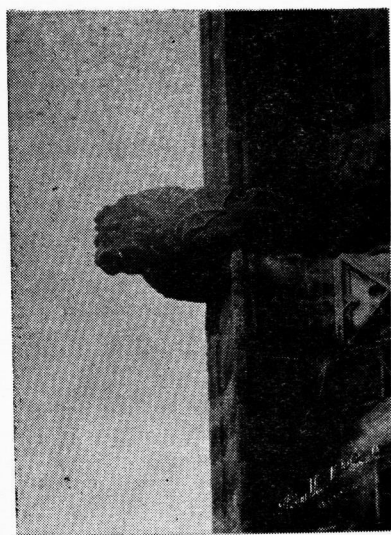
chancel draughty, particularly the manorial pew which is situated immediately to the south of the doorway, no decision has yet been reached.

The Fitton monuments, four in number, are situated within the sacarium, two on either side, and those nearest the east wall were formerly canopied and richly ornamented. All were mutilated in the 1851-5 restoration, and when several missing parts of the tomb chests and some of the elaborations of the old canopies were found in the Rectory stables in 1954 it was decided that a careful repair of the monuments was overdue. Accordingly, with the assistance of a grant of £500 most generously contributed by the Pilgrim Trustees, the work of cleaning and restoring the tomb chests and effigies was undertaken by Alan Brough, the Prestbury sculptor, who worked on their repair for many months. He also made a new head for the kneeling figure of Richard Fitton, who died in 1610, the younger brother of the first Baronet, the original head having been mutilated beyond all form of recognition. Miss Susan Blacking, assisted by Miss Isobel Brett, following their splendid work at Gloucester and Windsor, stayed in Gawsworth for several weeks whilst the delicate work of recolouring the damaged part of the monuments was undertaken.<sup>1</sup> I would emphasise that the lovely kneeling figure of Mary Fitton, the so-called "Dark Lady" of Shakespeare's Sonnets, having been so well preserved, beyond washing her face no recolouring or touching up of any kind was thought advisable.<sup>2</sup>

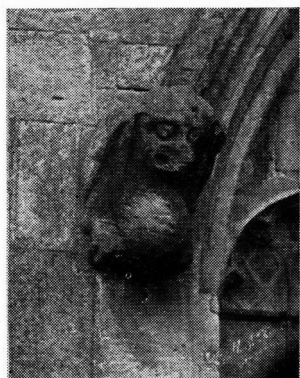
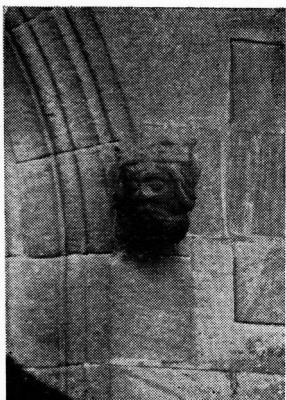
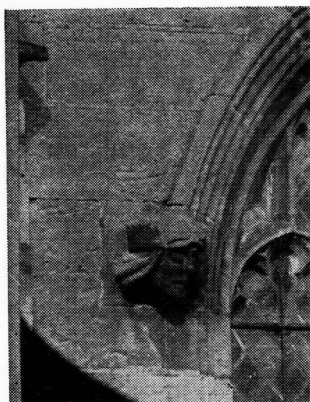
The oldest monument at Gawsworth is to the memory of Francis Fitton who died in 1608, and this is situated on the south side of the chancel adjacent to the walled-up squire's doorway. It is the only example in Cheshire of a table tomb. The slab above holds the effigy of the knight and rests upon six pillars with Corinthian caps. These support a series of depressed arches, ornamented with armorial bearings, the spandrels with foliage and flowers, the whole coloured. Beneath is a cadaver or skeleton in a shroud, the skull now missing. It is curious to observe that from an anatomical point of view, the spine of the skeleton displays the ribs fixed the wrong way. The tomb is adorned with shields

<sup>1</sup> Sir James Mann, K.C.V.O., M.A., B.Litt., Master of the Armouries at the Tower of London, very kindly gave much useful advice on the work of restoring the effigies when he stayed with the author in July, 1954.

<sup>2</sup> The age old problem was she dark or was she fair may continue to exercise the resources of Shakespearean scholars now and in the future, with no complaint that the author, the Rector and their advisers in the 1954 restoration authorised any alteration in the colour texture of the hair or face of this figure.



Tower Gargoyles.



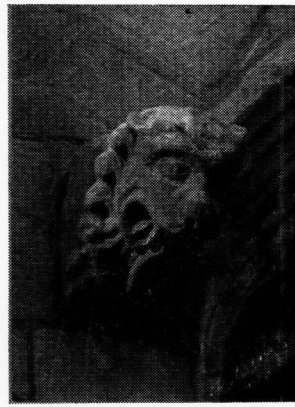
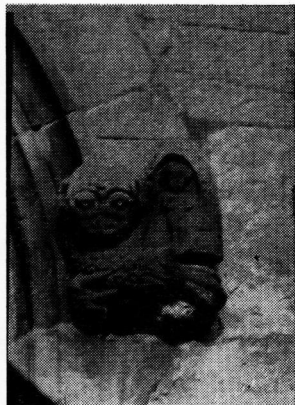
Corbels.

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of arms of Neville and Fitton, Francis having married in 1588 Katherine, widow of Henry (Percy), Seventh Earl of Northumberland, and eldest daughter and co-heir of John (Neville), Fourth Baron Latimer. The material of the tomb is part alabaster and part stone. Lynch, in his *Gawsworth* notes of 1879, states:

“It is perfectly clear that this tomb has been removed from its original site. The whole construction proves that it must have formerly stood in an open space, at all events that three sides were accessible. I was told by the oldest parishioners that they heard from their boyhood this tomb was brought from the Duke of Northumberland’s to Gawsworth. This tradition still exists. Be this as it may, I am inclined to think that its first position in the church was near the altar, on the south side, and at the death of the late Sir Edward Fitton was removed to its present site to make room for the larger tomb. I found the strongest evidence of its having been conveyed from a distance, independent of it totally differing in material, construction and style from the others.”

Personally I can find no evidence to support the views of Lynch that the monument was brought from Northumberland. The tomb, however, was certainly placed in a different position, and exposed on three sides. The recent cleaning suggests that when the monument was first set up it was placed with the feet of the effigy against the east wall of the chancel, and later moved into its present position when the great canopied tomb of the second and last Baronet, Sir Edward Fitton, was set up in 1663. The elaboration seen on the north side of the tomb is repeated on the south side now placed against the chancel wall, and in consequence it is not possible to interpret the shields of arms hidden by this change of position. The spandrels enriched with foliage and flowers can be traced by feeling beneath the table slab on which rests the splendid effigy of Francis Fitton. The head of the knight reposes upon a large helm; the hair half-length, moustache and clipped beard. Round the neck a gorget of mail but no ruff. The cuirass bulging in front with large pauldrons almost meeting across the chest, with seven laminations. Large elbow-kops, the hands in gauntlets. A thin waist-line, round which is a narrow strap terminating in six loops round the scabbard of the sword. The tassels are large, shaped at the extremities in half-rounds, behind which is very wide trunk-hose, slashed and enriched. The tassels are as usual strapped to the cuirass. The thighs are protected with plate both back and front, being hinged together but not laminated. The knee-kops large, the lower legs covered or protected with thick leather leggings turned back at the tops disclosing a red lining. Spurs and straps are placed round the ankles. The whole of the armour in last century’s



Window Corbels.





Before Restoration. Table tomb of Francis Fitton 1608. The only example of its kind in Cheshire. Originally placed with the feet against the east wall. The cadaver is cut in alabaster.





After Restoration. The tomb of Francis Fitton, 1608. The elaboration seen on the squandrels of the tomb is repeated on the south side now placed against the chancel wall, and in consequence it is not possible to interpret the shields of arms hidden by this change of position. The arms displayed to the left are those of Fitton with the quarterings of family alliances. The other shield displays the Northumberland arms, Francis Fitton having married Katherine, widow of the Earl of Northumberland.

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restoration had been given a thick coat of brown treacly paint, and when this was removed in the recent cleaning, much of the original colour was revealed. Apart from the customary gilding, the strappings of the armour were found to be beautifully painted with delightful floral decoration, and this proving so fine and unusual no attempt was made to "touch up" the original work in any way.

On the tomb of Francis Fitton are three painted shields, two of which are identical, Fitton with nine quarterings; 1. Fitton, a Mullet for difference; 2. de Orreby; 3. Legh; 4. Bechton; 5. Siddington; 6. Harbottle; 7. Welwick; 8. Manboucher; 9. Lilleburne. In writing of this memorial Earwaker says of the third shield "Fitton impaling Percy", this is obviously incorrect. Dr. Ormerod in his monumental History of Cheshire states "on the arches supporting the tomb the arms of Fitton and Neville", but makes no attempt to identify the quarterings. Francis Fitton married, in 1855, Katherine, the eldest daughter and one of the four co-heiresses of John Neville, Lord Latimer, widow of Henry, seventh Earl of Northumberland, and without doubt this is her coat:—

1. NEVILLE. Gules, a saltire argent.
2. NEVILLE (Ancient). Or fretty gules, on a canton an ancient ship, sable.
3. FITZALAN. Gules, a lion rampant or.
4. BEAUCHAMP. Gules cruasily (3 & 3) and a fesse or.
5. de WARWICKE (Newburgh). Chequy or and azure, a chevron ermine.
6. BERKELEY. Gules a chevron between ten cross crosslets, argent.
7. LISLE. Or, a fesse between two chevrons, sable.
8. (?) FITZGERALD. Gules a lion passant guardant argent.
9. de VERE. Quarterly gules and or, in the first quarter a mullet argent.
10. (?) CARIADOC. Sable, a lion rampant argent.
11. SANDFORD. Barry and wavy of six argent and azure.
12. BADLESMERE. Argent, a fesse gemelled gules.
13. de CLARE. Or, three chevronels gules.
14. (?) CHAMPERNOUNE. This is very indistinct, but appears to be Lozengy gules and or, a saltire sable. It may possibly be chequy or fretty.
15. HOWARD. Gules, between six cross crosslets fitchie, a bend argent.
16. BOYS. Ermine, a cross sable.
17. WELWICK. Argent, three escallops argent.
18. (?) PLAITZ. Pale, or and gules, a lion (?) rampant/passant argent.
19. STAFFORD. Or, within a bordure engrailed sable, a chevron gules.
20. (?) BLYKE. Sable, a chevron argent, in chief three ?s faces, or.

Round the edge of the tomb is the following inscription:—

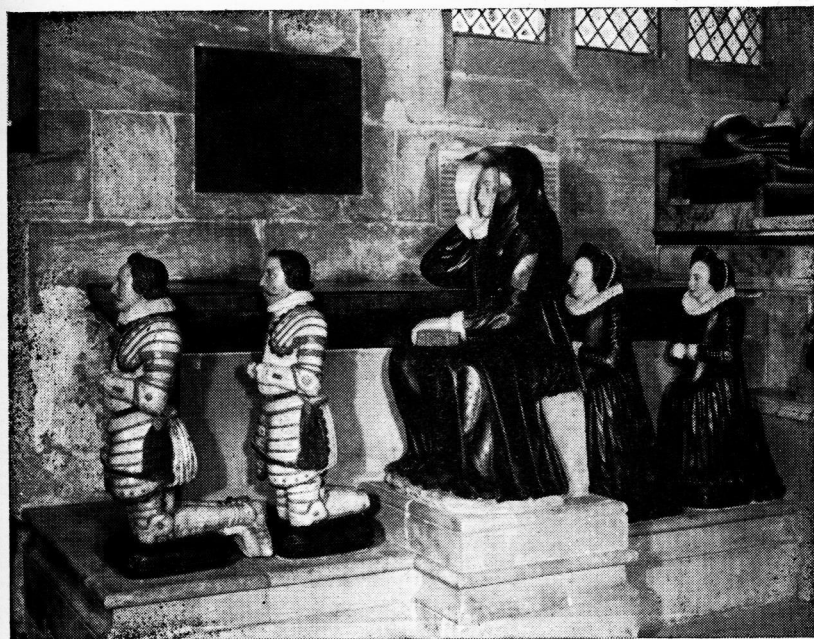
"Here lyeth Fraunces Fitton Esqir who married Katherine, Contes doager of Northumberland, and third brother of Sir Edward Fitton, deceased, of Gawsworth, Kt., Lord President of Conought."



Before Restoration. Tomb of Dame Alice Fitton 1626, and her husband Sir Edward Fitton Knight, who died in 1606. His effigy which formerly lay on the tomb chest appears to have been lost since the early eighteenth century.



After Restoration. The restored effigies grouped on the north east side of the chancel. The seated figure is that of Dame Alice Fitton, 1626, and the kneeling figures represent her four children. The second son Richard displays a new head and the face of Dame Alice has been skilfully restored. The small figure on the low pedestal seen on the second tomb nearest the east wall is that of Edward Fitton, the second and last Baronet, restored with a new head.



After Restoration. This tomb of Dame Alice Fitton, 1626, was originally erected with the kneeling figures of the children at each of the four corners. The sons are Edward and Richard (new head), and the daughters Anne and Mary, the latter Maid of Honour at the Court of Queen Elizabeth. Her lovely figure to the right is much admired as the possible "Dark Lady" of Shakespeare's Sonnets.

### *The Manor of Gawsworth*

Francis Fitton, who died June 17th, 1608, owned the manor of Bosley which he bequeathed to his nephew Sir Edward Fitton.

The monument occupying the same position on the opposite side of the chancel, on the north side and adjacent to the priest's door was set up to the memory of Sir Edward Fitton who died in 1606. His effigy is lost, and there is no record when it was last in situ at Gawsworth. The seated figure of his wife Dame Alice Fitton and the kneeling figures of their four children still survive. The entire tomb was complete in 1629, and Earwaker in his MS. Cheshire Church Notes described this from a seventeenth century record as follows:

"Sir Edward Fitton his monument in ye chauncell. Note ye two sones and two daughters are portraid on either side ye monument and ye sons are neare ye heade. Inscription in ye wall neere ye monument.

'Heere lyeth Edward Fytton knight sonne and heire of Sir Edward Fytton, Lord President of Connaugh and Treasurer of Ireland, who married Ales ye daughter and only heire of John Hovlcroft, knight, who had by her four children two sonnes and two daughters. He died Anno. 1605. Heere also lieth buried Holcroft Fytton eldest son of Edwarde Fytton Esq. and grandchilde of ye said Sir Edward and also Richard Fytton younger brother to ye said Edward Fytton Esq.'

Over this inscription was Fytton with ten quarterings, bearing Holcroft quarterly of four on a shield of pretence, and above the crest of Fytton on a cap of maintenance a pansy, and that of Holcroft a raven holding a sword."

The tomb was originally placed, together with the effigy of the knight, now missing, close to the east wall, and was exposed on all sides. The seated figure of Dame Alice occupied her present position on the south side of the monument, whilst the kneeling figures of the two sons were placed at the two western corners and the daughters at the eastern extremity of the monument.

It would appear that when the canopied tomb of the first baronet who died in 1619 was erected, the group of figures depicting Dame Alice Fitton and her four children was moved westwards and placed close against the north wall in similar manner to the table tomb of Francis Fitton. A fillet of stone was inserted to fill in the gap where the moulding of the tomb slab left a cavity against the wall, and the four figures of the children with their mother were crowded together on the south side. To make this possible the feet of Richard Fitton were cut off at the ankles, and his elder sister Anne awkwardly placed looking into her mother's back. The kneeling figure of Richard, who died in London in 1610, appears to have been most unkindly treated from the seventeenth century onwards, and as his head was quite unrecognizable as a result



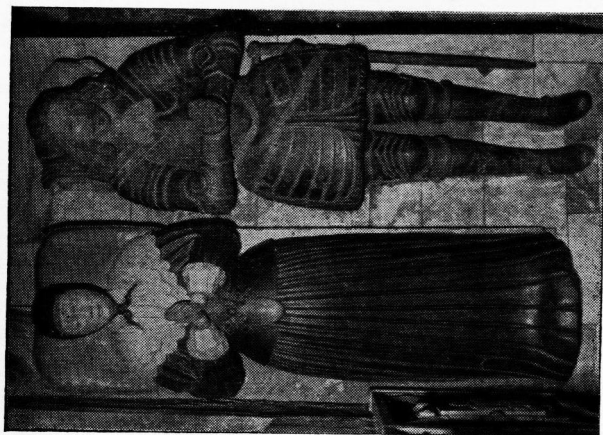
### *The Church*

of maltreatment we decided, after a good deal of thought, to cut him a new one. If posterity prefers the original, the mutilated damaged fragment is preserved in the church safe. I think, however, it will be conceded that the new work has been most carefully and sympathetically carried out. Certainly the old mutilated head can be replaced at any time without incurring damage to the kneeling figure. Dame Alice Fitton in the centre of the family group is modelled in stone on a larger scale than the children and is seated facing the nave with her elbow placed on the top slab, on which the recumbent figure of her husband was originally placed. She wears her hair well brushed back over a pad; over all a huge caul coming completely round the head and shoulders and held in position by wiring. Round her neck is a double ruff. The bodice is pleated and narrows at the waist, the sleeves are full with turned back cuffs. The skirts are long and full.

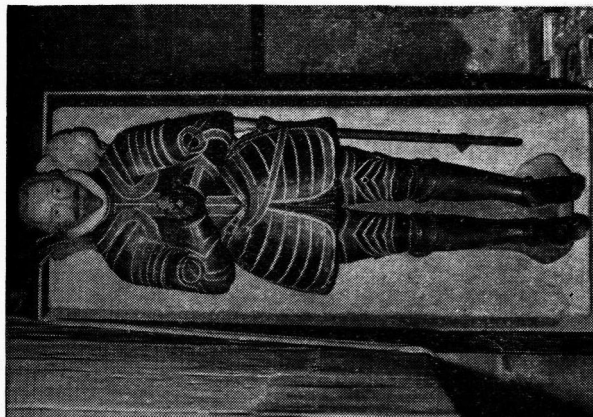
The children, fashioned in alabaster and looking west, kneel facing the head of the tomb, the two sons in front of the mother. They have bare heads, clean shaved except for a small moustache, the gorget hidden by a large turnover starched collar. The cuirass ridged, pointed and bulging out at the front over the waist. The pauldrons almost meeting in front, returning over the shoulders and fastened by a rivetted band. They are semi-circular in front and with the brassards laminated in four pieces and edged with a broad strip of scalloped leather. The vambraces are of plate, hinged and hooked, with a turned back cuff at the wrist. The elbow-kops are ornamented with a rosette, the edges cabled, as is the band round the arm. At the waist above the rim is a narrow sword belt and on the left side a wide and deep tassel or fringe to which the sword strap is attached; the swords are missing. The tassels are deep with six laminations, spreading out and enriched with scalloped leather edgings. The trunk hose at the back is pleated and voluminous, more like a skirt. The thighs are protected with laminated plates similarly enriched, the trunk hose being tight at the back. The knee-kops are almost pointed, and have wide ogee-shaped pas-guards. The greaves are plate, hinged and hooked, the shoes laminated and square toed.

The two daughters retain their original appearance with only trifling damage discernible. The cap hides much of the hair, being starched up into a high ruff over the forehead, with a close fitting cap behind it, the caul flowing down the back. The neck ruff is large and full, the bodice coming down in front to a sharp point; the sleeves are full and puffed. The hips are encircled with a farthingale of large proportions but without

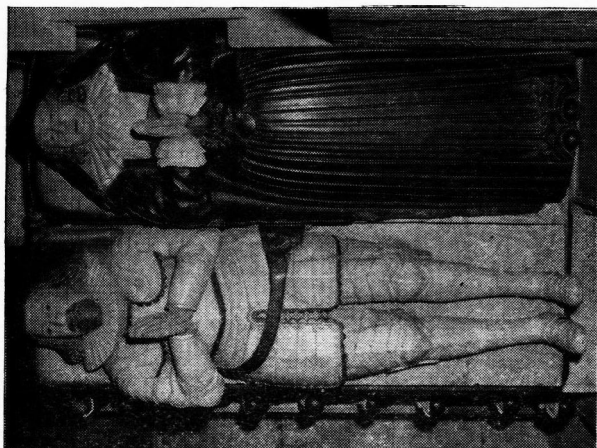
## THE RECUMBENT EFFIGIES AFTER RESTORATION



The effigies of Sir Edward and Lady Fitton. Jane Fitton, the wife, died in childhood, 1638. She was the daughter of Sir John Trevor, Co. Flint. Both effigies cut in stone have recovered much of their former distinction following cleaning. The gauntlets of Sir Edward have been renewed, a new right leg provided beneath the knee. His left leg which was fractured into three parts has been reassembled and secured.



This effigy of Francis Fitton, 1606, until the restoration appeared to be poorest in the church. Both the feet and the sword were missing, and the whole of the stone figure in the 1851 restoration had been given a liberal coating of paint. Apart from the usual gildings, the strappings of the armour were found to be beautifully painted with floral decoration, and no attempt has been made to "touch up" the original work in any way.



The recumbent effigies of Sir Edward Fitton, Baronet, 1619, and his wife, Anne. Both heads rest upon two cushions and both figures are complete in every detail. The armour is a splendid interpretation of Elizabethan work, the shoulders of the knight being protected with great pauldrons. The rich colouring of the tomb was revealed by careful cleaning.

### *The Church*

the extra frill or ruff; the skirts descending perpendicularly.

Sir Edward Fitton knt. was born 1550. In 1580 he was knighted, became Lord President of Munster and died in London March 4th, 1606. Buried at Gawsworth April 3rd. He married Alice, daughter and heiress of Sir John Holcroft of Holcroft in Lancashire, Knt. She was married in 1572 and buried at Gawsworth on January 4th, 1626-7. The children were, respectively, Edward who succeeded and was created a baronet in 1617, married Anne, daughter of James Barratt, and died in 1619; Richard, who died unmarried in London June 5th, 1610;<sup>1</sup> Anne, baptized at Gawsworth October 6th, 1574, married 1587 to Sir John Newdegate of Arbury, county Warwick, knt.; and Mary, baptized June 24th, 1578, Maid of Honour to Queen Elizabeth, married first William Polwhele, secondly Capt. Lougher.

Mary, the last figure in the group is the famous so-called "Dark Lady" who attracts world wide interest as the possible enchantress of Shakespeare's sonnets. Visitors who come especially to Gawsworth to inspect this charming Elizabethan kneeling figure, appear to be firmly divided into two categories—those determined to prove that Mary Fitton was Shakespeare's Dark Lady,<sup>2</sup> and those who are equally determined to prove that she could have played no part in inspiring the sonnets.

A few feet to the south of the tomb chest, and almost immediately beneath the spot where the brass chancel lectern stands, is the entrance to the Fitton vault. Tapping on the paving stones indicates the entrance, and this was opened during the Rectorship of Herbert Polehampton when Lancelot Banner of Macclesfield removed the tiles from the altar space and laid the present stone flooring.

Mr. Fred Smith, who was closely connected with Polehampton for many years at Gawsworth, and now lives in Pennington Lane at the north end of the parish, states that he was present at the opening of the vault, and that Polehampton said a Requiem in the burial chamber.

<sup>1</sup> The interpolated entry in the Gawsworth Register of burials reads: "Mr. Rich. Phitton second son to Sir Edward Ph. 4ti eius nom[in]is, educated by me W. Brownell p[ar]son and after in Oxon. was very skilful in distillations and surgerye And attended upon ye Erle of Mar. Died in London of a decease [sic] caled polipus: & Brought home & buried in G."

<sup>2</sup> The identification of the "darke lady" as Mary Fitton has proved to be a vexed question amongst Shakespearean authorities. The fact that Mary Fitton was the mistress of William Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke, and the claim that she is the "darke lady" mainly rest upon the theory that Pembroke was a patron of Shakespeare, and that the dramatist was probably well acquainted with his patron's mistress.

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The adjoining monument on the north side and next to the east wall, all fashioned in alabaster, is to the memory of Sir Edward Fitton, Bart., who died in 1619, and his wife Ann. Formerly canopied, Dr. Ormerod described it in 1819 as follows:

"A very large and sumptuous monument, consisting of a lofty arch of marble, raised on pillars, over which are the arms of Fitton, Argent on a bend Azure debruising a canton Gules, three garbs Or, impaling Barrett, Gules, on a Shield indented three escallops Sable. Crest gone (a cinquefoil in a cap of state). The badge of baronety on an escocheon of pretence.

Under the niche are the figures of Sir Edward Fitton and his lady, with hands clasped and heads reposing on pillows. Both have large ruffs; the knight is habited in plate armour.

On a ledge below, are ten small kneeling figures. The first, representing the last Sir Edward Fitton, is in armour; and two of the remaining nine are males, representing Richard and Thomas Fitton, his brothers.

Under the arch over the recumbent figures, are a profusion of armorial shields and two tablets; the upper one inscribed."

The head of the knight is bare resting upon two cushions, the hair worn long, moustache and beard. The neck is encircled with a wide compressed ruff. The cuirass is slightly pointed and bulges out over the waist-line. The shoulders are protected with elaborate pauldrons with seven laminations including the brassarts, trimmed with scalloped scarlet leather; the elbow-kops shaped, the hands bare. The cuirass springs out at the waist-line which has a narrow buckled belt. The tassels are strapped to the cuirass and at their extremities are nearly square, composed of five laminations and edged with scalloped leather. The thigh pieces are laminated and strapped at the back across the trunk-hose. Large knee-kops of elaborate design, plain greaves, the feet in laminated square-toed shoes, no spurs. The work is good, the armour enriched with round-headed rivets studded all over, the alabaster having been partially coloured.

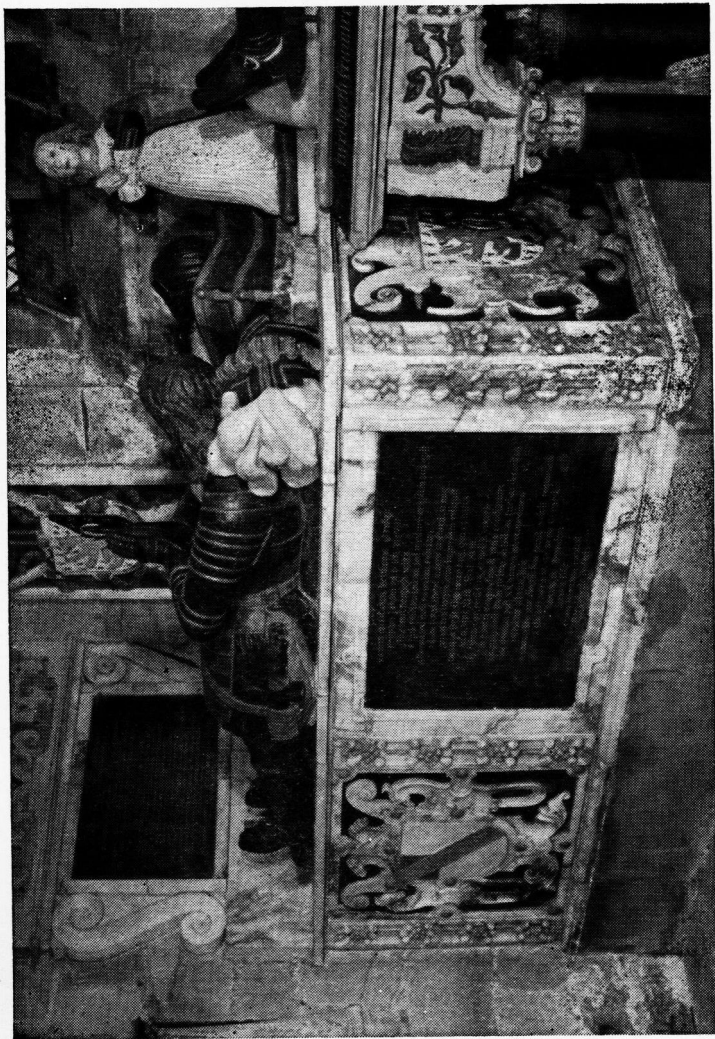
The lady's head reposes upon two cushions. She wears a widow's veil enclosing long curly locks of hair and beneath her chin a wide and deep ruff. The veil spreads out over the shoulders; the sleeves are very full with double turned-back cuffs. She wears a tight bodice fastened to a point in front and tied with a bow of ribbon. The bodice is cut low showing the dress beneath. The skirts are long and over all is a flowing mantle. An excellent example of careful delineation.

The female weepers of this tomb are all dressed alike with the French type of hood, the caul covering the head and coming down to the

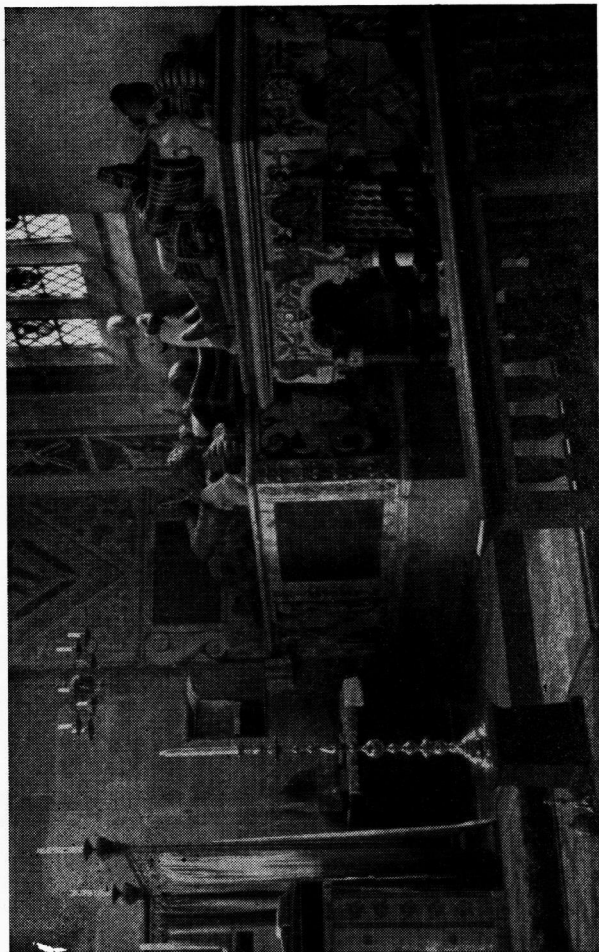


Before Restoration. Tomb of Sir Edward Fitton, the second and last Baronet who died at the siege of Bristol, 1643, with the effigy of his first wife and only child, Margaret, who died at the age of seven.





After Restoration. The tomb of Sir Edward Fitton, the second and last Baronet. Until the recent restoration the monument was in serious danger of disintegration. All the sections of stone and alabaster have now been secured, and new material cut to match up with the elaboration at the corners. The interesting lettering is again legible after the cleaning and waxing of the stone tablets. As with all the Fitton tombs the heraldry is splendid. The coats displayed are Fitton and Trevor of Plas Teg.



After Restoration. The monument against the east wall is that of Sir Edward Fitton, the second and last Baronet. Until the recent restoration the monument was in serious danger of disintegration. All the sections of stone and alabaster have now been secured, and new material cut to match up with the elaboration at the corners. The interesting lettering is again legible after the cleaning and waxing of the stone tablets. The table tomb is that of Francis Fitton, 1606.

### *The Manor of Gawsworth*

shoulders. The ruffs are not large, nor do they seem stiffly starched. The bodices and skirts are pleated, the sleeves puffed with turned-back cuffs. Over all a long mantle suspended from the shoulders from behind.

On the wall at the foot of the monument appears the following inscription:

“A monument erected by the Lady Ann Fytton to the memory of her deare husband Sir Edward Fytton baronet, who departed this life May 10, anno dom: 1619. et etatis 47.

Least tongues to future ages should be dumb,  
The very stones thus speake about our tombe,  
Loe two made one, whence sprang these many more,  
Of whom a King once prophecy'd before:  
Here's the blest man, his wife the fruitful vine,  
The children the olive plants, a graceful line,  
Whose soules and body's beauties sentance them  
Fittons, to weare a heavenly diadem.”

The pun on the name Fitton seen in the last line of the inscription is a typical rebus of the period.

The plaque at the head of the tomb displays sixteen coats.<sup>1</sup>

1. FITTON-BARRET. Sir Edward Fitton, born Dec. 1572, married Ann, daughter and co-heir of James Barret of South Wales, 1609. Created a baronet 1617, died and buried at Gawsworth, May 10th, 1619.

Parted per pale, baron and femme, two coats; the first FITTON, Argent, a canton gules, over all on a bend azure, three garbs or. The second BARRET, Gules, on a chief indented argent, three escallops sable. The augmentation of the human hand gules on the escutcheon in chief denotes that the holder was a Knight Baronet.

2. MAINWARING-FITTON. Margaret Fitton, aunt of the above-named, married Sir Randle Mainwaring of Peover, September 1st, 1568, at Gawsworth. On the same day her sister Elizabeth married Sir Thomas Holcroft.

Parted per pale, baron and femme, two coats; the first MAINWARING, Argent, two bars gules, the second FITTON, Argent, a canton gules, over all on a bend azure, three garbs or.

3. SIR EDWARD FITTON, Baronet.
4. de ORREBY. Argent, two chevrons and a canton gules.
5. LEGH OF BECHTON. Azure, two bars argent, over all a bend gules with three bezants for a difference.

Thomas Fitton (aged 13-9 ED: III) married as his first wife, Margaret, daughter and co-heiress of Peter de Legh of Bechton, and grand-daughter of Matthew de Bechton. She died on December 12th, 1379.

<sup>1</sup>See *The Gawsworth Armorial*, by the Rev. W. E. Clarke, *Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society*, Vol. 3, N.S.

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6. CULCHETH. Argent, an eagle with wings displayed sable, preying on an infant proper, swaddled gules.
7. HORTON. Argent, a squirrel sejant gules.
8. BAGULEY. Or, three lozenges azure.
9. BECHTON. Azure, three spades argent.  
Margaret Fitton (see 5 above) was granddaughter of Matthew de Bechton.
10. HOLCROFT. Argent, a cross within a bordure, enrailed sable.
11. SIDDINGTON. Argent, a chevron between five cross crosslets fitchie (2 & 3) sable.  
Edward Fitton (1434—February, 1510-11) married Emma, daughter and heiress of Robert Siddington, of Siddington, Cheshire.
12. LILLEBURNE. Sable, three water bougets argent.
13. HARBOTTLE. Azure, three icicles bendways or.  
Sir Edward Fitton (1500—February, 1547-48) married Mary, younger daughter and co-heiress of Sir Guiscard Harbottle of Northumberland.
14. MANBOUCHER. Argent, three water pots covered gules.
15. WELWICK. Argent, three escallops gules.
16. FITTON.

The monument was erected about 1619, to Sir Edward Fitton, born December 1572, created a baronet in 1617, and died May 10th, 1619. He married Ann, daughter of James Barratt of Tenby. She was born in 1571 and died in 1643. There were twelve children to this marriage, as follows: Holcroft who died young in 1594; Anne born 1594; Penelope 1595; Mary 1602; Edward 1603, the last baronet; Frances (not known); Alice 1605; Richard 1617; Thomas 1608 Lettice 1613; Jane 1615; Elizabeth 1618, buried in 1619."

The monument on the opposite side of the chancel, erected in the south east corner was also formerly canopied.<sup>1</sup> Ormerod gives a description of the tomb before the restoration of 1855 when it lost its entablature:

"a very large monument consisting of an arch supported upon pillars under which is an altar tomb, with two recumbent figures. The lady has a loose cap and handkerchief, the knight is habited in plate armour and under his head is a full-faced helmet, with a plume of white feathers. Near his feet is the figure of their infant daughter. Over the monument is the coat of Fytton, as before (crest gone) impaling party per bend sinister Ermine and Erminois, a lion rampant Or, Trevor. Under the arch over the figures are armorial shields and an inscribed tablet."

<sup>1</sup> Affixed to the wall of the chancel is the following inscription:—"The two eastern monuments of the family of Fitton in this church, having fallen into disrepair, the pillars and canopies over them were taken down in 1855. The foundations have now been repaired, and by the aid of drawings made some years before, the fragments of the canopies have been replaced (?where), and the original inscriptions and armorial bearings refixed as nearly as was practicable, according to the original arrangement, 1859."

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The chest tomb is shallow in treatment, the top rim thin and unmoulded. The exposed side is unequally divided; towards the feet is a large square heraldic panel, followed towards the west by an oblong inscribed panel, the scheme following round to the west end with another heraldic panel, both framed in strapwork. The tomb is painted and of alabaster, the effigies cut in stone.

The head of the male effigy is bare, reposing upon a large helm, the hair worn long and curling at the ends, moustache and clipped beard. Round the neck a silk scarf knotted and bowed under the chin. The cuirass not very prominent, with large pauldrons, which with the brassarts have seven laminations, large elbow-kops and gauntlets. The waist narrow, encircled with a broad leather sword-strap, buckled, and finishing with five loops round the scabbard. The tassels wide and short, strapped to the cuirass and with six laminations. The trunk hose very full at the back. The thighs protected with plate armour, front and back hinged together and hooked. Large knee-kops, the shins protected by leather leggings with turnover tops showing a red lining. The armour is painted black enriched with gold. This suit of armour is a replica of that of Francis, 1608, the head and neck being differently treated.

The lady's head reposes upon two cushions and is enclosed in a tight fitting cap tied under the chin, round the neck and shoulders a double tippet having scalloped edges, wide sleeves with turned-back cuffs, tight waist encircled with a ribbon tied in front in a bow, long skirts, and coloured. The features of the face give every indication of having been splendidly copied from a death mask.

The little girl kneels upon a cushion in a full white skirt, a tight bodice with a low squared neck with a wide turned-down collar and cuffs, having puffed sleeves. The hair is parted in the middle and comes down the sides of the head in long curls; a pleasant face with rosy cheeks.

The inscription is as follows:

Inter Nobilissimos Majores Ipse Maximus  
D. Eduardus Fytton de Gawsworth Baronettus  
    Heic Situs Est,  
qui antiquiss. Fyttonor. Gentem Clausit simul atq: impleuit  
    Ultimus Primusq: sic Fata voluere.  
Nempe vt vetusto stirpis splendori Coronidem su'man imponeret  
In se vno Omnium virtutes atq: praeconia congessit,  
    Decus, Robur, Fulgorem Corporis,  
    Candorem, Fidem, Probitatem animi:  
Hoc sibi proprium habuit, quod Pacis gremis Lactatus,  
    Belli Furiis implicitus Nemo grandius intonuit,



## The Church

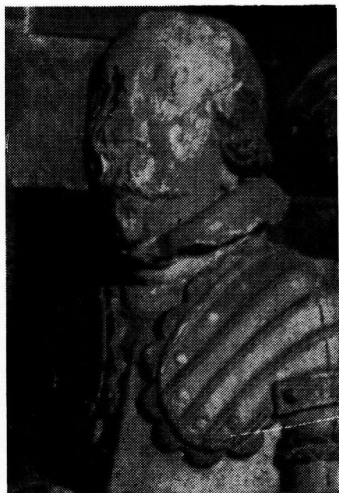
Nec Rem Martis prius inexpertam praeclarius gessit:  
A Carolo (Beatiss.Martyre) Trib. Mil. insignitus,  
illius angustiis periculisq: Fidus Comes adhaesit,  
Nec Spermendis copiis, Auxilium gratum tulit  
Primum ad Edghill, vbi die cruento Tormentis Regiis Praefectus  
Omnibus magis Tormentis Rebelles Turmas Concussit,  
Dein ad Banburiam, Brainford: Redding: atq: Alibi saepius  
Nunquam sine Laude et Lauro cum Cestriensibus suis  
Fortissime meruit,  
Demum Bristolliae. sed vrbe captâ. atq: Triumphans  
Heu Occidit.  
Vxores duxit duas, lectisimas utraq:  
Primam Janam fil D. Joh. Trevor  
In Comit. Denbigh Militis,  
E qua Filiolam unicam sed imature ereptam suscepit;  
Alteram sed nulli secundam Feliciam  
Filiam D. Rad. Sneyd in agro Stafford. Armig  
Quam tristiozem, quia improlem, reliquit.  
Denatus Bristolliae Mense Aug. quo et natus  
Ano D. MDCXLIII Aetat XLIII.  
Ibi fidum Cor, cerebrum, et mollia viscera  
in B. Petri Templo fragili vrna conduntur:  
Reliquus cinis Oxon. primo ob bellicas turbas depositus,  
inde demum post XX Annos intercapedinem  
infractus, illaesus, Heic  
in Gawsworthae suae dilectiss. sinu prout voluit, requiescit  
Piâ Curâ Honoratiss. D. Caroli Gerard,  
Baronis de Brandon,  
Sororis Filii,  
Quem Haeredem instituit.  
Celebrate Posteris.

### Translation of above:

"Among most noble ancestors, himself the noblest, Sir Edward Fytton, of Gawsworth, baronet, lies here: In whom the ancient house of the Fyttons was closed at once and perfected. The last and yet the first (so willed the fates). In sooth that he might add the last stroke to the ancient Glory of his line. In his single person he joined the virtues and the praises of all, Bodily grace, strength, and beauty, Mental uprightness, fidelity and honesty; He had this peculiar praise, that, though nursed in the lap of peace, Yet involved in the furies of war, no one was more distinguished, Or waged war (heretofore untried) most nobly; by King Charles, the blessed Martyr, he was raised to the rank of Captain. And throughout his distresses and dangers stood faithfully by his side. And with no mean forces brought him welcome aid, First at Edgehill, where, on that bloody day in the command of the Royal Artillery, He more than all the artillery, routed the rebel troops, He fought most bravely, And finally at Bristol (but not all the city was taken), he triumphed. Alas! he perished.

He married two wives, both most accomplished. The first, Jane, daughter of Sir John Trevor Knight in the County of Denbigh, By whom he had an only little daughter; Who was prematurely snatched away; The second, who was second to none. Felicia; Daughter of Ralph Sneyd, Esq.,<sup>1</sup> in the county of Stafford: Whose widowhood was the more grievous because childless; His life closed as it had begun in the month of August at Bristol: In the year of our Lord 1643, aged 43. Here his faithfull heart, his brains and his soft bowels are contained in a frail urn in St. Peter's Church: The rest of his ashes having been first deposited at Oxford By reason of the tumults of war, Thence at last after an interval of 20 years Unimpaired, uninjured, here In

<sup>1</sup> The whole of the Sneyd muniments dating from the 12th Century are preserved with the Gawsworth estate papers in the Author's collection.



The head of Richard Fitton, ob. 1610, before and after restoration.



Margaret Fitton, died 1631, aged 7. The only child of Sir Edward Fitton, the second and last baronet and Jane, daughter Sir John Trevor of Plas Teg. Figure from her parents' tomb.

## The Church

the bosom of his own beloved Gawsworth, repose According as he wished: By the dutiful care of the most noble Lord Charles Gerard Baron of Brandon; His sister's son, Whom he appointed to be his heir. Praise him Posterity!"

The memorial displays eight shields; four on the plaque placed on the east wall of the chancel, two on a plaque on the south wall above the monument and two upon the tomb chest.

17. FITTON-TREVOR. Sir Edward was the second and only surviving son of the first baronet. He married first, Jane, daughter of Sir John Trevor of Plas Teg., co. Flint, on October 13th, 1622. The only child of this union, Margaret, was born on February 26th, 1623-24. She died in infancy and was buried at Gawsworth on October 2nd, 1631. Jane, Lady Fitton, died in June, 1638, and Sir Edward subsequently married Felicia, daughter of Ralph Sneyd of Keele, co. Stafford, who bore him no child. On the outbreak of the Civil War he fought, as his epitaph records, on the Royalist side at "Edgehill, Banbury, Brainford, Reading and many other places." He was present at the siege of Bristol, and when this was successfully raised he was left in command of the garrison by Prince Rupert. He died in tragic suddenness, not of wounds, but of a consumption in August, 1643. His body was first buried at Oxford, and subsequently re-interred at Gawsworth. He was the last male in the direct Fitton line.

Parted per pale, baron and femme, two coats; the first, FITTON, with the augmentation of a human hand gules;

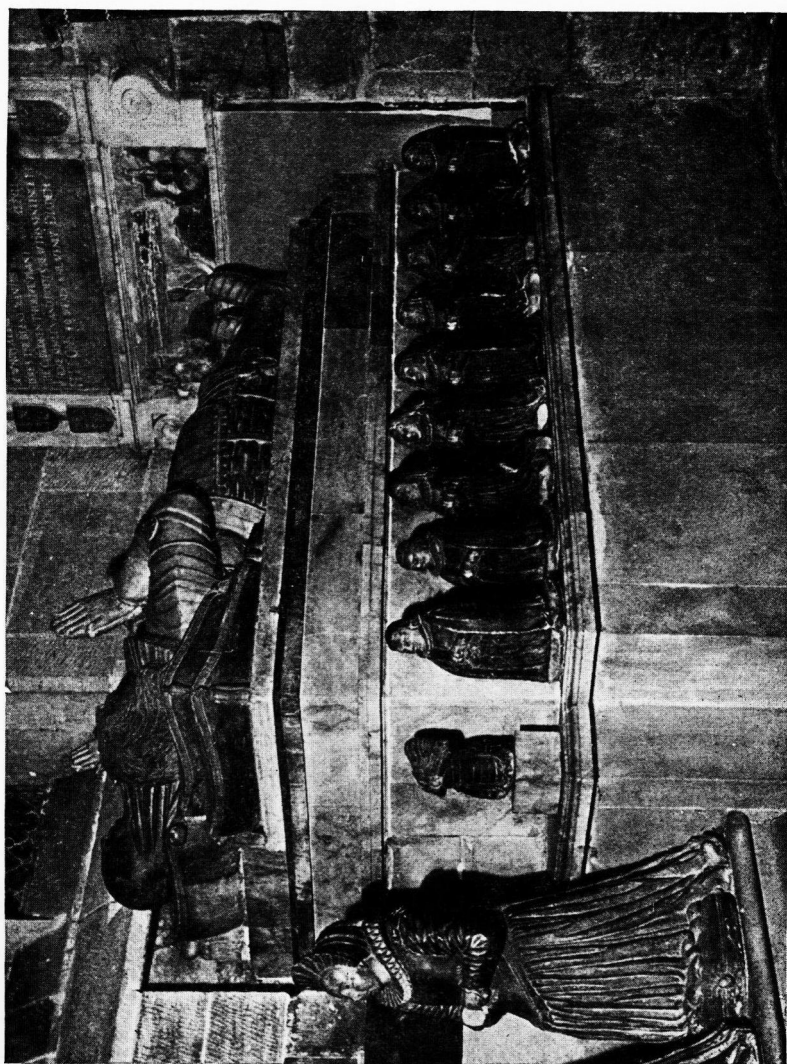
The second TREVOR, party per bend sinister, ermine and ermines, a lion rampant or.

18. DE ORREBY. This is not a shield but a large lozenge, and in 1859 was set up on its end, contrary to all principles of heraldry. It appears to have originally formed the centre panel of the canopied tomb. There is almost the suggestion of a hatchment about it, save that it is cut in alabaster and its surrounding embellishments are tinted in palest azure and decorated. The epitaph to Sir Edward begins "Among most illustrious ancestors himself the greatest, Sir Edward Fytton, of Gawsworth, Baronet, is here laid, who at the same time ended the most ancient race of Fyttons and completed it, the last and the first, so Fates decreed." In this memorial to the last of the Gawsworth Fyttons, erected by the Rt. Hon. Charles Gerrard, Lord Brandon, his nephew, it was natural that the centre panel should proudly display the de Orreby coat, which they had borne since Thomas Fitton married Isabel de Orreby, and from whose family their estates and Lordship of the Manor of Gawsworth had been derived.

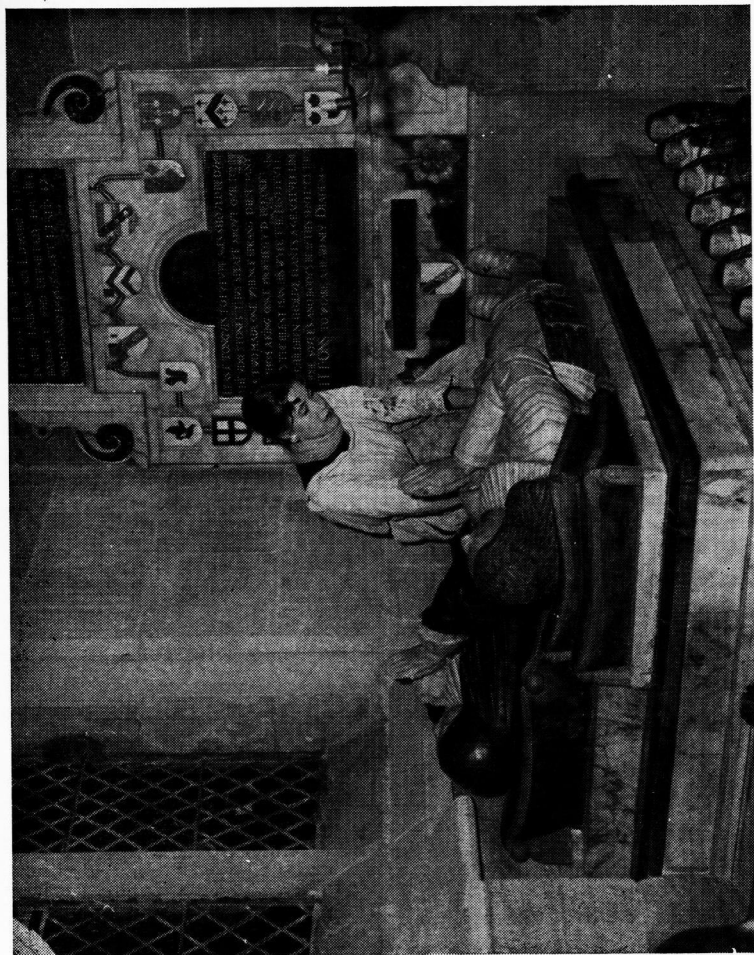
19. (?) COLE-FITTON.

Parted per pale, baron and femme, two coats; the first, Sable, a chevron or, and in base a scorpion of the second. The second FITTON.

Letice, the sixth sister of the 2nd Baronet, born 1613, married, c. 1634, John Cole of . . . co. Salop. According to Burke's General Armoury COLLE of Newcastle-on-Tyne was granted December 3rd, 1614 "Argent a fesse engrailed between 3 scorpions erect sable," and also COLE bore "Argent a chevron gules between three scorpions erect (another reversed) sable." It would seem to be fairly certain that this coat is Cole impaling Fitton.



Before Restoration. Tomb of Sir Edward Fitton, Bart., 1619. This monument all fashioned in alabaster, together with the companion tomb to the second baronet (on the south side of the chancel) was formerly canopied, but the columns and entablature were removed 1851-7.



After Restoration. The Tomb of Sir Edward Fitton, the First Baronet, who died in 1619, and his wife Anne. Miss Susan Blacking, who worked on the cleaning and repairation of the Gawsworth Monuments, is seen completing a detail of the armour.



## *The Manor of Gawsworth*

### 20. (?) MEYRICK-FITTON.

Parted per pale baron and femme two coats; the first, Sable, a chevron between three three trunks raguly or; the second FITTON.

Alice, the fifth sister of the 2nd Baronet, born at Gawsworth October, 1605, married at Gawsworth April 22nd, 1629, Sir John Meyrick, of Monckton, co. Pembroke, M.P. MEYRICK of Salop bore "Sable, on a chevron argent, between three staves raguly or, inflamed proper, a fleur-de-lys gules between two Cornish choughs sable." The similarity is too close to arrive at any other conclusion than that this coat is Meyrick impaling Fitton.

It is evident that this tomb was not erected until Sir Edward's remains were brought from Oxford in 1663, else the inscription would have insured its destruction during the Commonwealth. Sir Edward Fitton the second and last baronet, after the loss of his first wife Jane, daughter of Sir John Trevor, knt., of Plas Têg, Flint, who died in 1638, married secondly Felicia, daughter of Ralph Sneyd of Keele in Stafford. After the death of Sir Edward Fitton in 1643 she married Sir Charles Adderley,<sup>1</sup> of Co. Warwick, as his second wife, and continued living at Gawsworth until her untimely death in childbirth in 1654. Although the wife of Sir Charles Adderley she apparently continued to be known in

<sup>1</sup> The Warwickshire seat of Sir Charles Adderley, Knt., was Hams Hall, a property purchased from Sir John Ferrers, Equerry to Charles I. His son Arden Adderley is the ancestor of Hubert Bowyer Arden Adderley, the 6th Baron Norton of Fillongley Hall, Coventry, co. Warwick, whose son kindly provided the following details concerning the four marriages of Sir Charles Adderley.

- (i) c 1637 to Anne, the youngest of the four daughters of Sir Henry ARDEN Kt., of Park Hall, Co. Warwick by Dorothy, daughter of Sir Basil Fielding, Kt., of Newnham in the same, and in her issue coheirress to her brother, Robert Arden.
- (ii) to Constance, daughter of James ENION, Esq., of Flore, Co. Northampton by Dorothy, daughter of Thomas Coxe of Bishop's Itchington, Co. Warwick, and widow of Robert Wilmer, Esq., of Sywell, Co. Northampton.—(Marriage Licence dated 1641/2 Feb. 4).
- (iii) to Felicia, 6th and youngest daughter of Ralph SNEYD of Keele, Co. Stafford by Felicia, daughter of Nicholas Archbold of Uttoxeter in the same, and widow of Sir Edward Fitton, Bart., of Gawsworth, Co. Chester who died shortly after the taking of Bristol in August 1643. She died in childbirth and was buried at Gawsworth as "The Lady Felicia Fitton" on 22nd January, 1654/5, which rather suggests that she had not then been long married to Sir Charles. Newcome calls her "a lovely sweet person."
- (iv) to Frances, daughter and heirress of Richard CRESHELD, Sergeant at Law. of Evesham. Co. Worcester, and widow of William Jesson of Coventry, Co. Warwick. (Marriage Allegation dated 1662 Nov. 18, at Coleshill).

By his first wife Sir Charles had issue two sons—Arden and Charles—and a daughter Anne; by his second, a son, James, and a daughter, Dorothy. So far as I know there were no children who survived of the third and fourth marriages. He died 1682 Aug. 30 and is buried in Lea Marston Church, Co. Warwick where there is a monument to him and his four wives.

## The Church

Gawsworth as the Lady Fitton, and was buried under that name in the Fitton vault. A poignant account of her sad death is given in the diary of Henry Newcome, when Commonwealth minister at Gawsworth.<sup>1</sup>

"Jan. 20th (Saturday). Lady Fytton being now with child, was in lingering labour this week. Some offered to have me sent for to pray with her, but it was neglected. On Saturday I had been at Congleton, and was just come home, and they came shrieking to me to go pray with her; she did desire it, it should seem. I went as fast as I could; but just as I came, the fit of the palsy took her, out which she never recovered. We went to prayer in the gallery for her again and again. Mr. Machin providentially came in, (to go to Macclesfield the next day), and he helped me to pray, and we prayed there two or three times over. We begged life for mother and child very earnestly at first; after, we begged either, which God pleased. After that night we were brought to beg the life of the soul; for all hopes were over. The next day I went to her, and prayed by her before and after sermon in forenoon. I was affected much to see her lie as in a dream, pulling and setting her head-clothes, as if she had been dressing herself in the glass, and so pass out of the world. A lovely sweet person she was, but thus blasted before us. Died January 21st, just after evening sermon, as near as I could gather, just when she was prayed for in the pulpit. She was buried the next day, at night. I preached at her funeral on those words, And Rachel died. Sir Charles Adderley now removed, and all manner of confusion and trouble came in upon that estate, Mr. Fytton and the co-heirs striving for possession, which begat a strange alteration in the place. I soon saw how God can make one not so highly accounted on, to be sadly missed by one. This affliction hugely buried all kind of distances between Sir Charles and me; and after his going, he never sent over, but he wrote to me with very much respect."

The oldest surviving memorial in Gawsworth Church is a large brass surround to the old Fitton vault in the aisle of the nave.<sup>2</sup> Within the centre of the surround is a shield of brass, on a bend three garbs, a crescent for difference, and no canton, for Fitton, impaling Warburton with a crescent in the centre for difference.

Hic iacit (sic) Tho ffyto ar fili' 2' ffito milit et dñe Marie ux eiu' 2 da filia et Coheres Guichardi Harbottell milit' : Et duxit ad uxor Ana filia petri Wabarto ar' 2' fili' petri Wabarto de Arley milit' : Et pcreavit ffracisca nupta Johi Welles de Horecrose in com Staff. ar' : et Margarta nupta Roberto Hyde de Northbury in com Cestr ar' : Et decessit hac vita 170 die año domi 1600 anie Christ' recipiat.

*Translated:* Here lies Thomas Fyton, Esq., second son of Sir Edward Fitton, Knt., and the lady Mary, his wife, second daughter and coheir of Guiscard Harbottell, Knt. He married Ann, daughter of Peter Warburton, Esq., second son of Sir Peter Warburton, of Arley, Knt. And had issue, Frances, married to John Welles, of Horecrose, in the county of Stafford, Esq., and Margaret, married to Robert Hyde, of Northbury, co. Chester, Esq. And he departed this life on the 17th April, in the year of our Lord 1600; whose souls may Christ receive.

<sup>1</sup> *Autobiography of Henry Newcome, M.A.*, Edited by Richard Parkinson, D.D., F.S.A., Printed for the Chetham Society, 1852.

<sup>2</sup> This brass was formerly partly hidden by pews, so that the copy of the inscription, as given by Dr. Ormerod, is imperfect. The one printed above is from a careful rubbing.

### *The Manor of Gawsorth*

The following inscriptions recorded by Dr. Ormerod in 1819, in his *History of Cheshire*, as appearing on gravestones before the altar rails, have either been destroyed or are wholly or partially covered.

A memorial to Felicia Sneyd, second wife of Sir Edward Fitton.  
Edward Thornycroft died May 11, 1726, aged 71.

Frances, wife of Edward Thornycroft, of Thornycroft, Esq., died Dec. 29, 1809.  
Ann, Viscountess Barrington, second wife of the same, died April 13, 1816.

The following inscriptions are to be found on the north wall of the chancel. A white marble mural tablet, surmounted by an urn covered with drapery. Above the inscription is the shield of arms of Thornycroft—Vert, a mascle or between four cross crosslets argent, Thornycroft. Argent, a chevron sable between three moorhens close gules Henshaw.

In memory of  
EDWARD THORNYCROFT, ESQ<sup>re</sup>,  
who departed this life on the 20th of January, 1817.  
He was the last of the male line of the ancient family  
of the Thornycrofts of Thornycroft,  
his ancestors have resided there in regular succession  
since the 13th century.  
He married first, Frances, daughter of Bagot Read, of  
Chester, Esq.  
and to his second wife, Ann Dowager Viscountess  
Barrington;  
but left no issue.

.....  
The monument is erected by his two surviving sisters.

Below the above on a white mural tablet—

Sacred to the memory of  
ELEANOR THORNYCROFT, of Thornycroft,  
A sincere friend and a truly pious Christian,  
who died the 20th day of June, 1823.  
This mark of affectionate respect is placed here  
by her only surviving sister.  
Ann Thornycroft  
sister of the above, who died  
unmarried, on the 6th day  
of September, 1831.

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Formerly on a brass set in a stone frame, south of the altar, but removed in 1851 and not replaced was the following inscription:

## The Church

Canet enim Tuba et excitabuntur mortui incorrupti.

1 Cor. xv. 52.

Beatæ spe resurrectionis mortales exuvias

ESTHERÆ

Jo: Latham A.M. Eccl. Lawtonensis nuper rector.

filia pientissima

uxoris vero suæ charissimæ

cum multis heic deposuit lachrymis

GUL. HALL A.M. hujesce eccl. rector.

Obiit Sep. vi. A.D. M.D.CCXLVI. aet. 54.

Hic etiam ipse vir cum uxore conquiescat,

hinc ad vitam æternam ambo resurgant.

Amen.

Hic vero prout voluit conquiescit

mortale prædict: Gul. Hall.

obiit Jul. xx. A.D. MDCCLXIX

ætatis suæ 76.

rect. mun. 46.

### Translated:

For the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, 1 Cor. xv. 52. In the blessed hope of the resurrection, William Hall, M.A., rector of this church, has here placed, with many tears, the mortal remains of Esther, the most pious daughter of John Latham, M.A., late rector of the church of Lawton (near Congleton), and his most beloved wife. She died Sept. 6, 1746, aged 54. Here also let the husband rest with his wife, so that they may both rise thence to life eternal. Amen. Here also, according to his wishes, rests what was mortal of the said William Hall. He died July 20, 1779, in the 76th year of his age, and the 46th year of his office of rector.

Although Rector of Gawsworth for 46 years, during which time he faithfully kept the church register in beautiful penmanship, there is no entry of his own decease—no doubt an omission by the Clerk of the day.

A charming white mural tablet on the south wall of the chancel, placed over the south door records:—

In memory of

The Revd. JOHN HAMMOND, A.M.

41 years Rector of this Parish.

Also of Alice his Wife,

Who was the second daughter of

Sir Foulk Lucy of Henbury

in the County of Cheshire (sic) Knight.

She was interred the 14th of Oct. 1697. Aged 37,

And he on the 15th of April, 1724

in the 73rd year of his age,

leaving 3 Sons & 3 Daughters,

Their Virtues were Conspicuous,

In Piety Devout,

In Charity Liberal,

And in Friendship most Sincere.

He left 50 pounds, the interest of which to be given every St. Thomas's Day to the Poor of Gosworth, at the Discretion of the Rector and Church-Wardens.



Old Grammar School House, Macclesfield, circa 1775. From a contemporary engraving.



Old Grammar School House, Macclesfield. From a photograph, circa 1890.



## *The Church*

This Monument was erected by their  
Grandson the Revd. JOHN LUCY  
of Charlecote in the County of  
Warwick

In Duty and Respect to the  
Memory of his Ancestors.

Below is a shield of arms, Argent on a chevron Sable, between three pellets each charged with a martlet of the field, as many escallop shells Or, for Hammond, impaling Lucy, Gules three lucies or pikes hauriant, between nine cross-crosslets Argent.

Immediately below the mural tablet and close to the altar rails is the grave slab which reads:

“October MDCXCVII Here was interred Alice 2d Daughter of Sr Fulk Lucy Knight, wife to John Hammond Rectr of this Parish who also was interred here the 15 Apl. 1724 in the 73d year of his age.”

Close to this slab is the much worn grave slab of Anne Thornycroft, reading:

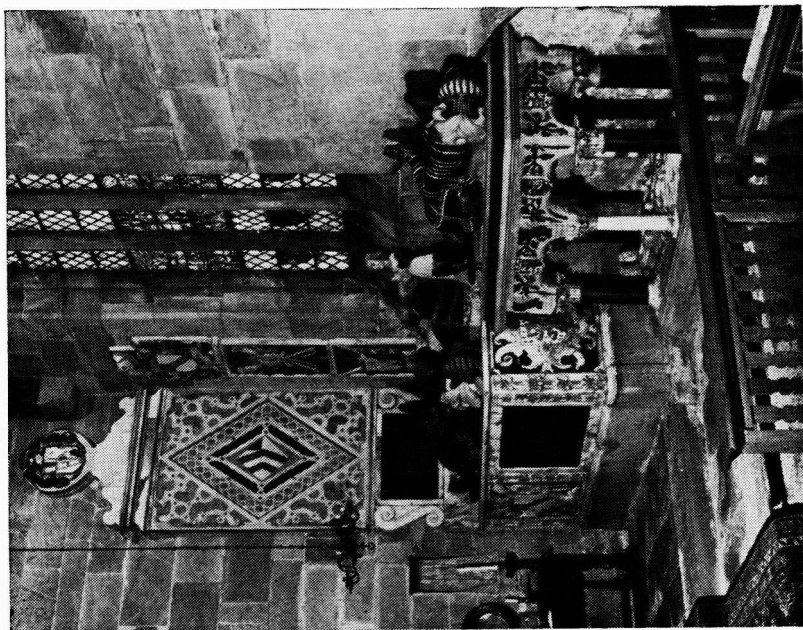
“Anne wife of Edward Thornycroft Esq. only daughter of Sr. Ralphe Assheton in the County of Lancaster Knight and Baronet  
Born 7 of Augst. 1655  
Dyed the 30 December 1712.”

On the south wall immediately behind the patron's pew in the chancel is a memorial plaque of red Mansfield sandstone, set up to the memory of the author's father<sup>1</sup> who departed this life in the early morning of the 5th December, 1951, at his home, Shelley House, Southport, in his sixty sixth year.—May he rest in peace.—The tablet reads:—

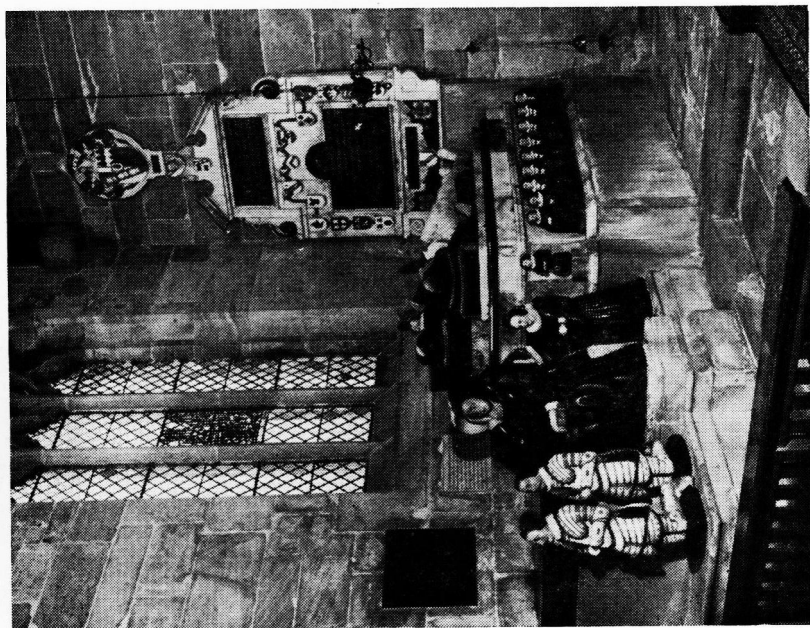
In loving memory of Thomas Edward Richards  
Born Macclesfield 5 March 1885  
Who departed this life 5 December 1951  
Spes Mea in Deo.

The carving seen on the family pew beneath, is the work of Pugin. The shield of arms displayed is the coat of Richards,—Sable, on a chevron argent, between in chief two lions rampant combatant, and in base a garb or, three pellets.

<sup>1</sup> He was the youngest son of Thomas Edward Richards who lived and died at the old Grammar School House situated in King Edward Street, formerly called Back Street, Macclesfield. In the eighteenth century this property was the home of Sir Peter Davenport, and it was in this house that the Young Pretender, Prince Charles Edward, lodged on the night of Sunday, Dec. 1st, and again a week later on Dec. 7th, during the retreat from Derby, following the ill fated Jacobite Rising of 1745. A print of the property as it appeared in the eighteenth century together with a photograph of the house as it appeared at the time of the author's grandfather's death in 1890 is reproduced in this volume, as being of local interest. Early this century the house was destroyed, only the fine Queen Anne staircase being preserved for re-use in a London mansion.



The Fitton Monuments in the Chancel looking South East.



The Fitton Monuments in the Chancel looking North-East.