

THE CHURCH

(Part 2)

NEARLY all visitors to Gawsworth remark on the feeling of mellowed age pervading the Church, which is all the more remarkable considering the heavy hands laid on the interior at the time of the 1851 restoration. Some extracts from an architect's survey written in 1849¹ present an interesting picture of the church as it existed less than a century ago:

"Gawsworth in Cheshire is a delightful village on the road from Congleton to Macclesfield, about five and a half miles from the former place, and three and a half miles from the latter. The whole of Gawsworth church is of one date, and appears to have been erected towards the close of the reign of Henry VII., by the munificence of the ancient family of the Fittons: whose arms and monuments now occupy and adorn the chancel, but which are all of later date than the church itself. It is an excellent and perfect specimen of a church of that period, and though in a state of sad neglect remains un mutilated as to its architectural features; these are very fine, although showing evidence of a considerable decline of art, in the execution of the details. It consists simply of a western tower, nave with south porch, and chancel; and there are the remains of an interesting churchyard cross in the usual position on the south side, in front of the porch, with animal monsters carved on the angles, after the manner of those seen on baptismal fonts, representing the expulsion of evil spirits, symbolical of that ancient sacrament of the Church.

"The tower is a fine composition, having angular buttresses, containing niches with rich canopies and pedestals and shafted jambs; and which have originally held statues of saints and martyrs, now destroyed. It has fine base moulds and trails of quatrefoils over the west door (which is square headed) and at the top, under the parapet. In the second stage of the west front is a fine carved niche with its statue [possibly lost in the 1851 restoration]; and on the sides are numerous shields of arms of the Fitton family, with foliage carved round them, and also some of the Tudor badges, the rose occurring frequently.

"The Porch has some elaborately carved niches over the doorway in a mutilated condition, with good open windows at the sides, and a shafted doorway.

"The nave, which has buttresses with pinnacles, is marked off from the chancel by angular buttresses, and has windows with four-centred heads, while those of the chancel are simply pointed. There does not, however, appear to have been any distinct division of the nave and chancel roofs, they being now continued under the same; nor is there the usual stone arch inside, but a timber one cased, which has originally extended over the rood loft, removed in the early part of the last century.

"The whole of the exterior abounds with carving, chiefly of a grotesque kind, but of exceeding boldness; the label terminations being large and curious, and gargoyles in the

¹ *The Architect and Building Operative for 1849.*

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tower being winged dragons of an enormous size and projection, and boldly cut through with much skill.

"The belfry windows are double, and show on all sides of the tower, which is finished with fine characteristic pinnacles.

"There is a priests' door on each side of the chancel, exactly opposite to and corresponding with, each other; a feature I never remember to have observed in any other church.

"But the great glory and attraction of this church is its interior, which appears to have been covered with chromatic decoration from the floor to the roof; and the whole of the windows have been filled with stained glass.

"Its glories have, however, been marred by its guardian churchwardens, and others equally interested in its conservation. The floor tiles and brasses have all disappeared; the beautiful poppy heads, at least as many as now remain, now form brackets to support the seats of the tremendous boxes put up in the beginning of the last century; its walls (and even the very stained glass in the windows, of the most delicate colours, the pinks in particular being very choice, and inscribed as was the custom of that period, and as seen in Norbury Church, Staffordshire, of the most beautiful description) are now 'white-washed annually,' as the clerk proudly observed while explaining its wonders.

"The roof of the nave is formed with arched ribs or rafters, with principals at intervals, and boarded; and the whole covered with the most brilliant colours, with the bosses at the intersections, and some of the mouldings, gilt; the whole can be quite distinctly made out.

"The chancel roof is flat and formed into square panels by moulded oak ribs, having a kind of Arabesque painted on them.

"There is an unsightly gallery at the west end of the nave, under which is the font, a large stone one, panelled and carved, but in a sad and desecrated condition."

Now let Rector Polehampton tell the story of the sweeping 1851 restoration in his own words:

"That neither architect nor clerical instigator of such restoration was possessed with a soul for antiquity, either material or spiritual, is all too apparent in the light of a pamphlet which has survived the past seventy years. These two men (The Curate Massie and the Architect) between them were responsible for the destruction of most of the church's ancient possessions which, were they in situ today would gladden the hearts of lovers of antiquity no less in material things than in things pertaining to ancient universal or catholic faith and practice, to which latter such features, rudely cast out, bore silent witness. An extract from the pamphlet before mentioned, penned in 1852, as 'the work of restoration was nearing completion,' reveals the spirit in which this so-called restoration was undertaken and carried through.

'When the work was first taken in hand,' says this interesting document, 'it might have been doubted by some whether there was so great a necessity for it as was represented; and others perhaps were not satisfied that the restoration would be carried out in a manner worthy of so interesting and beautiful a structure; and it may be, on the other hand, that fears were entertained lest some new fanglement or other of dangerous consequence might be introduced. All doubt on these points is now removed. And while the essential objects of a Protestant Church have been especially kept in view, there has been no needless sacrifice of architectural propriety. Every feature of antiquity not inconsistent with our purified religion has been carefully preserved.'

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Regarding this statement in the light of later happenings, it appears that everything was carried out—except a “restoration!” Elsewhere in the same document we learn that the work of the destroying angel was by no means as yet complete. The erection of a vestry north or south of the chancel was in contemplation. To those who know the church such a proposition seems incredible. Had it been carried into effect the graceful symmetry of the building would have been completely destroyed. May be that, during the temporary absence of the angel of destructive policy, that same constructive angel who, in the fifteenth century, guided the efforts of those who reared the building as we see it today, intervened at the moment of crisis, directing thought and ambition into saner and more fitting channels of ‘architectural propriety.’ For the vestry, stated at the time to be ‘highly desirable,’ was mercifully never built.

Yet again: In the nineties a push was made to build an organ chamber on the very spot selected for the erection of a vestry.

Once more the constructive angel asserted himself, restraining the modern vandal from disturbing the ancient walls. The matter, however, had gone pretty far on the road, for we find in 1895:

‘Paid (to the architect), re organ chamber, the sum of ten guineas.’”

The discovery of the medieval wall paintings when the accumulated layers of white-wash were removed has been told by Joseph Lynch, a Macclesfield artist, and antiquary who watched with much concern the so-called restoration of Gawsworth Church. This sweeping smartening up of the interior was undertaken by the curate in charge, the Rev. Edward Massie, during the rectorship of the Rev. The Hon. Henry William Stanhope, who needless to say was non-resident, and had little or no interest in the parish beyond retaining the greater part of the parish revenues. The architect in charge, Sir Gilbert Scott, had so much work in hand, his commissions were largely managed by assistants, indeed my old friend the late Fred Crossley enjoyed telling the story of Scott travelling by train across part of Cheshire, and seeing a church surrounded with scaffolding asked his secretary, travelling with him, who was repairing the building. The secretary replied “You are Sir.”

There is no excuse for Massie; he belonged to an old Cheshire family, and should have known better. His brother, William Henry, also a clergyman, was the founder of the Chester and North Wales Archaeological Society, and an antiquary of considerable renown. The Massies of Coddington to which both brothers belonged were seated at Coddington at least as early as the fourteenth century, and possibly were connections of Sir John Massey of Halton, who was descended in an almost male-line from Hamon de Masci, Baron of Dunham.

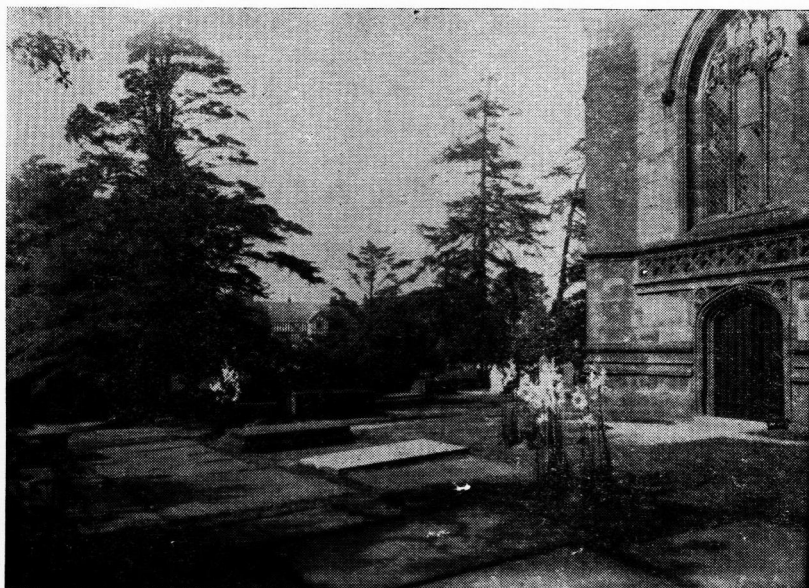
Both brothers were educated at Macclesfield Grammar School, and were the sons of the Rev. Richard Massie, Rector of Eccleston, Near Chester.

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When the Gawsworth wall paintings were discovered in 1851, William Henry Massie read a paper before the Chester Society upon the "Mural Paintings in Gawsworth Church," which was afterwards published in a distinct form, together with illustrated facsimiles of the paintings. A set of the Lynch interpretation of the paintings is preserved on the church walls. The larger drawings in mint condition were given to the author recently, after being found in the muniment room of Cholmondeley Castle by the Chaplain the Rev. D. Tudor Jones.

Lynch describes the discovery of the Gawsworth wall paintings as follows:

"I repeatedly examined the interior of the building at this time, my attention being principally given to the remains of the decoration on the roof of the older part of the structure. I studied the subject very closely, and came to the conclusion that it must be part of a complete system of decoration, including the wall surface. I could not reconcile my mind to the view that the ceiling only should be decorated, and that, too, in so elaborate a manner, with numerous figures of angels in various positions—some in the act of incensing, others holding scrolls, which originally contained inscriptions—the face of the beams on each side being literally covered with these carefully executed figures. The bosses were gilded, and the whole of the mouldings picked in



The great West Door of the Tower.



FROM THE ORIGINAL BY J. LYNCH.

the doom

SIZE OF PAINTING, 16.75

DISCOVERED ON THE EAST END OF BARNHURST LEVEL - BY J. LYNCH, OCTOBER, 1851.
 ENTERED AT STATIONERS HALL

PHOTOGRAPHED BY THE TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Lynch's drawing of the lost mural of the Doom, painted on the east wall of the chancel, destroyed 1851.



FROM THE ORIGINAL BY J. EALYNCH

SIZE OF PAINTING, 5.7.9

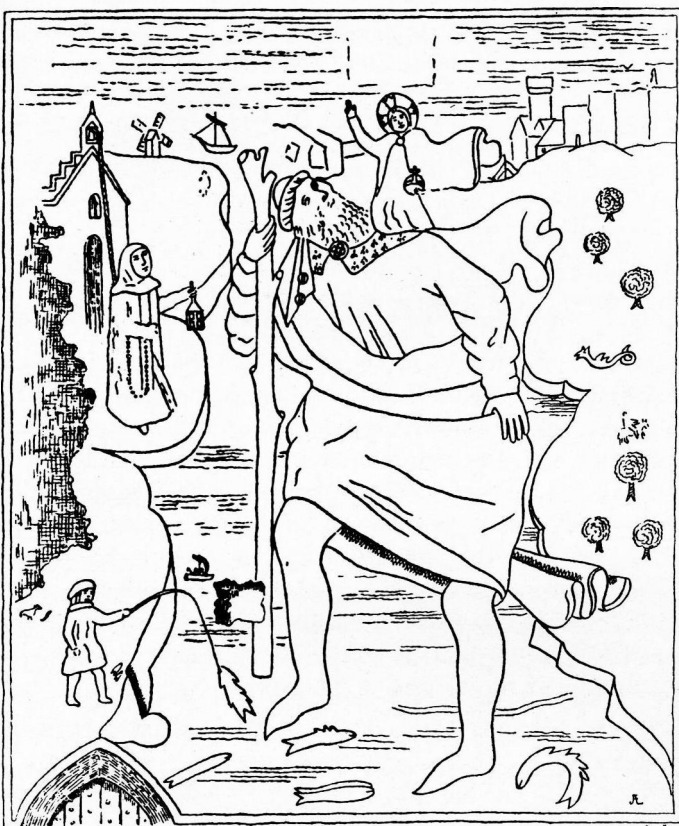
ST. GEORGE *

DISCOVERED ON THE NORTH SIDE OF BAWSWORTH CHURCH BY J. EALYNCH, OCTOBER 1881

ENTERED AT STATIONERS HALL

PHOTOLITHOGRAPHED BY THE PROPRIETORS OF THE B. & J. ARCHITECT

Lynch's drawing of the lost mural of St. George, painted on the north wall of the nave, destroyed 1851.



FROM THE ORIGINAL BY J.F. LYNCH

SIZE OF PAINTING, 13" x 11"

ST. CHRISTOPHER *

DISCOVERED ON THE NORTH SIDE OF DANWORTH CHURCH BY JEALYNCH, OCTOBER, 1851.

ENTERED AT STATIONERS HALL

PHOTODUPLICATIONS BY THE PROPRIETORS OF THE BRITISH ARCHITECT

Lynch's drawing of the lost mural of St. Christopher, painted over the north door of the nave, destroyed 1851.

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with colour and gold. The walls were thick with layer upon layer of dirt and white-wash. I had a strong desire to examine them thoroughly, but, strange to say, I could not obtain permission, at the same time receiving the suggestion that I had better make my experiments elsewhere! However, I cared little for this discouragement, and cherished the hope that some opportunity would yet occur. This fortunately, and in an unexpected manner, presented itself in the October of 1851, the year following, during the alteration and repairs of the building. The removal of the thick covering which so completely buried these remarkable works was a task requiring the greatest patience and caution. "The Doom," or Last Judgment, I discovered on the east end, in the space between the window and the south wall, extending to the roof. It was of large proportions, being about 16 feet high, by 7 feet 9 inches wide. The "St. Christopher" occupied the space between the first and second windows from the tower, on the north side, being about 13 feet high by 11 feet wide. The "St. George" was painted in the next space formed between the second and third windows, and was 13 feet high by 7 feet 6 inches wide."

Copies of Lynch's illustrations are embodied in this publication.¹

Photographs of the interior of the church taken last century show the chancel cluttered up with benches, a reading desk taking pride of place before a plain ugly panelled reredos, upon which were painted the Commandments, &c. The altar was an ugly oak table, quite unsuited to the church; all having been given by the Rev. John Thornycroft, Rural Dean at the time of the Restoration. In 1904 a new oak top was provided, and the east end remodelled into its present appearance; the English altar being a tremendous improvement. Continuing the good work Rector Polehampton restored the aumbry to the east wall, also the holy water stoup in the south porch. The wall aumbry now serves as a Tabernacle for the Reservation of the Blessed Sacrament.

Although the tradition of Catholic worship is again practiced at

¹ George Slater, a native of Gawsworth, in the introduction to his *Chronicles of Lives and Religion in Cheshire*, published in 1891, states:

"My lineal ancestor was not only a painter, but a very eminent Danish artist, and he and his staff were employed for a long time in very exquisite fresco work at Gawsworth church. It is said that when Gawsworth was first constituted a separate parish, the old chapel-of-ease was superseded by a new or a renovated church. These things took place over three hundred years since, and for the long space of nearly three centuries, the mural paintings in the interior of Gawsworth church have been the wonder and admiration of the artists of several generations, and have ever been the pride of all my family connections, knowing as we did, that this unsurpassable work had been designed and executed by my lineal ancestor. This evidence of ancient skill was in a perfect state of preservation down to my own day, but unfortunately it has been destroyed by the ruthless hands of the church restorers of the nineteenth century. The Danish artist is supposed to have been a native of the country lying between Chesterfield and Sheffield. He crossed the mountain range which is known as the backbone of England, found his way into Cheshire, and for a year or two at least, was engaged with his staff of workmen in the skilled work above named."

Personally I think Slater's claims should be treated with very considerable doubt as there is no documentary evidence in support of his assertions.

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Gawsworth, times have not always been so sympathetic to the pious admonitions of the founder. In the churchwardens' accounts and elsewhere we read that the walls of the church, including the windows themselves, were whitewashed annually until 1850, and when Edward Massie was curate and priest in charge of the parish from 1848 to 1867 he seems to have been obsessed with the ruthless determination to see his misguided conception of a "purified Protestantism" carried into full effect, only furniture and articles absolutely essential to his interpretation of a simple Protestant church being retained.

The surprising thing is that all these sweeping changes appear to have been accomplished without any serious protest from the parish or patron, and in consequence much that was old and lovely was discarded. Apart from the old wall paintings and frescoes which were deliberately destroyed, all the surviving portions of the fourteenth and fifteenth century stained glass were thrown out on the pretext of being beyond repair. Prior to this outrage, the windows undoubtedly contained much of the original pre-Reformation glass and from the fragments which survive it must have been some of the rarest in the county. Nevertheless when the Victorian architect and his assistants, aided by the over enthusiastic Curate Edward Massie, surveyed the fabric, they decided that the ancient glass having become loose as a result of the lead surrounds perishing, this would be an additional good excuse for having a clean sweep. Consequently, the lovely old glass depicting Tudor knights and their ladies, accompanied by a wealth of heraldry, was all removed, and with the exception of a few pieces now restored to the chancel windows all is irretrievably lost.

Of the discarded ancient stained glass of Gawsworth, let Polehampton describe its destruction in his own words, written in 1923:

"The windows. All were filled with fifteenth century painted glass. There was even earlier glass, preserved from the older church and incorporated in the newer. Today the windows are bereft of their wealth of colour which once they embraced in mullion and tracery. Chiefly of heraldic design in treatment, they presented figures of stalwart knight and dainty lady upstanding or kneeling at faldstool. In some were depicted saint and martyr, bishop and priest, throwing rich colour of habit and vestment athwart the pavement, thus warmly and richly adding a reinforcing note to the beauty of the interior. Gone are saint and ecclesiastic, knight and lady, hustled out in 1851 by men obsessed with but a single idea, the uprooting, if such could be possible of England's catholicity.

Any theory that the glass was broken up and scattered abroad in puritan times may be discarded in view of what some old natives of the village stated to the writer ten years ago [i.e. 1913.] If such theory were correct why should there have been discovered at the rectory in recent years many pounds weight of the original glass? Why,

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too, should two "passion shields" and some coats of arms of the Fytton line have found their way into windows at the rectory? How did they get there? When? And at whose hands?

If the church glass had been broken up in the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries it would have been trampled to powder, never to be heard of again. If, on the other hand, anticipating sacrilege at the hands of religious fanatics, pious souls had removed the glass and hidden it, how came it that a fractional portion should have been discovered where it was three hundred years later? No. In the light of recently acquired knowledge no such theory holds.

A contributor to the *Cheshire Sheaf*, who saw the church in 1849, gives conclusive proof that none of the glass was designedly removed till 1851. He says:

"The great glory and attraction of this (Gawsworth) church, is its interior, which appears to have been covered with chromatic decoration from floor to roof; and the whole of the windows to have been filled with stained glass. Its glories have, however, been marred by its guardian churchwardens and others equally interested in its conservation. Its walls (and even the very stained glass in the windows of the most delicate colours, the pinks in particular being very choice, and inscribed, as was the custom of that period (*orate pro anima*), and of the most beautiful description) are now "whitewashed annually" as the clerk proudly observed while explaining its wonders."

Finally, an octogenarian, whose native soil was Gawsworth, recalled to mind how, in 1850-1, she had witnessed the "old glass being collected and carried away." Thus from accumulated evidence, one may safely affirm that a considerable portion of the glass just simply fell out as the leads perished through age and neglect, and was casually brushed up with the ordinary churchyard sweepings as, piece by piece, it slipped from its setting, and so disappeared.

The fact is thus established that a very considerable amount of priceless glass was in the church when Victorian restorers set about their work, and that they were responsible for its demolition. What their reason? On the part of the architect, Sir Gilbert Scott, prejudice amounting almost to a hatred of antiquity. On the part of his clerical confrere, the Rev. Edward Massie, a superstitious dread of all material things which pointed back to catholic age. Witness his mythical fear of "new fanglements of dangerous consequence." His care to preserve only the "essential objects of a protestant church." His set purpose to rid the interior of every feature of antiquity "inconsistent with our purified religion." There you have it.

Out of the recovered glass four panels were constructed and placed in the south and north-east chancel windows. Two passion shields, removed from the drawing room in the rectory, were replaced in the former of the church windows just mentioned. And this is all that remains of some hundredweights of fifteenth and fourteenth century glass which once memorialized many a long since departed son and daughter of Gawsworth."

The best description of the ancient glass is given by Earwaker, who observes that in former times—

"the windows were filled with kneeling figures of the Fittons, with their wives and children, and those who were either connected with them by marriage or had been benefactors to the church. The men were represented kneeling on the one side with their sons behind them, and their wives opposite to them on the other side,

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similarly kneeling and having their daughters placed behind them. The men wore tabards of arms, and their wives had their arms displayed on their mantles, their respective arms being also shown, either as an impaled coat placed between them, or as separate shields on either side of them. Below the kneeling figures was an inscription in old English black letter, either desiring prayers for the souls of those who were dead, or for the general welfare of those who were living when the glass was put in, and whose figures were there represented. The ribs of the roof, on which the figures of angels, &c., were picked out in gold and colour, and the effect of the whole must have been very handsome, the character of the church being so well adapted for such a display of ornamentation.

"The chief sources of information for the old glass, &c., formerly in the church are the Randle Holmes' MSS. in the British Museum (Harl. MSS. 2151), the MS. volume of *Cheshire Church Notes* (Chester Library), and Ashmole's Notes, taken about 1654 whilst visiting his brother-in-law, the Rev. Henry Newcome, then rector of the parish. The quotations, &c., which follow, unless expressly stated to the contrary are extracted from the Randle Holmes' notes, forming part of the Harleian MSS.

'In the head of a windowe on the north side,' called in the MS. Church notes 'the lower (i.e. the most westerly) north (chancel) window,' 'these two coates,' Fitton (garb coat)¹ and Bechton, 'on the north side in three panes just under the foresd coates are these figures following with the writing under them,' on the one side kneeling figure of a man habited in a tabard, bearing the arms of Mainwaring, and behind them 4 sons, on the other side the kneeling figure of his wife, bearing the Venables arms on her mantle, and behind her, her 14 daughters; between the heads of the two principal figures is a shield of arms, Mainwaring impaling Venables, and underneath the whole this inscription:—

ORATE PRO BONO STATU RANULPHI MAINWARING ARMIG' ET
MARGERE UXORIS EJUS CUM PUERIS SUIS.

*Translated:—*Pray for the good estate of Randle Mainwaring, Esq., and Margery his wife² with their children.

"In another paine of the same north windowe is (*sic*) a man and woman kneeling with 8 sones behind him and 4 daughters behind her and this writing under them":—

Orate pro bono statu Laurencii fitton milit' et Agnet' ux' eius cum pueris suis.

*Translated:—*Pray for the good estate of Sir Laurence Fitton, Knt., and Agnes his wife, with their children.

The man wears a tabard with the *Fitton* (chevron) coat,³ and on the woman's mantle are the arms of *Hesketh* of Rufford, co. Lancs.⁴

¹ It may be here explained that the Fittons made use of the old Orreby coat (Argent two chevrons and a canton gules), and their own proper coat (Argent a canton gules, over all a bend azure with three garbs or), indiscriminately. When the former is used it is distinguished by being called the Fitton chevron coat, and when the latter, the Fitton garb coat.

² Probably the father and mother of Ellen, the wife of Thomas Fitton, Esq., who died 1449.

³ The Fittons made use of the old Orreby coat (Argent two chevrons and a canton gules), and their own proper coat (Argent a canton gules, over all a bend azure with three garbs or), indiscriminately. When the former is used it is distinguished by being called the Fitton chevron coat, and when the latter, the Fitton garb coat.

⁴ The arms of Hesketh of Rufford are very similar to those of Fitton, being Argent on a bend sable three garbs or. Randle Holme, by a mistake, makes the bend azure.

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"In another pane of the window on the said north side is this figure of a man and woman, with 7 sones after him and 5 daughters behinde her and this writting under them":—

Thomas ffyton armiger et Elene uxor' eius cum pueris suis.

*Translated:—*Thomas Fitton, Esq., and Ellen his wife, and their children.

The man wears a tabard with the *Fitton* (chevron) coat, and the woman bears on her mantle the arms of *Mainwaring*. Between their heads is an impaled shield of these two coats.

In the upper part of the window in which the above three inscriptions were placed were the words,—¹

Orate pro benefactoribus [qui] istam fenestram fieri fecerunt.

*Translated:—*Pray for the benefactors who caused this window to be made.

"In another windowe upon the same north side [called in the "MS. Church Notes" the highest and north window in the body of the church"] kneeleth five [figures] in these coates of armes in three several panes with this writting under them." In the first pane are the kneeling figures of a man and a woman, the former wearing spurs, bears on his tabard the arms of *Mainwaring*, and the latter on her mantle the arms of *Venables*. In the second pane are two kneeling figures of men, both bearing the *Fitton* (chevron) coat on their tabards, the first wearing spurs, and behind the other are shown his six sons. In the third pane is the kneeling figure of a woman with the arms of *Mainwaring* on her mantle, and behind her six daughters. Underneath was this inscription:—

Orate pro aiabus Thomæ ffyton filii Laurencii ffyton et Elene ux' eius et om' puerorum suorum qui istam fenestram [fieri] fecerunt.

*Translated:—*Pray for the souls of Thomas Fitton, son of Laurence Fitton, and Ellen, his wife, and of all their children, who caused this window to be made.

"In the heade of a windowe on the north side are these coates of Armes," *Fitton* (chevron coat) and *Hesketh*.² "In another windowe on the north side these two coates [*Poole* (Azure semee of fleurs-de-lys and a lion rampant Argent) and *Fitton* (chevron) coat] with a man and three sons kneeling, and a woman and seven daughters" (also kneeling), and a fragment of an inscription . . . *Thomæ Poule et . . . uxoris ejus*.³ "In a windowe upon the north side of the said church is the figure of a man and his sone after [i.e. behind] him, and a woman with a daughter behind her, kneeling, with these two coates of arms [*Fitton* of *Pownall* quartering *Erdeswick*,⁴ and *Fitton* (chevron coat)], and the inscription under . . . *Joh ffyton de Pownall et . . . uxor ejus*.⁵

¹ *Cheshire MS. Church Notes*. In this MS. the first two inscriptions are given as follows: *Ranulphus Maynwaring Armiger Margeriae* (sic *uxor' eius cum pueris suis*, and *Laurentius ffyton Miles, Agnes uxoris* (sic) *eius cum pueris suis*. But it is most probable that Randle Holme's transcripts are the most correct in this instance.

² The arms of *Hesketh* of *Rufford* are very similar to those of *Fitton*, being argent on a bend sable three garbs or. Randle Holme, by a mistake, makes the bend azure.

³ *Matilda*, or *Maud*, daughter of Thomas *Fitton*, married Thomas *Poole*, of *Poole*, in *Cheshire*.

⁴ Arms of *Erdeswick*, Argent three birds (? ravens') heads erased Sable beaked Or.

⁵ *Ellen*, daughter of Sir Laurence *Fitton*, Knt., married John *Fitton*, of *Pownall*.

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"In a windowe on ye south side¹ these coates with the writing under it with 5 sones and foure daughters," a shield quarterly of four, 1, *Fitton* (chevron coat); 2, *Siddington*; 3, *Fitton* (garb coat); 4, *Bechton*, and the shield of *Siddington* alone, the inscription being—

Orate pro aiabus Edwardi ffitton et Emmotæ uxis suæ et pro aiabus [Jobis ffitton] et Elene ux' sue . . . et Roberti Sedyngton et Elene uxoris sue.

Translated—Pray for the souls of Edward Fitton and Emma, his wife, and for the souls of [John Fitton] and Ellen, his wife, . . . and of Robert Sedyngton, and Ellen, his wife.

"In another windowe in the south Isle this coate [*Poole* quartering? *Buerton* and ? *Capenhurst*?] and these three inscriptions."

Orate pro bono statu Thome Poule ar' et Matilde uxoris sue . . .

Translated:—Pray for the good estate of Thomas Poole, Esq., and Matilda, his wife.³

"In the lower (second) south chancell window."⁴

Orate pro bono statu Ranulphi ffitton legum bacularii rectoris istius ecclesie qui istum fecit cancellum.

Orate pro aia Georgii Baguley rectoris hujus ecclesie qui rectoriam de novo construxit.

Translated:—Pray for the good estate of Randle Fitton, bachelor of laws, who erected this chancel. Pray for the soul of George Baguley, rector of this church, who built the rectory anew.⁵

"In the higher north [chancell] window."⁶

Orate pro aia Will Prydyn . . .

Translated:—Pray for the soul of William Prydyn . . . [He was rector from 1396-1424.]

Either in the same or an adjacent window was this fragmentary inscription, which has been preserved by Randle Holme.

Johannes Bröley et . . . uxor eius.

Translated:—John Bröley [i.e. Bromley] and . . . his wife.

"In another windowe in the said south isle are two men and one woman in these coates arnour [*Weever* . . . , and *Fitton* (chevron coat)] after [i.e. behind] the man is

¹ Called in the *MS. Church Notes*, "the upper south chancell window," that is probably that nearest the east end.

² The shield is, 1. and 4. *Poole*, 2. a chevron between three stags' heads, no colours given, and 3. a chevron between three birds, no colours given. The names *Buerton* and *Capenhurst* are given by Randle Holme.

³ See note¹.

⁴ *MS. Church Notes*, where the inscriptions are given better than by Randle Holme, who has omitted the last one.

⁵ Randle Fitton was rector from 1497 to 1536, and Baguley from 1470 to 1497. This shows that this glass was put up about 1520 when Fitton was living.

⁶ *MS. Church Notes*. This is omitted by Randle Holme.

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(sic) three sones and after the woman is (sic) 5 daughters but noe inscription."¹ "In another windowe these two coates [*Mainwaring* (with a label for the eldest son) and *Bulter of Bewsey*] with the writting under" *Willielmus Mainwaring ar.* "In the head of the chancell is (sic) 2 figures in coats armour with this inscription under them,"²

Orate pro bono statu Ric' Sutton et pro aiabus . . . [? ux' eius] qui istam fenestram fieri fecit Ano Dni millessimo quingentesimo quinto.

Translated:—Pray for the good estate of Richard Sutton and for the souls of . . . [his wives?], who caused this window to be made in the year of our Lord 1505.

The man is depicted wearing a tabard of arms, quarterly of four, 1 and 4 *Sutton ancient*, 2 and 3, *Sutton*, and on the woman's mantle is the *Worsley* coat, Argent on a chief Gules an annulet Or. In the *Cheshire Visitation* of Sir William Dugdale, 1663-4, as also in Ashmole's Notes, this figure is attributed to Sir Richard Sutton, Knt. the founder of Brasenose College, Oxford.

"In the windowes of the steeple these two figures and the writting under them, with 3 sones and 7 daughters," a man kneeling, wearing a tabard with the arms of *Pulford* (Sable a cross patonce Argent) intended for *Grosvenor* (who married the *Pulford* heiress) and on the woman's mantle *Fitton* (the chevron coat) and this inscription:—

Orate pro aia dne Johanne Grosvenor qui istam fenestram fieri fecit.

*Translated:—Pray for the soul of the lady Joan Grosvenor, who caused this window to be made.*³

"In another place in the same window this figure and inscription," a man kneeling wearing a tabard on which is the *Fitton* (chevron) coat, and underneath him *Robtus ffitton armiger.*

So far the Randle Holmes⁴ who conclude by giving rude sketches of 18 coats of arms "in severall places in the church," some of which were in the windows, and the others, as shown in the *MS. Church Notes*, being painted on the walls.

According to the *MS. Cheshire Church Notes* containing notes taken at Gawsorth in 1629, the south side of the church was enriched by a series of impaled shields, painted on the wall, and representing the alliances of the *Fittons*, the shields, of course, increasing in the number of their quarterings as they referred to marriages later in date.

¹ Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas *Fitton*, married Thomas *Weever*.

² The inscription is completed from the *MS. Cheshire Church Notes.* The date 1505, which is also noted by Ashmole in his Notes on Gawsorth, precludes this from being the Richard Sutton who lived in the 14th century, as suggested in the Sutton pedigree. It might possibly be intended for Sir Richard Sutton, the founder of Brasenose College, Oxford, as suggested by Ashmole and in the *Visitation of Cheshire, 1663-4*, but we have no evidence that he was ever married, and he certainly had no children. It is noteworthy that whilst Randle Holme gives the words *ux' eius*, they are not found in the *MS. Church Notes*, but the words in the third light of the window appear to have been destroyed before those Notes were made.

³ Joan, daughter of Sir Laurence *Fitton*, married Robert *Grosvenor*, of Hulme, son and heir of Sir Thomas *Grosvenor*, Knt. According to the *MS. Church Notes*, there were other inscriptions or fragments of them in some of the windows which the Randle Holmes did not copy. These, however, chiefly consisted of sentences recording that certain benefactors had caused the windows to be made, &c., but no new names are given.

The Church

The first shield was *Fitton of Chawell*,¹ fretty semée of fleur-de-lis (no colours given); the second was blank, the third *Fitton* (Argent a canton Gules, over all on a bend Azure three garbs Or) impaling *Orreby*; the fourth, *Fitton*, quartering *Orreby* and impaling *Legh of Bechton* (Azure two bars Argent, on a bend Gules three bezants) quartering *Bechton* (Azure three [half] spades Argent); the fifth, *Fitton*, quartering *Orreby*, *Legh of Bechton* and *Bechton*, impaling *Hesketh of Rufford* (Argent on a bend Sable, three garbs of the first); the sixth, *Fitton*, quarterly as the last, impaling *Legh of Lyme*; the seventh, *Fitton*, quarterly as the last, impaling *Siddington* (Argent a chevron between five cross-crosslets, three in base, Sable); the eighth, *Fitton*, quarterly as the last, impaling *Brereton*; the ninth, *Fitton*, quartering *Orreby*, *Legh of Bechton*, *Bechton*, and *Siddington*, and impaling *Harbottle* of Northumberland (quarterly of four, 1, Azure 3 icicles bendways Or, *Harbottle*, 2, Argent three escallops Gules . . . , 3, Argent three flesh-pots Gules, *Monboucher*, 4, Sable three waterbougets Argent, *Charron*); the tenth, *Fitton*, quartering *Orreby*, *Legh of Bechton*, *Bechton*, *Siddington*, *Harbottle*, *Monboucher*, *Charron* and . . . , impaling *Warburton of Arley* (quarterly of four, 1 and *Dutton*, 2 and 3, *Warburton*); the eleventh, *Fitton*, quartering *Orreby*, *Legh of Bechton*, *Baguley*, *Bechton*, *Siddington*, *Harbottle*, *Monboucher*, *Charron*, and . . . and bearing on a shield of pretence *Holcroft of Holcroft* (quarterly *Holcroft*, *Culcheth*, *Horton* and *Holcroft*); the twelfth, *Fitton*, quartering the same coats as in the last, and impaling *Barratt* (a coat of eight quarterings, several of which are not clearly recorded) and over all the quartered coat of *Holcroft* on a shield of pretence, a strange piece of bad heraldry, if properly copied. 'The thirteenth shield was a small one, Azure, a lion rampant between three fleur-de-lis Argent, for *Poole*² impaling the *Orreby* coat used for that of *Fitton*. The various marriages commemorated by the above shields will be found in the pedigree on pp. 40-46, and it is probable that under each shield was painted the names of the persons whose marriage it referred to. The only marriage in the series which is omitted is that of Thomas *Fitton* and Ellen *Mainwaring*, c. 1440, and this is perhaps due to the fact that he died before his father, and was never lord of *Gawsworth*. From the marriage of Sir Edmund *Fitton*, Bart., and Anne *Barratt* being shown, it is clear that these shields, or some of them, were painted as late as about the year 1600.

On the north side of the church were a number of smaller shields, which are described in the *MS. Church Notes* in the following order, a few corrections and additions being made from the *Randle Holmes*' notes. "Painted on ye north side of ye church," (1) *Venables* impaling *Mainwaring*, underneath it *Randolphus Manwaring*; (2) *Delves of Doddington* impaling *Mainwaring*, underneath *Johannes Manwaring miles*; (3) *Boteler of Bewsey* impaling *Mainwaring*, with a label for eldest son, and underneath *Willielmus filius dicti Johannis*; (4) *Warren* impaling *Mainwaring*, differenced by a mullet gules, and underneath *Willielmus filius Randul' senior*; (5) *Savage* (ancient) impaling *Mainwaring*, differenced by a crescent gules, and underneath *Randolphus Manwaring junior*. A glance at the *Mainwaring Pedigree* will show that these shields were intended to commemorate the alliances of the male members of that family, but by a strange error they have been painted reversed, the *Mainwaring* coat being on the sinister instead of the dexter side. The same strange mistake occurs in the following

¹ So called in the *MS. Church Notes*. To what family it refers I have no idea. The arms are entirely different to those of *Fitton* of *Bolyn*, or *Fitton* of *Gawsworth*.

² This is not the proper coat of *Poole* of *Poole*, but is one of the coats quartered by that family.

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shields, which are in continuation of those above described, and which are undoubtedly intended to illustrate the marriages of the daughters of the house of Mainwaring. The sixth shield (6) was *Mainwaring* impaling *Egerton of Wrinehill* (Gules a fesse ermine between three pheons Argent;¹ (7) *Mainwaring* impaling *Foulshurst of Crewe*; (8) *Mainwaring* impaling *Bromley of Badington* (so called in the MS., but the arms given are Argent on a chevron Gules 3 bezants, a bordure engrailed of the second;² (9) *Mainwaring* impaling *Orreby* (used for *Fitton*) and underneath *Thomas ffytton armiger*; (10) *Mainwaring* impaling *Davenport of Davenport*; (11) *Mainwaring* impaling *Needham of Cranage*; (12) *Mainwaring*, differenced by a bendlet Sable,³ impaling *Croxton*; (13) *Mainwaring* differenced by a bendlet Sable, impaling *Biddulph of Biddulph* (so in the MS., the arms being Argent, a chevron rompu between three crosses pommée Sable); (14) *Mainwaring*, differenced by a bendlet Sable,³ impaling *Rode of Rode*; (15) *Mainwaring* (undifferenced) impaling *Bechton* (used according to the MS. for *Davenport of Henbury*); (16) *Davenport of Henbury* (as the last) impaling *Mainwaring*, differenced by a crescent Gules and underneath *Randolphus Manwaring*; (17) *Mainwaring*, differenced by a bend Sable, impaling *Ward of Capesthorne* (so in the MS., but the arms given are those of Capesthorne, Argent a chevron between three martlets Sable);³ and the 18th and last coat, that of *Fitton of Fernelegh* (so in the MS) being the coat of *Fitton of Gawsworth* (with the canton Gules) differenced by a martlet Sable in chief. Two points are very noteworthy about these shields on the north side of the church, the one, that they represent the alliances of the Mainwaring family only, and secondly, that the position of the coats is exactly reversed throughout, the proper sinister being put on the dexter side, and the proper dexter on the sinister.⁵ This is an heraldic anomaly very difficult to explain, and yet strange to say the same is found on the shields on the tower. I am of opinion that the shields on the north side were of much earlier date than those on the south. They were placed in a row at the foot of the wall paintings.”

Today the church windows contain modern glass, both good and bad. The worst example is the east window by Wailes of Newcastle, with its ponderous blues and vigorous reds, set up last century by Thomas Ryle Daintry when residing at North Rode. The time is overdue for this to be replaced with something more worthy, and as Polehampton has said, “The glass in the east window speaks for itself.”

The simple stained glass window to the west of the pulpit in the south wall, is to the memory of Fred Trueman, who lost his life in the first world war. In the centre is a reproduction of St. George and the Dragon, as depicted in the former wall painting. Surrounding the main figures are eight shields of arms including those of former manorial lords, and

¹ So in the MS., not a common form of the Egerton coat.

² Randle Holme has the ordinary Bromley coat.

³ This bendlet is made sinister by Randle Holme, but possibly, wrongly.

⁴ Randle Holme calls it as *Warburton*, and the colours agree, but the birds in the Warburton coat are not martlets.

⁵ Both Randle Holme and the MS. *Church Notes* agree in this, so that it must have been so on the shields.

The Church

their family alliances. The inscription on the window reads "In memory of Fred Trueman, 10th Cheshires, who died for his country in France, 8th March, 1916."

The next window to the west has the inscription "To the glory of God and in loving memory of William Donald Lawton, who died May 22nd, A.D. 1931, aged nine years." This window is dedicated by Lillie Langtry (Miss Langtry, now Mrs. Steel, lives in Macclesfield). The centre light of the window depicts the Saviour holding a child in the crook of his left arm, with a boy and a young maiden at his feet.

The best example of modern stained glass craftsmanship is the memorial window of three lights erected by Rector Stephens to his son George, whom the author knew well. He lost his life in the second world war when in his early manhood. The centre light depicts St. Christopher with the infant Christ on his shoulder, a most suitable group in every sense, and the inscription reads "To the Glory of God and in Memory of Flt. Lieut. George Herbert Stephens, R.A.F., who lost his life June 2nd, 1940.—One of the few to whom the many owe so much." The stained glass window also incorporates the arms of the Royal Air Force, the arms of the Diocese of Chester, the crest and motto of "Neville Velis" borne by the Stephens family, and the arms of Worksop College.

In addition to the loss of the beautiful medieval glass in 1851, the old seventeenth century panelled box pews were thrown out, some of these finding their way to Pott Shrigley. In consequence of the refurnishing, the oak pews and stalls in the church are comparatively new, being a legacy from Curate Massie's days. Until Polehampton found them being used as pegs for slovenly caps and farmers' head wear, the stall ends terminated in carved triangular finials; however, no doubt to keep faith with his threat of removal if they were not better used, early in his incumbency the finials were all sawn off without further warning. Two of the more elaborate of the chancel stall ends have been returned to the church, and placed on the rector's stall. This is the only incident in Polehampton's splendid rectorship which appears at first glance to have been an altogether unwarranted high handed action, and hurtful to the furnishings of the building.

The present oak screen which divides the chancel from the body of the church, and occupies the site of the original pre-Reformation Rood Screen, was erected at a cost of £270 to the memory of "The Rev. Edward Massie who died Jan. 21, 1893." The small brass tablet placed on the south wall records that the screen was "given by H. V. S.

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Arkwright and other nephews and nieces." Constructed in five bays the screen is slender for its size, and although unkindly criticised in the past it is good work of its period and one of the more pleasant things associated with Curate Massie's ministry at Gawsworth.¹

Suspended from the cresting is a splendid pelmet emblazoned with the arms of past and present manorial lords of Gawsworth. The greater part of this needlework was accomplished by Mrs. Polehampton. The shields of arms reading from left to right are as follows:

1. NEVILLE. Gules a saltire argent an annulet sable pierced of the field.
2. STAFFORD de SUTHWICK. Or a chevron gules within a bordure engrailed sable.
3. SIR BARTHOLOMEW de BADLESMERE. Argent a fesse gemelled gules.
4. BAGULEY. Or three lozenges azure.
5. WELWICK. Argent three escallops gules.
6. HARBOTTLE. Azure three iciles bendways or.
7. BECHTON. Azure three spades argent.²
8. ORREBY. Argent two chevrons and a canton gules.
9. SIDDINGTON. Argent a chevron between five cross crosslets fitche (2 & 3) sable.
10. FITTON. Argent a carton gules over all on a bend azure three garbs or.
11. de WARWICKE. Chequy or and azure a chevron ermine.
(NEWBURGH).

¹The Gawsworth Parish Magazine for October 1894 records:—

"Wednesday, Sept. 12th, will long be remembered as a red-letter day in Gawsworth, because in the Service of re-opening and dedication we reached the crowning point of all our labours, for the improvement and beautifying of our Parish Church. The new organ; the beautiful oak screen, designed by Mr. John Oldrid Scott (son of Sir Gilbert Scott, the architect of the previous restoration of the Church, in 1850-2), and made by Mr. Bridgeman, of Lichfield, and presented by the Misses Arkwright and other relations in memory of our old friend and pastor, the Rev. Edward Massie; the eagle lectern, given in memory of our late neighbour and benefactor, Mr. Thornycroft, and his second son, the Rev. J. Mytton Thornycroft; the furniture for the Communion Table and East End; these were all dedicated to the honour and service of Almighty God by the Bishop of the Diocese. A large number of neighbouring Clergy assembled to assist in the Service, and there was a crowded congregation of parishioners, and of the general public, to whom Gawsworth and its Church is always an object of special interest and attraction.

The music was well rendered by the Choir (the male portion of which appeared for the first time in cassocks and surplices), assisted for the occasion by many willing friends.

The Bishop preached the sermon. He gave a most interesting account of the previous history of the Church and spoke some most helpful words upon the debt which we of this generation owe, both to our ancestors and to our descendants,—"

²In connection with these four coats the following extract from I.D.14, 268 Visitation of Cheshire 1580 is interesting: "These Armes taken owte of an old masse booke at Gouseworth wherein they wer fayne illumyned longe a goe."

The Church

12. LILLEBURNE. Sable three water bougets argent.¹
13. MANBOUCHER. Argent three pots gules.
14. LEGH. Azure two bars argent over all a bend gules charged with three bezants.
15. BEAUCHAMP. Gules cruicily (3 & 3) and a fesse or.
16. HOLCROFT. Argent a cross within a bordure engrailed sable.
17. STANHOPE. Quarterly ermine and gules a crescent for difference.
18. RICHARDS. Sable on a chevron argent between in chief two lions rampant combatant and in base a garb or three pellets.

In recent times the tower vestry has been divided from the body of the church by a flimsy wooden screen, which completely interrupts the view of the church from the great west door. Still, if much that was lovely has perished through ignorance and want of proper appreciation, and certain additions ill advised, Gawsworth church still retains much that is beautiful

Cut in the sandstone of the tower are a number of interesting initials and dates carved by old and young Gawsworthians in by-gone days, these include the following:—EM. 1678, 'William' Hammond 1698, Joseph Mottershed 1698, Thomas Chorley 1769. On the north side of the tower

¹ Referring to the notes of the Rev. W. E. Clarke, the Windsor Herald states he found this coat attributed in the Ordinaries to both Elderton (or Alderton) of Co. Northants. and John de Lilleburne (Ashmole and Surrey Rolls), and from his research he is fairly certain that it is not the coat of Bouchier, as was at first suggested. On the other hand, Earwaker "East Cheshire" Vol. II, p. 580, attributes this coat to CHARRON. In *Archaeologia Aeliana*, Third Series, Vol. III. and Vol. VI. Third Series (1906 and 1910 respectively), Mr. C. H. Blair discussing an armorial manuscript, probably of the sixteenth century, which contained 160 shields, in colours, records this description of the Harbottle coat: "HARBOTTOLL. Quarterly: 1. Silver three escallops gules. WELWICK. 2. Sable three water bougets silver. 3. Silver three pitchers gules. MANBOUCHER. 4. Quarterly: 1 & 4 silver a fess indented or three fusils gules, MANBOUCHER. 2 & 3 azure three 'hair bottles' silver, HARBOTTLE. Mr. Blair remarks that in connection with Welwick, it is curious to notice that Kelke of Barnetby, Lincs., also bore these arms (Papworth 681 and Burke's General Armory); and that William Kelke (the first of Barnetby) married the daughter and 'sole heir of Ralph Wellwick of Wellwick' (Visit: of Lincolnshire in 1562, Genealogist, IV., 186). THE SECOND QUARTER IS USUALLY GIVEN FOR CHARRON, ON WHAT AUTHORITY I HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO DISCOVER. THE ARMS OF CHARRON WERE QUITE DIFFERENT AND BEAR A RESEMBLANCE TO THOSE IN THE FIRST QUARTER. In the roll of Edw: II, 'Sire Richard de Charoune de goullys a une chevroun e iii eskalops de argent.' The same arms are blasoned in Grimaldi's roll of Edw: III, and in Jenyn's Ordinary."

In another paper read by Mr. Blair in 1909, he gives the same coat for Charron, citing as his authority the Parliamentary roll of Edw: II, and "The History of Northumberland" by the Rev. John Hodgson. In the same paper he gives "LILBURN, Sable three bougets silver," and quotes as his authority the Roll of Rich: II, edited by Thomas Willement, 1834, and "The Natural History and Antiquities of Northumberland" by John Wallis. Support for this is to be found in Glover's Visitation of Cheshire (Vol. XVIII, H.S., p. 99) where, dealing with the Fitton quarterings, we find "II. Argent, three water-bougets sable." On the other hand the shield of the Duke of Northumberland has no less than 892 Quarterings of Alliances, and there on coat number 713—"Sable three water bougets 2 & 1 Argent, CHARON."

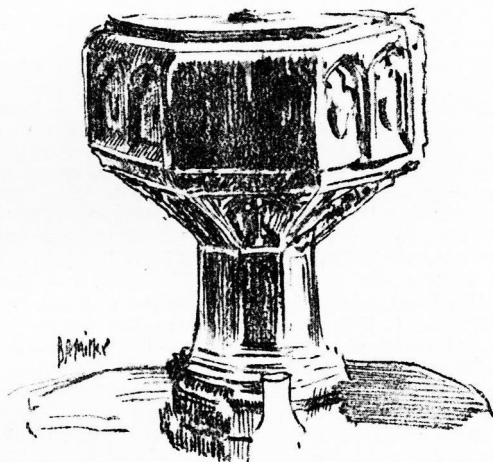
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vestry is the following inscription:—"The Organ rebuilt and recased was restored on the singers' gallery above x1918x in memory of Catherine Mother of Herbert Edward Polehampton Rector who by her example furthered the restoration here of Catholick Faith and Practice. She died at Carshalton 27 January 1911 and Lies Buried at Frome. Pray for her soul."

It commemorates the mother of Father Herbert Edward Polehampton, M.A., who brought much of the lost colour and dignified worship back to Gawsworth.

The font is coeval with the present church; it is octagonal in shape. The sides are carved with sixteen Perpendicular style tracery panels, each having plain shields in the insets. The base of the font is new, and the large bowl has been badly restored in the past. Formerly the font was placed on the south side of the church, close to the porch. The brass water ewer was given by Mrs. Polehampton, the mother of Rector Polehampton.

The two old chests placed one either side of the central aisle date from the seventeenth century, and contain church furnishings, one bearing the inscription "W.M. E.M. C.W. 1679." A taller chest of the eighteenth century now serves as a Lady altar, and is placed in the south west



The Fifteenth Century Font.

The Church

corner of the nave. The wardens' chairs were formerly kept in the chancel but were placed in their present position when Rector Polehampton presented the existing wardens' staves to the church. The seventeenth century brass heads of these wands are extremely rare, and were brought to Gawsworth from Somerset. There are two verges, one surmounted with the Bishop's mitre, and the other by the statue of St. James the Apostle, with the pilgrim's staff in his hand.¹

To the south of the Tower arch are two bronze plaques commemorating the fallen of two world wars. Their names are:—

The Great War of 1914-1919.

Fred Trueman	George Bennett	James Johnson
Samuel Bayley	John Hargreaves	William Torkington
Arthur Swindells	George Buxton	John Nixon
William Hudson	Frederick Ridgway	

¹Extract from the Rector's letter, printed in the Parish Magazine for September, 1955:

I received from Mr. Raymond Richards a most interesting letter written whilst he was in Spain last month. It should prove of great interest to us who live under the patronage of S. James the Great, one of the Apostles, and in whose honour our Church is dedicated. Mr. Richards says: "When in Spain this week I followed in the footsteps of countless pilgrims who through the ages have made the journey to Santiago de Compostela, to visit the shrine of Saint James, our patron Saint of Gawsworth; Spain claims him with pride as the patron Saint of the whole of that country. It was a remarkable pilgrimage for us through the splendid province of Galicia, involving a journey of some 130 miles.

The name Santiago is, of course, S. James, and Compostela is a corruption of *campus stellae*—a reference to the star which legend says shone above the tomb of the apostle after his burial beneath the High Altar of the Cathedral. Santiago is a delightful city, and the Cathedral and attendant buildings quite magnificent. In this small place there are no less than forty churches, apart from convents, monastic establishments and an ancient University. The buildings are all lovely, and a joy to behold.

The presence of the great Apostle seems to permeate Santiago, and apart from the many statues of the saint, the city is full of his symbols—the pilgrim staff and scallop-shell, and the urn and star dominate the architectural decoration of its city.

I am told that for centuries the road to Santiago de Compostela was one of the great pilgrim routes of the Western world—second only to Rome, and that S. Francis came here to worship at the shrine of Saint James, as did many notable English folk who were particularly assiduous in their pilgrimages." Mr. Richards then describes the Cathedral, and speaking of the Shrine, he says: "Above and to the east of the High Altar a stairway leads up to the great silver covered statue of S. James, seated upon a throne, with the pilgrim's staff in his hand. When I climbed up, I noticed that the silver cope of the apostle, embellished with scallops is worn thin by the kisses of countless pilgrims. Immediately beneath the Altar is the lighted crypt in which lie the remains of the Saint in a silver coffin."

I was delighted to receive this first-hand account of the shrine of our Patron Saint, and to receive from Mr. Richards a silver model of this great statue, made by one of the many silversmiths whose shops are grouped round the Cathedral Square.

W. EDGAR CLARKE.

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The World War of 1939-45.

Raymond George	Harry Goodier A.B.	Harry Goodier Fus.
Blench	George Herbert	Wilfred Leonard
John Knight	Stephens	

The present organ was placed in the restored tower gallery when the west end was rearranged in 1917. It is a modern instrument, and took the place of the old 1836 organ purchased second hand and set up at the south west corner of the church, completely blocking the window.¹

No account of Gawsworth would be complete without due reference to the church music and choir, and as Polehampton observes, the church was no whit behind others in the possession of an orchestra in the eighteenth century. In the early nineteenth century Mrs. Brandt, the wife of Curate Francis Brandt, records that on the west gallery in 1818 was "every description of musical instrument under the sun." Whatever its composition, it remained until 1835. Some entries in the churchwarden's book about this period are interesting:

- 1833. "New flute, £1 11s. 6d."
- "J. Mottershead for repairing clarionet, 5s. 6d."
- "W. Mottershead for five reeds, 1s. 8d."
- "Sam Lawton for four violin strings, 4s. 0d."
- 1834. "Geo. Walker for repairing fiddle, 6s. 0d."
- "M. Mottershead for reeds, 1s. 0d."
- 1835. "S. Lawton for bass viol strings, 4s. 2d."

This is the last entry in regard to the orchestra.

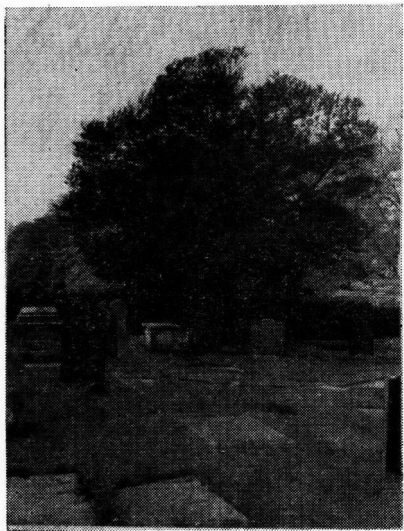
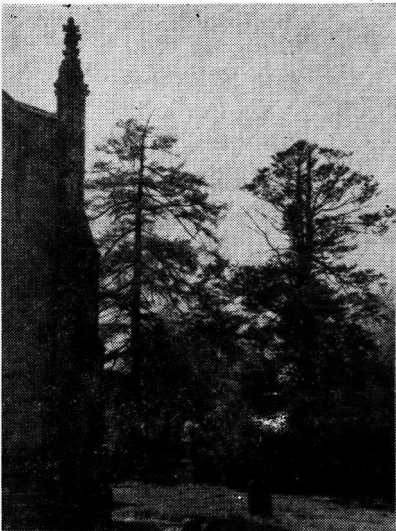
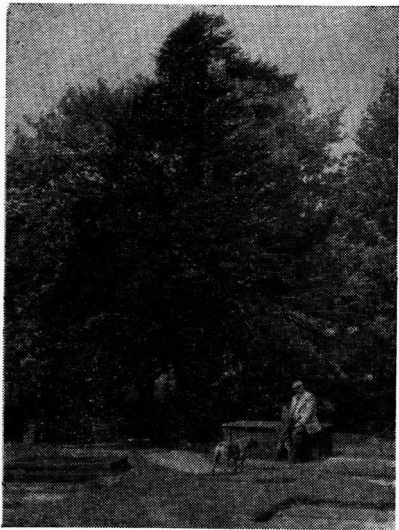
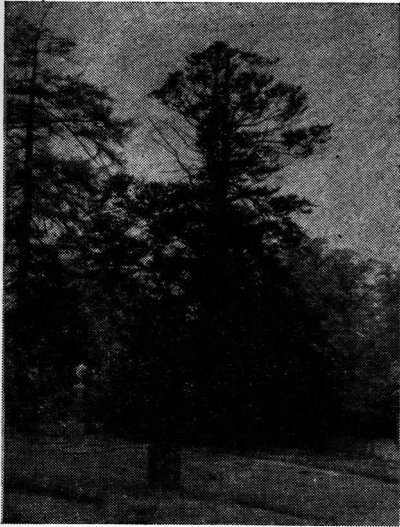
In 1837 occurs the first mention of an organ:

- "Repairing of organ box, 2s. 6d."
- "Henry Holland for blowing organ, 8s. 0d."

Meanwhile, one pauses to ponder, in parenthesis, on the passing of church orchestras in general. In doing so one heaves a sigh of honest regret. These orchestras may have been in the main crude, but let it be put to the credit of the men who composed them that each was ready at all times to do his best in the public worship of the parish. Each took pride—very likely something more!—in displaying a knowledge of his particular instrument.

Of this organ, Mr. Penrose speaking in January, 1894, stated:—

"Owing to the peculiar shape of the Church three or four different plans for the organ have had to be discussed, each involving a great deal of letter writing; organ builders and architects have been consulted, plans drawn and discussed, all causing delays which were sometimes long and vexatious. But I really believe we are beginning to see daylight, and that in a very few months our hopes will be fulfilled."



The Churchyard Yews.

The Manor of Gawsworth

What wonder of musical accompaniment the Church deprived itself of in the nineteenth century! It allowed the organ to usurp the place of a multiform individuality. Those men who, of their day, were experts on fiddle, viol, horn, bassoon, clarionet or serpent contributed an individual part, combining to make up the whole. Nowadays congregations are at the mercy of one individual who, if he has a musical soul all is right, if he hasn't everything is wrong.

Much has been written about the "tyranny of the organ," and not without reason. Was it not Wren who called an organ "a box of whistles."

Gawsworth, dispensing with its orchestra in 1836, purchased a second-hand organ in lieu thereof which occupied the place from whence "cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery and dulcimer and all kinds of music" had, shortsightedly, been expelled, until 1895. In this year the out-of-date organ was sold in favour of an up-to-date instrument. Unfortunately, this instrument was erected on the floor space, blocking the south-west window, and cramping the west end. In 1917 the west end was re-arranged and the organ, rebuilt and enlarged, moved to the recently restored gallery.

Organists who have served the church are:

1839. Wm. Nicholson	1910. S. Cooper
1842. Edw. Ellis	1913. John Goodwin
1849. Wm. Leigh	1914. John Mitchell
1856. Wm. Warrington	1916. John Goodwin
1881. Charles Godwin ¹	1924. Miss Nellie Smith
1936. William Norman Roughley	

From orchestra to choir is not a long step, and there is a reference to singers in the Churchwardens' Accounts of 1833, when the "singers" were annually paid the sum of ten pounds. This payment, varying somewhat in amount, continues till 1850. In 1837 there had been added to the choir an officially paid leader and instructor at a "Sallery of £2 10s. Od." These leaders included Messrs. Clegg, Knowles, Booth and Cosgrove, who successively held office till 1883. In 1856 the choir was composed of four, viz.: "John Gee, Saml. Lawton, Ellen Holland and Priscilla Whittaker," to each of whom was paid "for singing £1 10s. Od." From this date until 1885 there is no record as to how the singing was supplied. Presumably a quartet of voices, with Mr. Cosgrove as leader,

¹ Still living in Gawsworth 1957.



The Georgian Gate Piers leading to the Yard of
Gawsworth Church.



Medieval musician.

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carried on. In, or about this latter year a scheme was afoot for the introduction of the east end bogey. In 1896 this was well established in its position of autocratic usurpation. In 1904 it was gently disestablished, and relegated—with its threadbare cassock, ragged surplice and general irreverence—to the ground floor at the west end, the gallery being no longer existent. It survived here till 1910, when, owing to dearth of boys and lack of part singers, it ceased to be, and the congregation became its own choir. After the restoration of the gallery in 1914, chanters were stationed upon it until called to the war, when their places were filled by women—locally known as “enchanters”—who since have continued, with admirable result, to sustain the congregation in its worship. In 1952 the choir was robbed, and with a full attendance of six men and some twenty women the old church music is sung in simple harmony.

Turning now to the bells in more detail than the brief reference on page 74, the history of the Gawsworth ring is of much interest. A note in the December number (1889) of the parish magazine states:

“It appears from the inscriptions and dates on the bells that the first peal of five bells was put into the belfry in the year 1776 by Rudhall, of Gloucester. So the peal remained until after the restoration of the church in 1851.”

This theory, however, as existing records show, is incorrect, and it is something of a surprise to learn that certain of the eight bells contain pre-Reformation metal of the fifteenth century. In 1549 the church possessed “a ryng of iii bells,” a fourth being added in 1619. In regard to this bell we gather from the registers that it was cast to the order of Sir Edward Fytton. Here is the extract from the burial register:

“Sir Edward Fytton, who made ye 4 and least Bell.”

Apparently this would be a new treble added to the existing three. There is no record as to the date of the fifth bell, but, assuming what is more than probable, that the original three bells were in no sort of tune together, and that the new bell did but add to the general discordancy, one is driven to the conclusion that in 1776 the four were sent to the Gloucester foundry and, with added metal, returned to the church as a ring of five. The bells being inscribed:

“Thomas Rudhall, Founder, Gloucester, 1776.”

Mr. J. W. Clarke of Mollington, Chester, who made a careful examination of the Gawsworth bells, noted that “in 1850 one of the gudgeons of the third bell snapped whilst ringing was in progress and the bell was

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flung violently against the timbers of the frame thus giving the ringers a very terrifying experience. A subsequent examination revealed the fact that the bell was cracked at the crown and shoulder so that recasting was desirable if not absolutely necessary. To help matters the Rev. E. Massie, curate, offered to pay the cost of a new bell to make a ring of six if the parish would recast the broken third, but this project appears to have received little support and the cracked bell was eventually repaired by the village blacksmith, who fixed a hoop or iron round the shoulder. The inscription was thus covered and no record of it remains. It was not until 1856-7 that a restoration scheme was carried out by the Whitechapel Foundry when the broken bell was at last recast and the new treble added, the former being cast in 1857 and the latter in 1856. At the same time the timber frame was repaired and extended, the bells rehung and all fittings made good."

So the restored peal remained until 1889. In this year it was found that some of the bells were in bad condition. The parish magazine at this time states that:

"The fifth and tenor are very seriously cracked, damage has been done to the second and third which has injured their tone. The treble is unmusical in character (this was one of the two new bells cast in 1857), while the fourth bell (recast in the same year by the same firm) is an excellent bell and will not be recast, but will be taken to London and the other bells tuned to its note."

The bell frame too by 1890 appears to have been in an unsafe condition, obviously as a result of prolonged neglect and ill use. The fifth and tenor bells were cracked, no doubt by being "clocked" for funerals, while the frame was unsteady and a danger to the tower. The founders were again called in and after due consideration a very extensive scheme was embarked upon. All the bells were recast except the fourth (the third of Rudhall's ring of five recast in 1857) and hung in a new frame built to house eight bells "in case the generous impulse of any friends should prompt them to increase the peal into eight." Having raised £250 however, no further friends came forward and it was not until 1907 that, largely by the efforts of the ringers the octave was completed by Taylor of Loughborough.

With a diameter of $40\frac{1}{4}$ in. and strike note G, the tenor bell weighs approximately 11 cwt.

As noted by Mr. Clarke, on the treble and second, which hang from iron headstocks, the vine-leaf and grape border encircles the bell below

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the inscription and the circular trade mark of Taylor of Loughborough appears on the waist. The style of lettering on these two bells can only be described as "fancy." The initials on the treble are those of John Mottershead and Richard Thornycroft and those on the second of Herbert Edward Polehampton, rector 1904-1925. In the present ring only two of the original Rudhall inscriptions have survived, that on the fourth, and on the tenor which also carried "Thomas Rudhall Gloucester Founder 1776."

As a result of the outbreak of war in 1939 the bells again became silent, and with subsequent dilapidations it became necessary for a complete restoration to be undertaken. After much delay the work was completed early in 1956 by Taylors of Loughborough, and the ring once again is in good order.

In the ringing chamber are three boards recording peals rung at different times. They are as follows:

The Bells of St. James's Tower.

This Tablet

Is to commemorate the repeating of the Grandsire Doubles, to the amount of 1,870 changes; which were Rung in excellent Stile in 1 hrs. and 10 mints. on Jany. 8th, 1870: being the greatest number of changes ever rung on these Bells; and corresponding with the date of the year.

The above changes were composed by Mark Green, and rung by the following persons, conducted by Charles Lomas:

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Charles Lomas | 4. Mark Green |
| 2. Andrew B. Lomas | 5. John R. Henshall |
| 3. Abram Lomas | 6. John Gee |

Weight of Tenor, 18 cwt.

Rev. E. Massie, Minister.

Robert Mottershead }
Josiah Thompstone } Churchwardens

B. Treherne, Esq. }
John Slater } Sidesmen

William Warrington, Organist.

William Barrett, Clerk.

(in point of fact, the tenor bell weighs only between eleven and twelve hundredweight).

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Chester Diocesan Guild.

Macclesfield Branch.

At S. James's, Gawsworth, on March 21st, 1904, a peal of Grandsire Minor, 5,040 changes, in 3 hours 2 minutes, was rung by the following members as a welcome to the Rev. H. E. Polehampton, M.A., it being the first peal rung on the bells.

Mark Stanway, Treble	John M. Davenport, 4th
Saml. P. Bayley, 2nd	Thos. Mottershead, 5th
Saml. Robinson, 3rd	Edwd. Johnson, Tenor

Conducted by E. Johnson.

John Mottershead, John Thompstone, Churchwardens.

Percy Lomas, James Fisher, Mark Pierson, Henry Malbon, James Hague, Sidesmen.

The Chester Diocesan Guild of Bellingrings.

(Macclesfield Branch).

At the Parish Church, Gawsworth, a peal of Grandsire Triples, 5,040 changes, was rung in 3 hrs. 3 mins. on Sept. 11, 1919.

The first Peal on the eight Bells.

(Vickers six part peal).

Treble	Joseph B. Lomas
2nd	Frank Stoneley
3rd	M. H. Davenport
4th	Herbert Davenport
5th	S. P. Bayley
6th	(Conductor) A. B. Lomas, Junr.
7th	Thomas Mottershead
Tenor	Arthur Lomas
	Herbert E. Polehampton, Rector.
	John Mottershead, James Fisher (Churchwardens).

An interesting peal was rung on April 13, 1913, as a farewell to one of the ringers about to migrate to foreign lands, by members of his own family. Here is the record:

Treble	H. Lomas, ætat 42, nephew of A. B. sen. and D. L.
2nd	A. B. Lomas, sen. ætat 63, brother of D. L.
3rd	A. B. Lomas, jun. ætat 40, son of A. B. L.
4th	D. Lomas, ætat 57, uncle of A. B. L., jun.
5th	J. B. Lomas (Conductor), ætat 32, son of A. B. L., sen.
6th	P. Lomas, ætat 44, brother of H. L.
7th	T. B. Lomas, ætat 28, son of A. B. L., sen.
Tenor	C. V. Lomas, ætat 26, son of A. B. L., sen.

Such is the history of the bells.

Although Gawsworth Church tower has long been the home of centuries of jackdaws, it has been found necessary to exclude these birds from the

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bell chamber by placing wire guards behind the louvres. Until recently the belfry floor was feet deep in twigs brought in by these noisy birds, and the risk of fire was considerable. The displaced jackdaw colony, however, being more or less gregarious, frequently associates with the parish Rooks.

The old benefaction board now in the ringers' room records:—

BENEFACTIONS

To the poor of Gawsorth.

BY	FYTTON . GERARD . 15 . L. TO WHICH . THE . PARISH ADDED 5 . L. AND IS SECURITY AND PAY'S INTEREST FOR THE WHOLE TO BE DISTRIBUTED TO POOR HOUSEKEEPER'S RESIDENT IN THE PARISH. NOT BEING PENSIONERS ON EVERY ST. THOMAS'S DAY BY AND AT THE DISCRETION OF THE MINISTER AND CHURCH WARDEN'S	20
ALSO	THE PARISH IS SECURITY AND PAY'S INTEREST AND TO THE SAME USE FOR	23
BY	THE REVD. MR. HAMMOND, RECTOR, SECURITY AND PAY'S INTEREST. THE CHAPEL-IN-LE-FRITH TURNPIKE, TO BE DISTRIBUTED AS ABOVE ON EVERY ST. THOMAS'S DAY	50
BY	JOHN UPTON TO THE SCHOOL OF GAWSWORTH FOR WHICH THE PARISH IS SECURITY AND PAYS INTEREST	50
BY	THE REVD. MR. HALL SECURITY BUXTON TURNPIKE, THE INTEREST (PAYABLE TO THE SCHOOL MASTER OF GAWSWORTH) OF 20. L. TO BUY BIBLES AND OF THE OTHER 20. L. TO THE SAID SCHOOL-MASTER	40
BY	THOS HAMMOND SECURITY BUXTON TURNPIKE, THE INTEREST TO BE DISTRIBUTED TO POOR HOUSEKEEPER'S RESIDENT IN THE PARISH NOT BEING PENSIONERS ON EVERY ST. THOMAS'S DAY	100
BY	ELIZABETH MIRIAM WILSON TOWARDS THE SUP-PORT OF THE SCHOOL	100

These charitable donations are not complete, the most important gift in later years being the Wade and Tickle bequests.

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The Rev. John Tickle who was non-resident Rector of Gawsworth from 1786 to 1803 left to the Parish £200, and in 1821 Wade Stubbs bequeathed £500 to Gawsworth to be applied in the education of poor children born in the parish. As there are now no poor children in the accepted sense deprived of education, the accumulated interest of this bequest is being used for purposes not envisaged by the Donor. Wade Stubbs was a half cousin of the author's Grandmother Brooker, and as his will has never been published before, the document, which is of considerable interest is printed in full in the appendix notes.

Turning now to the precincts of the church; the lych gate, erected in 1907, is reminiscent of fifteenth century work, but unfortunately the timber used in its construction has not weathered well, and considerable renewal has been necessary recently.

From 1898 until 1904 the church and its precincts were closed to non-parishioners, save at the time of divine service, or when a three days' notice had been given to the rector of proposed visits. Apparently for years visitors from outlying districts and the industrial areas had created a gross scandal, being allowed to use church and yard as tea room and gardens. In 1898 Mr. Goldie, the newly appointed rector, took drastic measures. He closed church and churchyard to the public. Book and press unkindly criticised him. There might have been want of tact. His action, however, was misjudged by both. He abolished once and for all a very grievous state of affairs and taught an irreverent public, through six weary years, to regard with reverence a spot hallowed and rendered sacred by episcopal consecration. After this severe and timely lesson, it became possible to throw open again both church and churchyard to a public which had learnt its lesson, and from which little or no trouble has since been experienced.

In the churchyard many interesting memorials are to be found. The flat stones north and south of the church, which are such a feature, were completely buried until 1904 beneath a tangle of overgrown grass, sorrel and dock, which obscured much of the beautiful lettering of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The oldest stone, 1609, lies under the extreme south-east window. It memorialises a member of the Fytton family. The stones on this side are well worthy of attention, if only from an educational point of view. Idle moments might be spent with advantage in studying old-world design and lettering. They tell of past simplicity as opposed to modern vulgarity.

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A charming headstone much weathered placed near the priest's chancel door on the north side, reads;

“Thomas Corbishley was a Trooper in ye King's
army part of which passed through Gawsworth in
ye march to Derby in 1745.

Reader take notice
that on the 12th day of Feb. 1760

Tho. Corbishley
A Brave Veteran Dragoon

Here went into
His quarters
But remember that when
The Trumpet Calls
He'll out and march again.”

Perhaps the most beautiful stone of all is the simple one beneath the west yews which reads:

HERE LYETH
J O A N E P A S S
1624.

By the south porch is the ruined base of the fifteenth century churchyard calvary, with its much weathered figures of animals. The stepped base now supports an oak cross made of timber from the old priest's house, Macclesfield. A similar stepped cross, with stump which may be even earlier in date, is situated in the village, near the Warren. It is very likely an ancient Preaching Cross, of which several examples survive in East Cheshire.

A particularly pleasing feature of the north east side of the old world churchyard is the fine early Georgian stone gateway, the piers depicting the emblematic skull and crossbones boldly cut on each face.

Against the adjoining wall were situated the “parish stocks,” a good picture of these when in situ is seen in illustration on page 69, reproduced from a rare drawing in the possession of Mr. Albert Bailey. And nearer the pool, in all likelihood stood the “ducking stool,” regretted, perchance, by the male population, where the brawling woman may have had her ardour damped.

A marble funereal urn set up on a decaying stone pedestal on the north wall of the church overlooking the church pool, bears the following lines:

“In Memory of Isaac Thornycroft, the 3rd son of John and Ann Thornycroft, of Tidnock, in this Parish. He died April 17th, 1842, aged 22 years.

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“The yew trees waves thy tomb above
A sorrowing Brother's work of love;
If dead in Christ, thou hence shalt rise
With Him to share God's Paradise
And freely eat of life's own tree,
Whose fruit is for eternity.”

This memorial was carved by the deceased's brother, the celebrated sculptor Thomas Thornycroft (1815-1885), of Great Tidnock Farm, Gawsworth, who left his native village in 1835. He mounted the London coach at the bottom of Tidnock Lane, and in later years built up a national reputation as a great sculptor and engineer. He married Mary Francis (1814-1895), herself a noted sculptress and the daughter of the famous John Francis (1780-1861), who was the pupil of the great Chantrey.

One of the sons of Thomas and Mary Thornicroft was the brilliant Sir W. Hamo Thornycroft, R.A. (1850-1925) and a plaster copy of his General Gordon¹ is a treasured possession of Gawsworth village school.

In 1913 Lord Harrington gave a triangular piece of land to the south of the old graveyard and after many irritating delays primarily by the Bishop's solicitors, the grant of “an addition to Gawsworth churchyard” was completed. The formal document of the conveyance beautifully written on velum embellished with seals forms part of the estate papers preserved with the Gawsworth muniments.

At the extreme end of this new ground a further enclosure has since been walled in, being private hallowed ground, upon which stands the Richards mausoleum. This building is constructed of old materials brought from the old school at Knutsford, originally erected at the sole expense of Wilbraham Tatton, father of the 1st Baron Egerton of Tatton in 1830. The quoins and massive doorway are fashioned from stone originally brought from the Millington quarry.

Gawsworth churchyard, bounded on its eastern side by the original Tudor brick wall, and on its northern side by ancient yews and silent pools, presents a picture of rural loveliness. It is approached from the Congleton Road from the west through a noble avenue of limes, and from the east beneath the shade of ancient sycamores.

The living of Gawsworth church once valued in the King's Books at

¹ For a list of the portrait busts which depicted members of many wellknown and local families of the day see Dictionary of British Sculptors.

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£7 4s. 4¼d. was later one of considerable opulence until the revaluation earlier this century. The tithes were commuted in 1848 for £750.

Many documents relating to the old tithe Rent charges still survive, and provide interesting records of former tenants' names. Unfortunately the churchwardens and constables accounts date only from 1833 and 1778 respectively, and very few other parish records have been preserved.

The splendid parish registers of Gawsworth, dating from 1557, have been transcribed at the author's invitation by Dr. Robert Dickinson, and are published supplementary to this volume.

The following is a list of the church plate.

(a) An exquisite Tudor paten and chalice—the paten inscribed “*Verba quae ego loquor spiritus sunt et vita,*” and the chalice of the same period, marked “*Caro non prodest quicquam spiritus est qui vivificat.*”¹ The chalice is a charming example of its period, and although undated its general appearance, according to Mr. Charles Oman of the Victoria and Albert Museum, is quite compatible with an Edward VI. date, but in the absence of any date or hall-mark, it is perhaps safer to attribute it to the very beginning of the reign of Elizabeth, when many of the goldsmiths making communion cup continued to use the old designs of the period of Edward VI. The chalice is silver 6¾ in. in height, diameter Bowl 4 in., Foot 4 in. Weight 13 ozs. The paten is silver, diameter 5 3-16 in. Weight 3 ozs.

(b) Large Georgian chalice, date 1762/3. Silver, height 15½ in., diameter Bowl 6½ in. Foot 6 in. Weight 49 ozs. Hallmark—London 1762-3. Inscribed—“The Gift of Wm. Hall, A.M., Rectr. of Gawsworth 1763.”

(c) Early Victorian paten, silver, diameter 9½ in. Weight 11½ ozs. Hallmark—London 1842-3. Inscribed on face, “*Panis enim Dei est qui de caelo descendit et dat vitam mundo+*”, on the reverse “For the use of Gawsworth Church, Easter Day, April 16, 1843.” This paten was the gift of the Rev. John Thornycroft of Thornycroft Hall, T. R. Daintry, of North Rode and another.

(d) Modern chalice, date 1956. Silver, silver gilt inside bowl, Height 7¾ in., diameter Bowl 4¾ in., Foot 5¾ in. Weight 20 ozs. Hall-

¹ The Chalice and Paten could not be dated later than the first years of Elizabeth from the fact that the Vulgate version is used in the inscription. Theodore Beza's Protest Latin New Testament came out in 1556, and became the usual source for texts in the reign of Elizabeth.

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mark—London 1956. Inscribed beneath foot, "In memory of Amelia Thompstone, 24.2.1945."

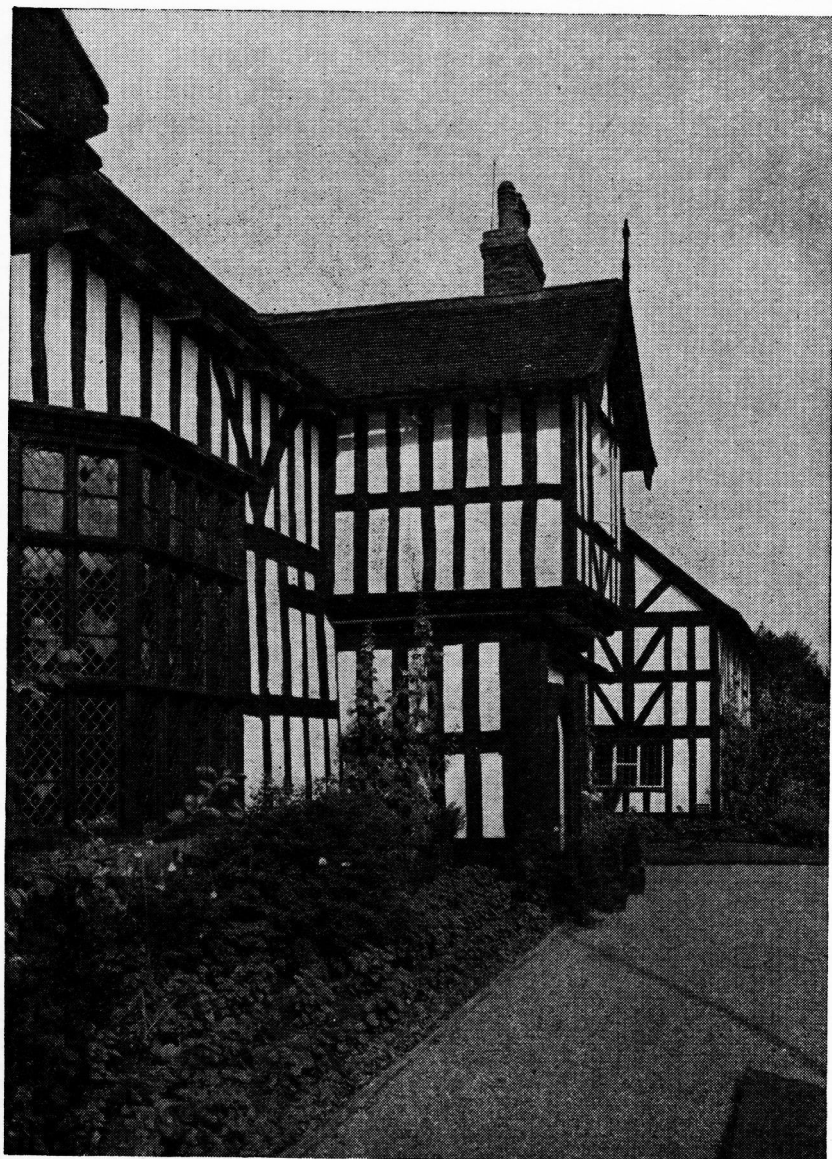
(e) Modern paten to accord with chalice of same date. Silver, silver gilt face diameter $6\frac{1}{2}$ in. Weight $6\frac{3}{4}$ oz Hallmark—London 1956. Items (d) and (e) were the gift of Nathan Thompstone, and his family of Henshaw Hall, in memory of Amelia Thompstone.

(f) Modern Ciborium, Height $8\frac{3}{8}$ in., with lid 11 in., diameter Bowl $3\frac{3}{4}$ in., Foot 6in. Spanish.

Such is Gawsworth Church—A goodly heritage.



Gawsworth St. James. Belfry before 1955 Restoration.



GAWSWORTH OLD RECTORY.

The Forecourt looking East.