

CHAPTER II
THE CHURCH

The place where thine honour dwelleth.—*Psalm xxvi. 8.*

THOUGH in these latter days the Parish Church is held in less veneration than formerly as the centre of the corporate worship of the community, yet as a sermon in stones, as a link with former generations, and with all its associations and sacred memories for individuals, the Church fills a place that is unique in the history of any village.

In regard to the dedication of our village Church there would seem to be some uncertainty as to the Patronal Saint. By his will dated 1st May 1417, proved 8th December 1420, Walter Burton directs that his body 'shall be buried in Church of St. Andrew Shrivvenham, dioc. Sarum, in Capella beate Katerine Virginis in Medio dicte Capelle coram imagine beate Marie alabastr.' That it may have had a later dedication is not unlikely, as a manuscript note in a Church register refers to the Church as being dedicated to St. Mary Magdalene. By common acceptance, however, it is now held to be dedicated to St. Andrew.

Surrounded by a large Churchyard bordered by elm-trees said to be planted in 1740, the sacred building stands back at a short distance on the north side of the main street. The approach to it is along an avenue of lime-trees planted by the compiler of this book in 1900, and through a



THE CHURCH AVENUE AND LYCH GATE

handsome Lych Gate, designed by Mr. C. Oldridg Scott, and erected 'To the glory of God, and in memory of the dead in Christ', in the year 1912. The iron gates which it replaced now stand at the south-east entrance to the Churchyard. On the west side of the path leading to the Church is a large grey granite Ionic Cross erected by his family in memory of the Rev. George William Murray, Vicar of the parish from 1859 to 1889. Immediately opposite to it on the east side of the path is a tall and simple Cross of Douling stone standing on a broad octagonal base, designed by Mr. Lawrence H. Turner, and erected by the parishioners in 1919, in remembrance of Shrivenham men who gave their lives in the Great War. Inscribed on the memorial tablet on the base of the Cross are the names of those who made the supreme sacrifice. These are:

Gustavius Henry James Pound. L.-Corporal 1st Wilts.
Killed 15th October 1914. Aged 18 years.
Joseph William Prince. Priv. 8th R. Berks. Killed
13th October 1915. Aged 19 years.
Bertie William Ballinger. Priv. 9th Worcester Regt.
Missing 20th April 1916. Aged 36 years.
William Walter Hall. Priv. 92nd Canadian Highlanders.
Killed 22nd September 1916. Aged 36 years.
Thomas Ballinger. Priv. 17th Manchester Regt.
Killed 15th October 1916. Aged 38 years.
Harry Gealer. Priv. 1st R. Berks. Killed 3rd May 1917.
Aged 25 years.
Reginald Charles Frogley Lawrence. 1st Canadian
Mounted Rifles. Killed 14th November 1917.
Aged 28 years.
George William Hicks. Gunner R.G.A. Died from
gassing 28th April 1918. Aged 23 years.
James Ebbsworth. Labour Battalion. Died 1st July
1918. Aged 48 years.

With so much that seems to lie beyond the possibility of certain knowledge, it is no easy thing to record with accuracy the history of the Church as it formerly was and as it now exists.

It is noteworthy by way of introduction to anything recorded of the village Church that in Domesday Survey (1086) there is mention of 'a church in Scriveham (*sic*) with five hides of land, and belonging thereto are one plough, and four villeins, and five borderers with two ploughs. What the priest has is worth 4 pounds'. By a charter of Henry I, the Church, with the lands, chapels, tythes, and all other customs appertaining thereto, was granted to the Abbey of Cirencester. This grant was confirmed by a charter of Edward III. In a letter to the Archbishop the King writes: 'We have inspected the Charter of Henry Ist, heretofore King of England our progenitor. Know all men that I by consent and authority of Pope Innocent of pious memory have given to God and the Church of the Blessed Mary of Cirencestre of which I was the unworthy founder for the good of the soules of my parents and ancestors and to Serlo¹ the first Abbot and to all his successors . . . the Church of Scriveham with the lands Chapels tythes and all other customs appertaining to the said Church'.²

The earliest account of a Church in Shrivenham is in a deed of agreement between the Vicar and the Abbot, and Convent of Cirencester in the

¹ Serlo was fourth Dean of Salisbury and first Abbot of Cirencester, 1117 to 1147.

² *History and Antiquities of Cirencester 1100 to 1153.*

year 1395,¹ 'When Nicholas, Abbot of the Monastery of Cirencester, being prevailed on by the prayers and supplications of the parishioners of the church of Shrivenham—upon one occasion refitted and repaired the Chancell then in a decayed condition, out of his own pure liberality to prevent the said Church from wholly going to ruin in the time of David Candelan, a Welshman, and Vicar of the said Church, who all his time absented himself from the Vicarage and dilapidated and consumed the goods belonging to the said Vicarage and suffered the houses and almost the whole of the other buildings to fall to the ground.' Not a worthy example to set his successors! Yet if there is anything that could be pleaded on behalf of this erring Vicar it might possibly be thought that the good Abbot's account of his iniquities is accentuated by a prejudiced and unsympathetic bearing towards a nominee of the reigning King—the Abbacy with its right of appointment being at that time vacant. But be this so or not—*requiescat in pace*. There is no trace of this fourteenth-century chancel so built that can now be shown, unless it be a fragment of ancient glass which now appears at the top of the central light of the east window of the present Church, representing a bishop in cope and mitre, and bearing a scroll with the inscription 'Jesu mercy'. There is a record of a chantry as having been founded at the altar of St. Mary's in Shrivenham Church in 1336 by one John de Bourton for the souls of himself, his wife Agnes, John de Bourton, his wife Emma, Thomas de Bourton, Gilbert de

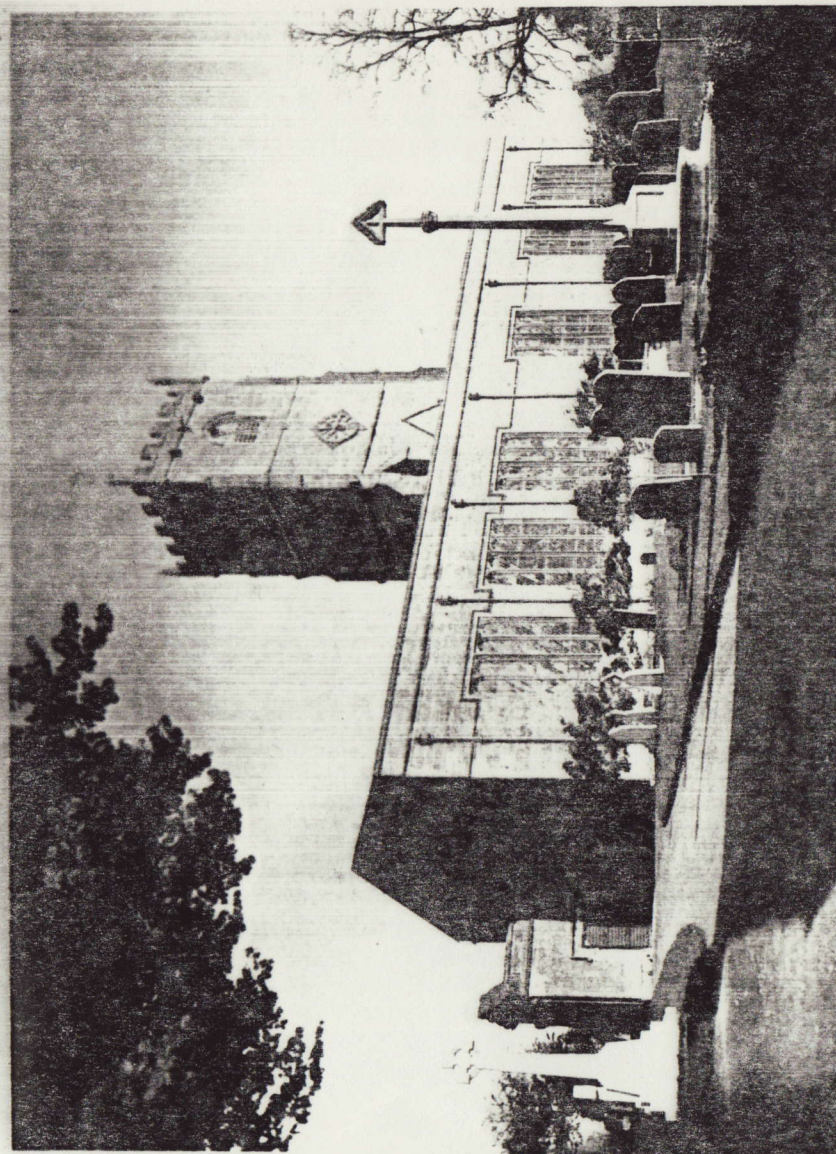
¹ Sarum Diocesan Registry.

la Stane, their fathers, mothers, and ancestors. He endowed it with a message and virgate of land in Bourton and Shrivenham. In spite of careful search for any record that might throw light upon it, it is not possible to give any account or description of a former Church, of which the only remaining portion is the central tower. It is not, however, unreasonable to suppose that it suffered destruction, or irreparable damage, in the Civil Wars. And such inference may be drawn from the fact that Major Wildman, who was living in Beckett in 1666, had the greater part of his old Manor House burnt down in these wars, and it is at least warrantable to think that the Church may have suffered in the same way at the same time. In further support of such supposition it is to be noted that Ashmole in his description of Berkshire Churches in 1666 gives no account of any Church in Shrivenham.

The present Church which has now replaced it—with the exception of the tower, and a portion of the west wall, which may be assumed to be of twelfth-century date—was built, it would seem, late in the seventeenth century and during the reign of Charles II (1660–85) by Sir Henry Martin, and is stated to have cost £4000.¹

The rebuilding—in whatever year—of the main body of the Church as it now stands was done at a time when but little, if any, Church-building was being undertaken, and at a period when, we are told, that builders of Churches were halting between two opinions—whether to adhere to the old Gothic tradition, or follow the new classical

¹ Manuscript note in Baptismal Register, 1782–1901.



THE CHURCH, EXTERIOR

manner. In the case of Shrivenham Church both courses were freely followed, and with results which perhaps are not altogether unsatisfactory. The late Mr. John Parker, of Oxford, has described the Church as being of 'singular character'; whilst Mr. C. M. Oldrid Scott speaks of it as being 'an architectural, perhaps also an ecclesiological, curiosity'.

Though possessing no distinctive architectural beauty, it is at least dignified in its unique appearance. Rectangular in form, it measures on the inside 101 x 62 feet, and, with the exception of the slight elevation of the Sanctuary, the stone floor is level throughout. The external walls, which are very solidly built, are of stone with quoins and dressings, and without buttresses, or plinths. The roof is of lead, and at the east and west ends may be noticed the wide flat-pitched gables, following the shape of the roof, which is of one span over the nave and aisles.

The Tower, which is of good design and outline, and the only surviving portion of a previous Church, is of different date, which may be as early as the year 1200. This date would correspond with that of the two little short shafts and caps, and the arch which they carry, as seen on the inside over the west window of the nave, where they were probably inserted at the rebuilding of the Church. This would also agree with the fairly pointed shape of the Tower arches, but all the visible stonework and mouldings of these belong probably to the rebuilding date, the builders in this case inclining to the Gothic rather than the Classic style. In the opinion of Mr. Scott it

may not be unlikely that the thirteenth-century mouldings and arches exist behind what now appears. Close to the door on the south side of the west end wall is a Norman buttress. Whilst speaking of the exterior of the Church it may be of interest here to note the names of Churchwardens and others embossed in the lead of the roof. They are as follows:

On roof of Chancel.

B. Colton. 1778.	John Wirdnam.
B. Colton. 1765.	John Smith.
Recast August 1842.	Churchwardens.
W. Looker.	1770.
1842.	C.F.

On Nave roof.

Thomas Edginton.	Lead dated 1731.
Richard Wirdnam.	Names of Churchwardens
Churchwardens.	and of Plumber defaced.
William Williams.	_____
Plumber.	Henry Gearing.
1801.	William Wright.
William Bowls.	Churchwardens.
William Hibbard.	1789.
Churchwardens.	I.W. (Plumber).
John Williams.	_____
Plumber.	William Horn
1800.	& Mr Beniman. Kent.
R. W. Hedges.	Churchwardens.
J. G. Day.	MDCCLXXXVIII.
Churchwardens.	E. Farr. (Plumber).
1907.	_____

Richard Eyloc.	J. Lawrence.
Richard Stephens.	J. G. Day.
Churchwardens.	Churchwardens.
1724.	1908.
G.F. (Plumber).	U.C. (Plumber).

On Tower roof.

Edward Hunt	J. Wilson.
& Mr. Thomas Cox.	J. Skurray.
Churchwardens.	Churchwardens.
1716.	(not dated.)

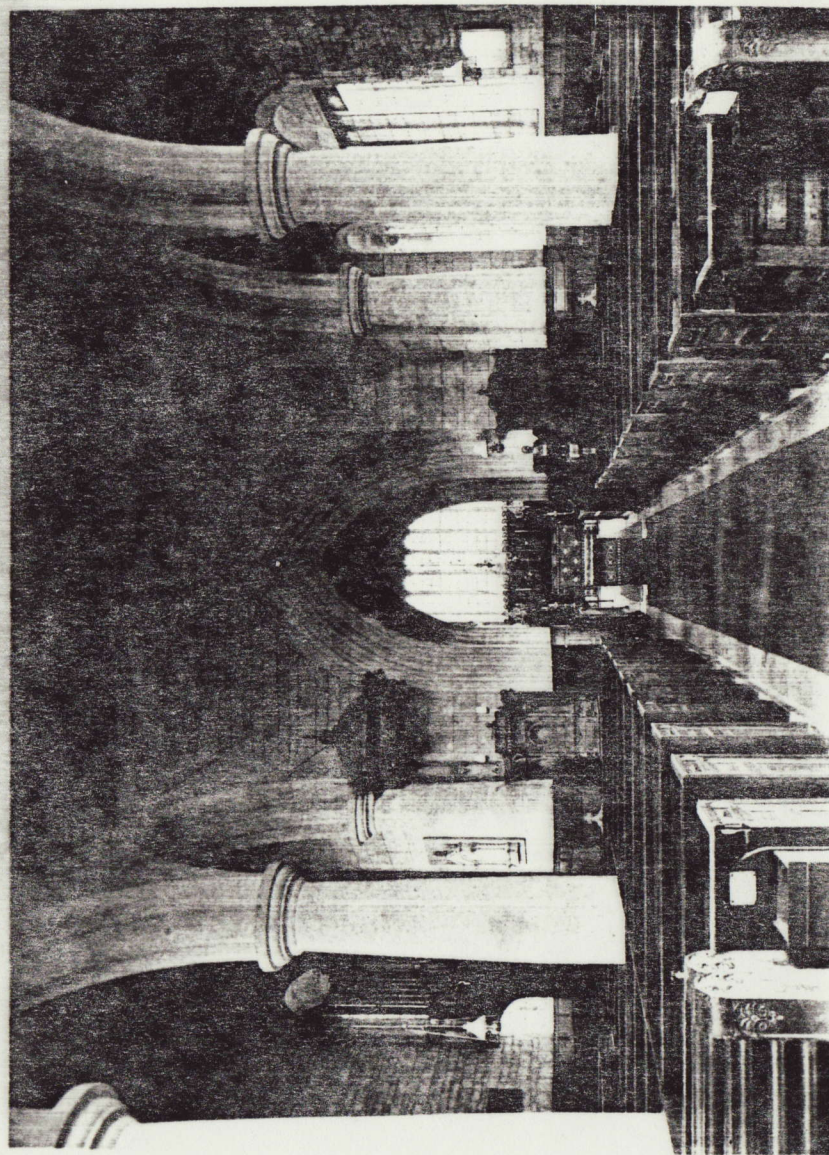
Judged by its features, the west porch might be thought, as it sometimes has been, to be of a later date than the main building (e.g. 1660-85), but those features are not irreconcilable with this date. The jumble of the perpendicular and classic design of the doors is similar to that of the other doors, whilst the nicely moulded timbers of the roof are on the same lines as those of the roof of nave and aisles, and the royal cipher C.R. on the west side would seem to assign it to the Caroline period. Though the pediment is frankly classic, it is not thereby disqualified from being of seventeenth-century work.

To pass on to the interior of the Church—on the west side of the porch are the Royal Arms, removed at some time from the Church itself, and which, as may be seen in an old photograph, was hung on the west side of the western tower arch. Fronting the door are two large benefaction-boards. These were set up in the year 1786 by an order to the Churchwardens of the Archdeacon of Berks, Dr. Onslow, together with a Table of the prohibited degrees of marriage. This latter, how-

ever, has been removed, and is referred to in a subsequent chapter.¹ The windows of plain glass lattice-work are Gothic, and indisputably of seventeenth-century work. They consist of four lights, are mullioned, tall, and square-headed, and have on the outside moulded labels carried round the edifice as a string course. There are six such windows on the north and the south sides of the Church. The east window is of five cinquefoiled lights, and on either side of it there is a three-light window above a doorway. These large and many windows afford abundant light to the Church.

At the west end of the Church there was formerly a large gallery, which gave a heavy and gloomy appearance to the entrance, and afforded convenient shelter for the misbehaviour of the youthful members of the congregation. It was told the writer that on one occasion an irresponsible youth, under cover of his hiding-place, set fire to the hair of a village maiden! The gallery was first closed, and afterwards removed by the present Vicar in 1890; and the two end seats of the nave on the north side of the Font were added at the same time. The Font, which is of Purbeck marble, is good, and of late twelfth-century design. The bowl is octagonal, resting on a circular plinth, the two lower stones of the base being of later date. It was formerly supported by wooden balusters. Owing to their falling into decay these were removed some thirty years ago. The nave of the Church is separated from the aisles by rounded arches in imitation of the Nor-

¹ Village Charities, p. 65.



THE CHURCH, INTERIOR

man style, supported by tapering columns of Chalk stone. These are plain with moulded caps, and belong clearly to the seventeenth-century period.

The four arches of the central Tower, with their massive masonry, are a marked feature of the interior of the Church. In terms of architecture these are good perpendicular with mouldings continued to the ground, without capitals, and a perpendicular vault with tracery work. It could be thought from its appearance that the vaulting might be later than the Tower itself, and was possibly done at the rebuilding of the body of the Church.

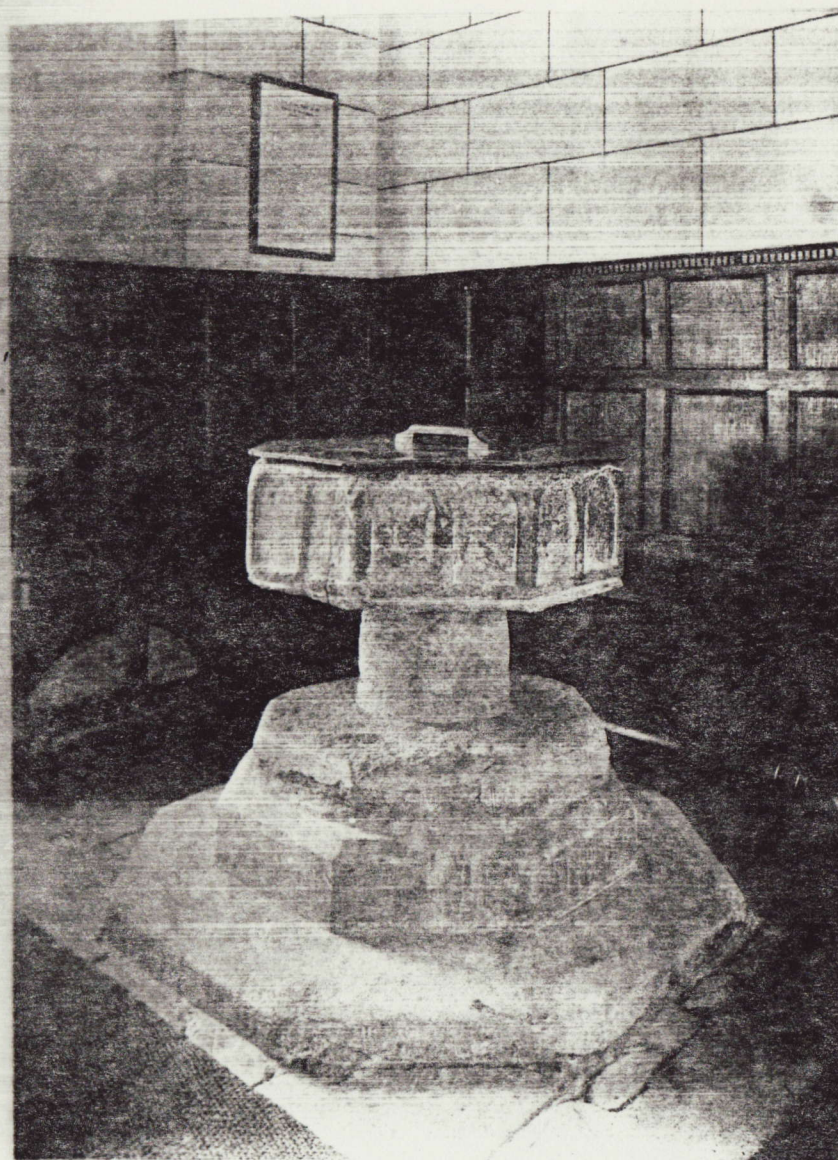
The woodwork of the Church is of oak throughout, and, with the exception of the Chancel screens, is all of seventeenth-century date. The old oak panelling of the aisle walls is a pleasing feature. The Church was re-seated in 1887 by the Barrington family, in memory of George, ninth Viscount Barrington. The present seats were adapted from the old high pews. The family pew beneath the Tower was removed at the same time, and has given place to the present choir seats and clergy stalls. The present dignified panelled and canopied pulpit, in shape hexagonal, which once formed a part of the old-fashioned 'three-decker', was restored to its present shape by Miss Justina C. Milligan, in memory of her sister, Miss Alice K. Milligan, under the direction of Mr. Charles Oldrid Scott. The clergy and choir seats, and the panelling on the west walls of the Tower, were renovated at the same time. The handsome brass Lectern on the opposite side was the gift to the

Church of Mr. John G. Day, of Stainswick, in memory of his son Arthur, who died at Pretoria on the 4th September 1901 at the age of eighteen. The organ is a good one, and was restored, enlarged, and re-cased by Lindsay Garrard, formerly of Lechlade, Gos., in the year 1912.

The dignity of the Church is greatly enhanced by the present sanctuary and chancel, with its iron and oak screen-work and marble floor. The work of reconstruction was carried out in 1901, after the plan of the then Diocesan architect, Mr. Oldrid Scott, and was the gift to the Church of the late Mr. W. Milligan and the Misses Justina C. and Alice K. Milligan, in memory of their sister, Miss Mary Milligan. In the centre of the chancel is a handsome eighteenth-century brass chandelier with gracefully curved branches, and bearing the inscription 'Ex dono Guilielmi Parson 1726'. On either side of the sanctuary are two good modern brass candlebra, given by Mr. John G. Day, of Stainswick, in memory of his wife, who died on the 18th November 1909.

On the south side of the chancel there hangs a large white naval trophy, which never fails to arrest the attention and stir the curiosity of the casual visitor. This is a flag captured by Admiral (then Captain) Barrington of the White from a French man-of-war, off Finisterre, on the 4th April 1759. The French Admiral was the Count de Grasse. A special historic interest attaches to this flag as being the last royal trophy captured from the French.

In the central light of the east window, in addition to the fragment of ancient glass, to which



THE FONT

allusion has been already made, there is an elaborate coat of arms of the Radnor family, with the date 1790.¹ In this are the armorial bearings of the Achards, Delameres, and Forsters of Aldermaston. Above this are two shields of arms, the uppermost one, with initials J.H., bearing date 1505, and the lower one with date 1607. The only account that can be given of these shields is from the following information recently received from the Windsor Herald, of the College of Arms in London.

'With regard to the arms dated 1607, these are Pleydell impaling Ayscombe. In the Pleydell pedigree John Pleydell of Shrivenham, son and heir of Thomas Pleydell, by Anne Higges his wife, married Anne, daughter of Oliver Ayscombe, of Lyford, co. Berks. He was buried 2nd August 1637, and his wife survived him.

'With regard to the other coat of Arms these were very much more difficult to discover, but the coat on the sinister side is a picture of the arms of Hawkborne, which are Argent, a cross moline Or between four acorns Gules, husks and stalks Vert, on a chief Azure a mitre Or between two birds.'

'Dr. John Hawkeburne was Abbot of Chichester in the reign of Henry VII, and Lawrence de Hawkeborne was Bishop of Salisbury 1288, but the arms as placed represent a wife.

'With regard to the arms which, as shown in the drawing sent, are "Argent, on a chevron Or three rams' heads cabossed of the field", this coat cannot be identified, but with different colours it may be that of the family of Werdishaller, but in this case the rams' heads are coupé as well as being of a different colour. The only coat that I can find approaching it is "Argent, on a chevron Gules three rams' heads cabossed of the first attired Or". This coat is in Augustinian's Abbey at Cirencester, co. Glos.; it has, as far as I know, never been identified to any family.'

¹ The Pleydells, the senior branch of the Radnor family, lived at Shrivenham.

The Church contains several monuments and memorial slabs and tablets chiefly in memory of members of the Barrington family. Conspicuous amongst these may be noted two large monuments on either side of the Altar—that on the north side in memory of the founders of the Barrington family, John Wildman, the Anabaptist (1693) and John his son (1710), who, as set forth in the inscription, appear to have spent most of their lives in prison for righteousness' sake. On the south side is a monument of similar design in memory of John Shute, the adopted son of the younger John Wildman, who was afterwards the first Lord Barrington.

At the north-west corner of the Church, and worthy of notice, is a finely sculptured marble monument in memory of Admiral Barrington of the White, already referred to in connexion with the naval trophy hanging in the Chancel. The words of the inscription, which are as follows, are attributed to the pen of Hannah More:

Here rests the hero, whd in glory's page,
Wrote his fair deeds for more than half an age.
Here rests the Patriot, who for England's good,
Each toil encountered and each clime withstood:
Here rests the Christian, his the loftier theme,
To seize the conquest, yet renounce the fame.
He, when his arm St. Lucia's trophy boasts,
Ascribes the glory to the Lord of Hosts:
And when the harder task remained behind,
The passive courage, and the will resigned,
Patient the Veteran victor yields his breath
Secure to Him, who conquered sin and death.

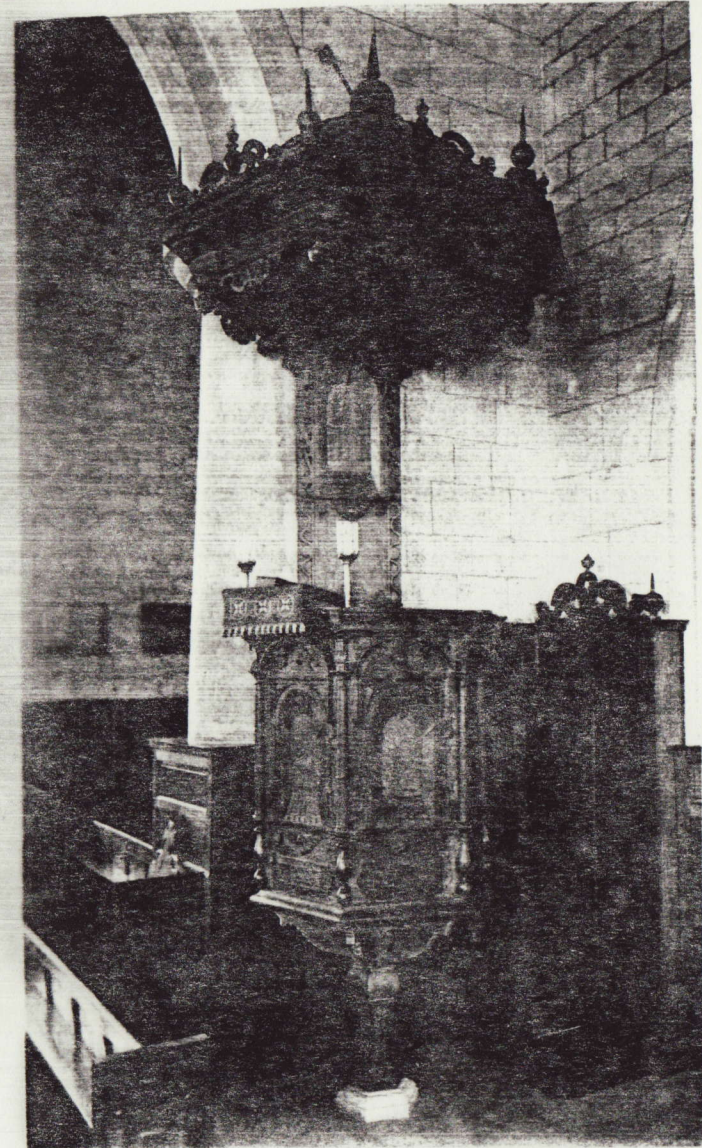
On the floor between the Vestry and the organ

are three tablets of black marble memorializing members of the Blaggrave family (formerly of Watchfield) from 1702 to 1784. On the Vestry floor are stone tablets in memory of Hannah, wife of Richard Williams, died 1738, and of their infant son Richard; and others in memory of Edward Clark, died 1734; and of Margaret (died 1731) and Edward (died 1734), children of Edward and Ann Clark. On the floor in the centre of the Nave are four small brass plates with Latin inscriptions, in memory of John Ridley, died 1672; Thomas Stratton, died 1655; Jane, wife of Thomas Stratton, died 1676; John Stratton, died 1672.

Amongst other monumental records may be mentioned a brass tablet on the south wall erected by George William, Viscount Barrington, his attached friend, to the memory of the Earl of Beaconsfield, the distinguished politician and statesman of the Victorian era. Other monuments on the walls are those erected in memory of the Pleydell family; the Cox family (Bourton); Charles Gunning Parker (for forty years the village doctor); Herbert Alfred Fowler; Arthur James, and Percival Star Day; George St. Vincent Thomas Nelson Murray, and Alicia his wife. On the floor between the tower arch and the Sanctuary are stone slabs in memory of Edward Young, died 1782, and Mary his wife, died 1781; of members of the Fairthorne family, ranging in date from 1774 to 1826; of Edward Jenner, died 1742, and Mary his wife, died 1752; their son William, died 1753, and a daughter—the wife of Joseph Maskelyne, died 1763; also of John and Martha New, of Bourton, died 1744.

Behind the choir stalls is a recumbent stone effigy, said to be of the fourteenth century. This has become so defaced that it is not possible to trace the outline of the figure or the facial features. Though it might be supposed that the effigy is that of a female, it is recorded in an old Church register that in 1782 John Ford, the parish clerk, informed the Vicar (The Rev. C. Colton) that this ancient monument was called that of 'the old Friar'; whilst at that time there was a local tradition of its being visited by pilgrims. It may be fairly conjectured that this effigy was originally inside the Church, and at some time, and for some reason, was removed to the Churchyard, where it was placed very near to the east wall of the Church. It was in the Churchyard probably that it suffered its present mutilation, for the writer remembers being told how at one time the village boys found it well suited for purposes of sliding! There were no Parochial Church Councils in those days to care for, and to maintain Churchyards! It is only in recent years that this effigy has been brought back into the Church and placed in its present position.

The Church has a peal of six bells, room being left in the frame for completing the octave. Two of these were first hung in 1701, and all were recast and rehung in the year 1908 under the direction of the late Rev. F. E. Robinson, Vicar of Drayton, Berks., a campanologist of high repute. It is probably but few incumbents who have seen the recasting of their Church bells, but the writer, and the present foreman of the ringers—Mr. T. Dike—were present at Messrs. Mears &



THE PULPIT

Stainsbank's foundry in Whitechapel, E., when the molten metal was pouring from the furnace into the moulds. The new frame was made, and the bells hung by the well-known family of bell-ringers, Messrs. White of Appleton, Berks. The dedication ceremony was performed on September 28th in the same year by the then Suffragan Bishop of the Diocese, the late Dr. T. L. Randall, Bishop of Reading. The weights of the bells and the inscriptions they bear, are as follows:

- c. q. lb.
Treble. 5. 3. 2.
 Edwardus VII, R. et I. Vivat.
 Edward F. Hill, Vicar.
 John G. Day, James Lawrence, Churchwardens.
- c. q. lb.
 2. 6. 3. 0
 Glory to God in the highest.
- c. q. lb.
 3. 7. 2. 4
 On earth peace, goodwill towards men.
- c. q. lb.
 4. 8. 2. 3.
 Good people all that hear me ring
 Be true and loyal to God, and King.
- c. q. lb.
 5. 10. 1. 11.
 On earth bells do ring
 In Heaven Angels sing. Hallelujah.
- c. q. lb.
Tenor. 14. 1. 0.
 I toll the Funeral knell,
 I hail the Festal day;
 The fleeting hours I tell,
 I summon all to pray.

The Church Plate consists of two chalices, two

patens, and one large flagon, all of silver. One of the chalices is of the Elizabethan period, and has all the grace and ornamentation characteristic of chalices of that time. The date-letter is 1577-8. The maker's mark \AA in a shaped shield. There is no existing covering, or lid, usually belonging to chalices of this date. The second chalice bears no hall-marks. Dating probably from the time of James I, it possesses no beauty of design, and its broad curved lip is a drawback to its use. On one of the two patens (date-letter 1636) the maker's mark RS, with a heart beneath, is noticed by Cripps in his book on *Church Plate* as being identical with that on a pair of flagons at Bodmin, co. Cornwall. The silver flagon, twelve inches in height, bears the date letter 1624, and the maker's mark TB. It has engraved on it an armorial shield, Argent, 2 bars, each charged with three plates.

In addition to the foregoing there is an almsdish of good pewter, embossed with fleur-de-lys and French coronet. This is probably of modern manufacture, and was formerly in use in the private Chapel at Ashdawn Park, and was given to the Church by the late Evelyn, Countess of Craven. There are also belonging to the Church two small gilt plates, said to be Augsburg work of the seventeenth century. In the centre of one is an embossed figure of a boy with a sickle; in the other, a boy with a nest in one hand and a bird in the other; round the rims are flowers and fruit. They probably belonged originally to a set of four, symbolic of the seasons. They serve no practical purpose, though Thomas Hill—a former sexton—once told the writer that he had used them for the

collection of the alms, as the congregation passed out of the entrance door.

Any account of the Village Church would perhaps be incomplete without reference to a fire which broke out on the roof of the north aisle above the organ early on Sunday morning, 13th March 1910, originating in connexion with the flue of the heating apparatus, and which, but for its discovery at its first outbreak, would have threatened destruction to the entire fabric of the Church. On the alarm being given many willing workers from the village were promptly on the scene, and by their efforts in grappling with the fire in its first beginning, aided by the services of the Faringdon Fire Brigade, saved their Church from disaster, which otherwise would have been very considerable. Marks of the melting lead of the roof are still to be seen on the north wall.

Since this book has been in the hands of the printers a plan is under consideration for the construction of a chapel on the south-east side of the Church, under the direction of Mr. C. M. Oldrid Scott. This it is hoped will shortly be carried out, and will add considerably to the dignity and beauty of the Church. Having regard to a former dedication of the Church, the chapel will be dedicated to S. Mary Magdalene.