

THE CHAPEL OF ST. NICHOLAS, GIPPING, SUFFOLK.

PHILIP J. TURNER, F.R.I.B.A., F.R.A.I.C.

Gipping, a small village situated about three miles from the town of Stowmarket in Suffolk, England, contains a remarkably interesting 15th century Chapel.

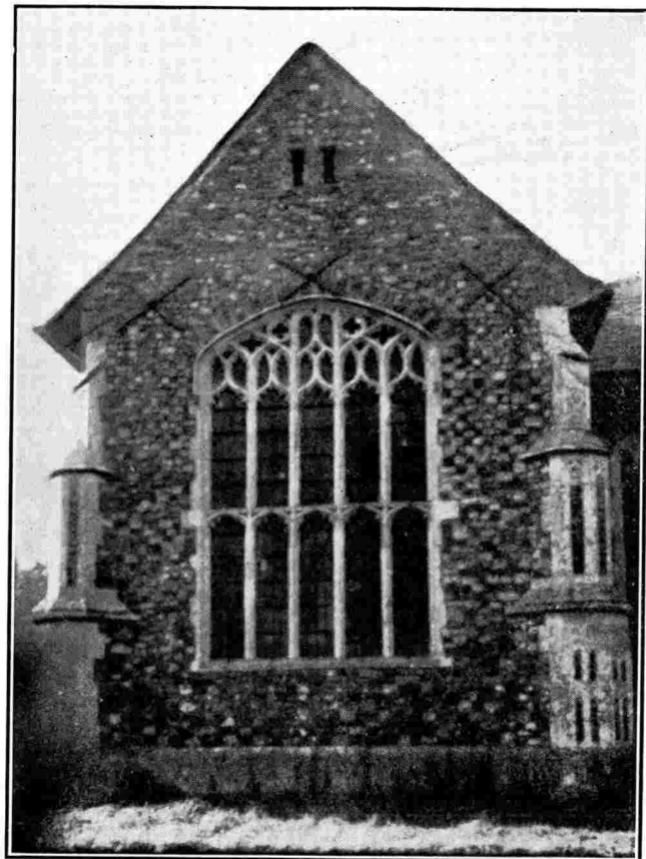
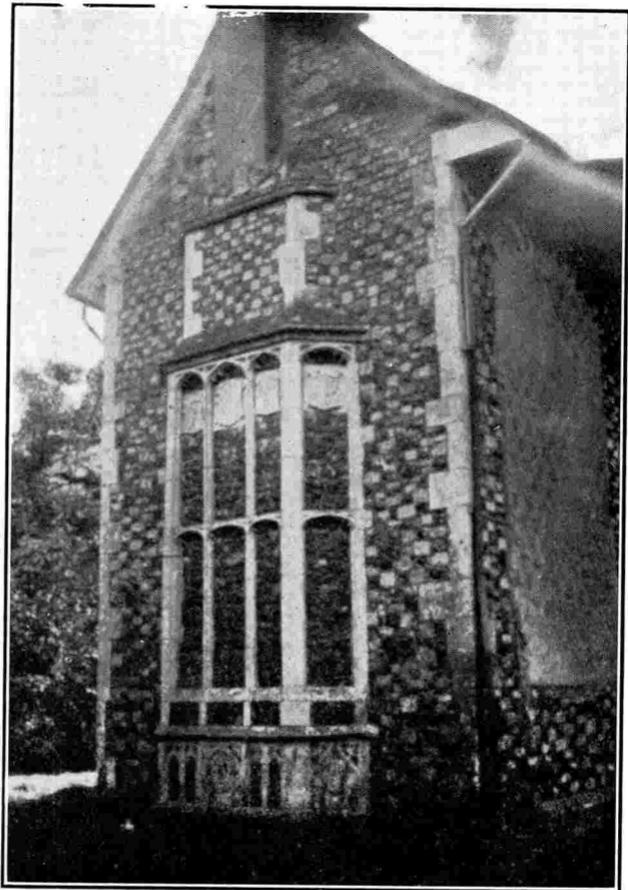
This building is a fine example of flint panel work or cut flint worked into the stone of a type that is characteristic and typical of others in the Eastern counties, where the cutting of flint has been for centuries a craft peculiar to this district.

On its exterior walls are to be found a wonderful collection of heraldic devices, rebuses, monograms, decorated panels, and other elaborate details in stone that make a study of this building one of more than usual interest.

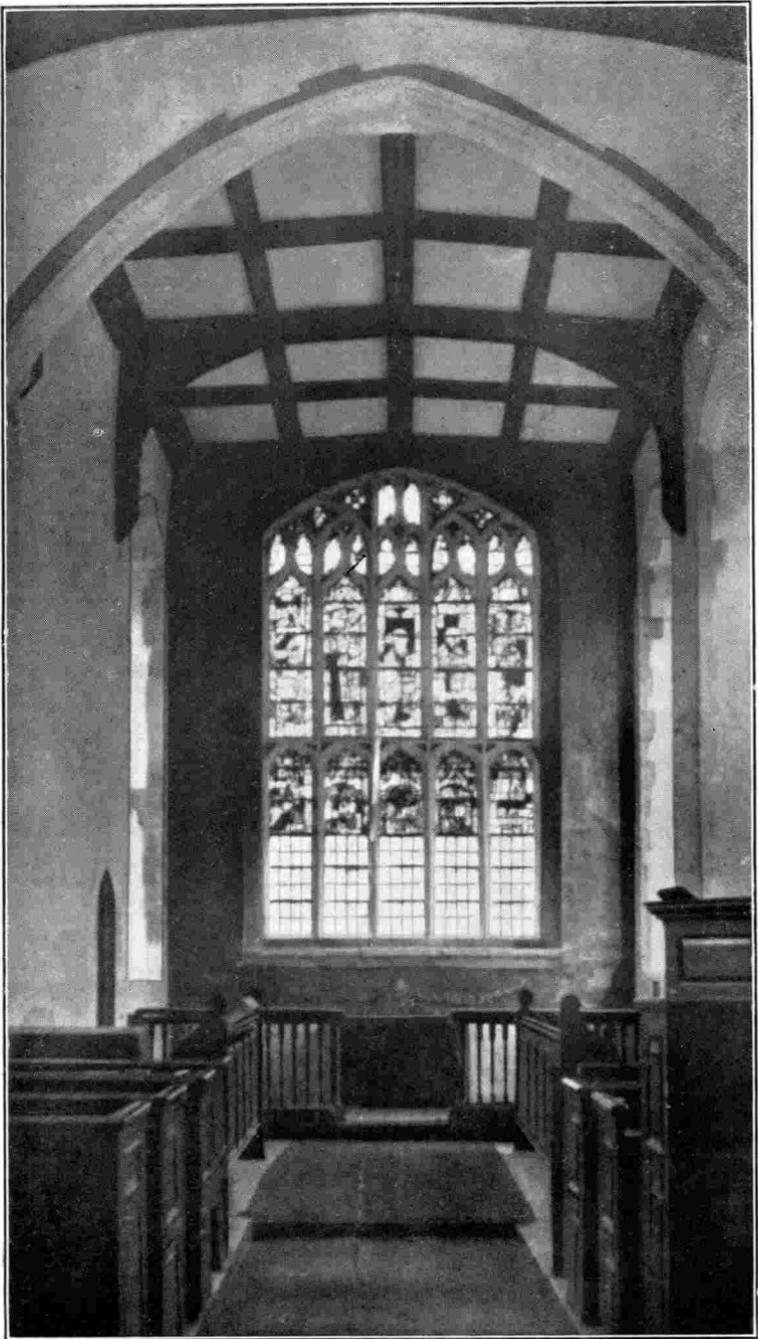
The Chapel was built by Sir James Tyrell, Knight Banneret, about 1483, and it is dedicated to Almighty God, in honour of St. Nicholas. Contrary to common tradition, there is nothing to prove that the Chapel was erected in expiation of the crime he is said to have committed, namely that of superintending the murder of the Princes in the Tower, which took place about the time the Chapel was built. The inscription over the "Vestry" (Private Chapel) Door (See. Dwg. 2) "Pray for Sir James Tyrell and Dame Anne his wife" has served to keep alive, if it did not originate, the local tradition above referred to. This conclusion seems to be assuming a great deal however, although it is realised that it was not customary for a donor (and his wife) when living to ask for the prayers of their fellows.



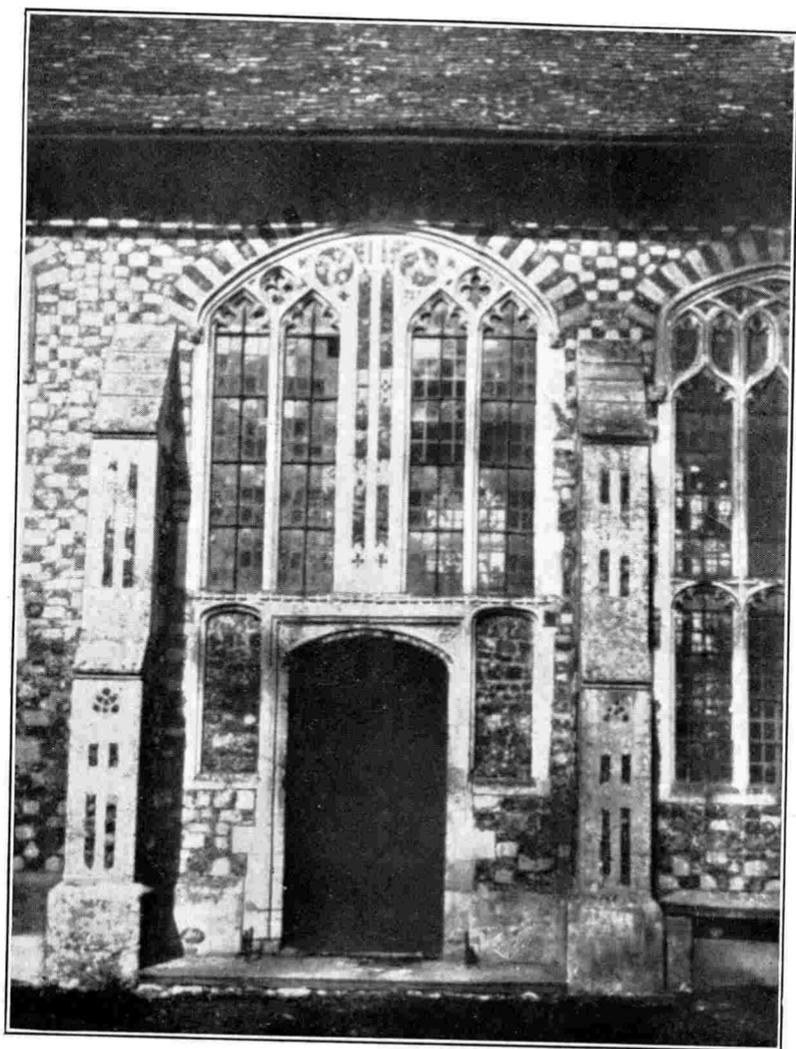
GIPPING CHAPEL.



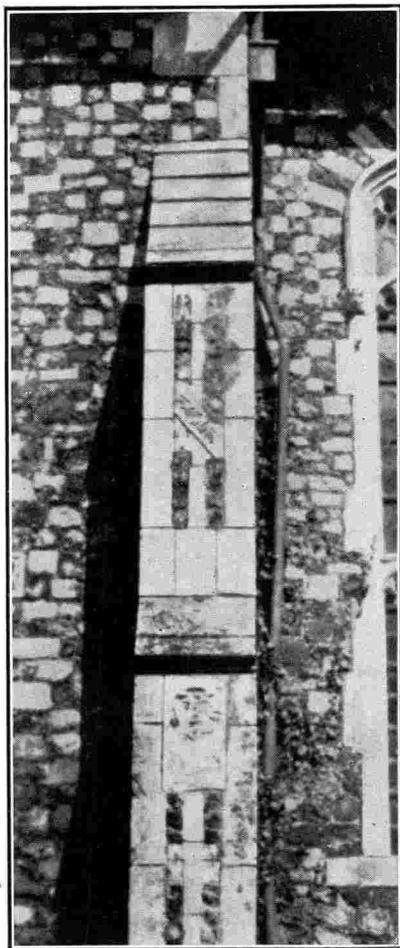
GIPPING CHAPEL.



GIPPING CHAPEL.



GIPPING CHAPEL.



GIPPING CHAPEL.

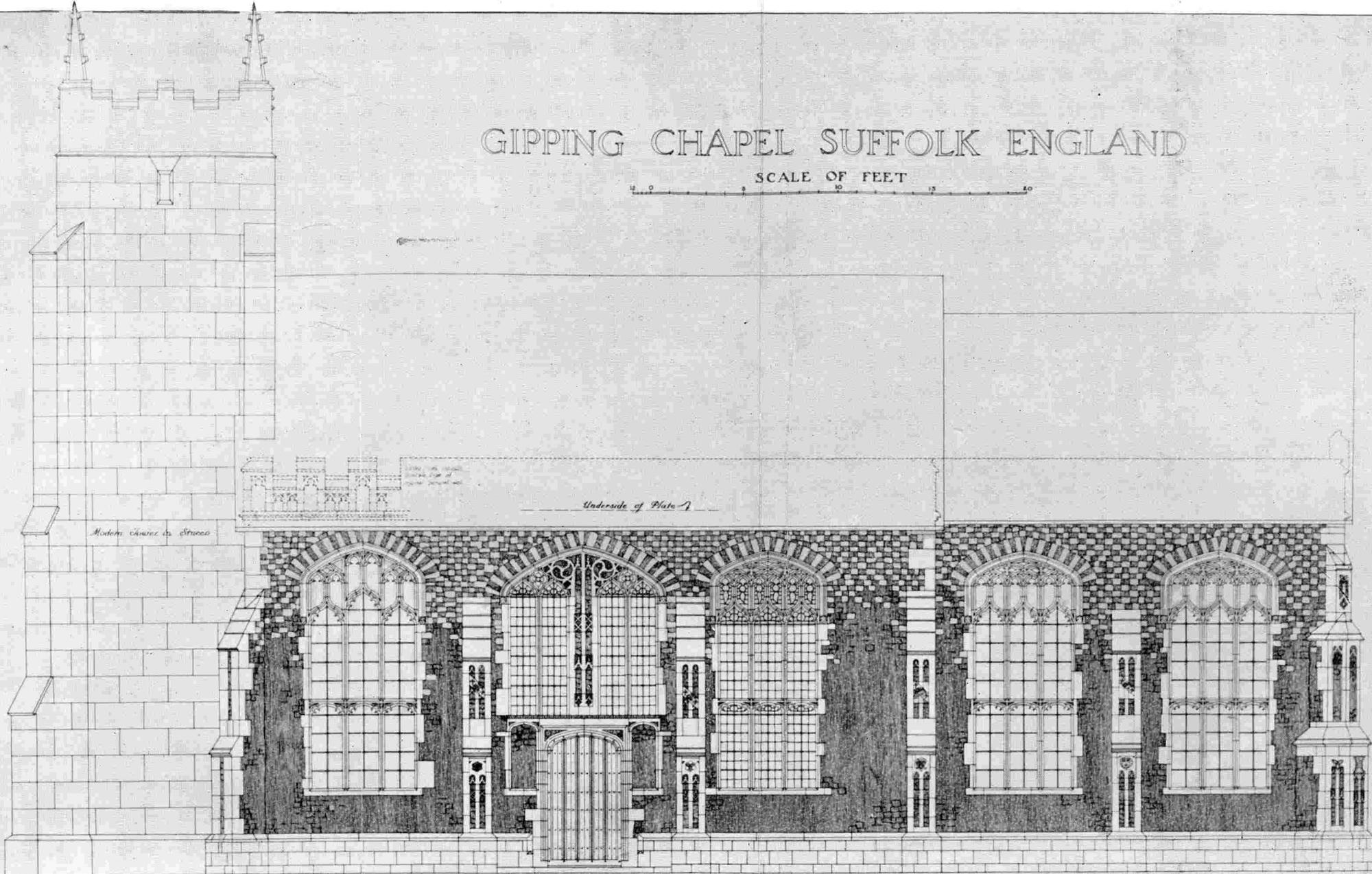
GIPPING CHAPEL SUFFOLK ENGLAND

SCALE OF FEET



Underside of Plate 1

Modern church in street

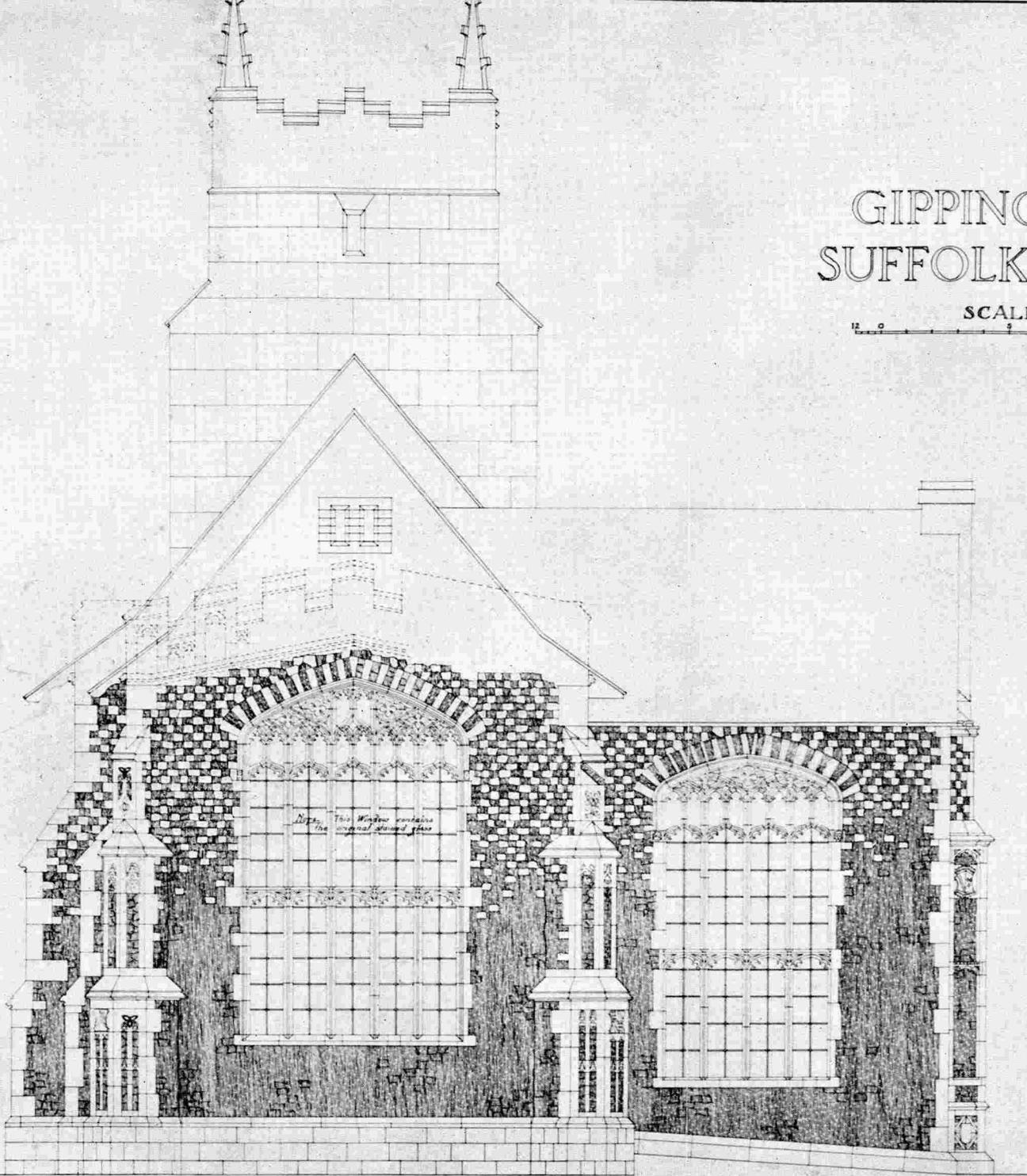


SOUTH ELEVATION

PHILIP J. TURNER, ARCHT.
C. W. FISK, ENGR.

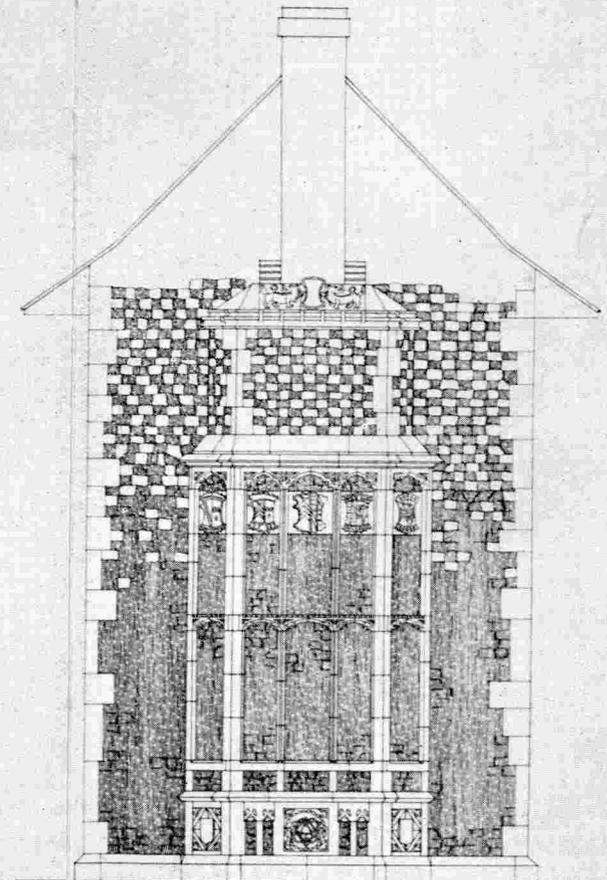
GIPPING CHAPEL SUFFOLK ENGLAND

SCALE OF FEET

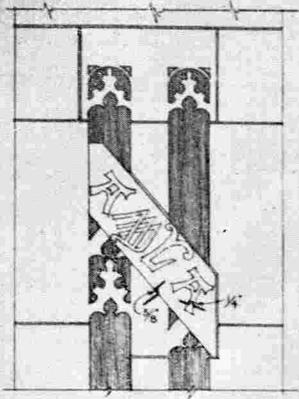


*Note. This Window contains
the original stained glass*

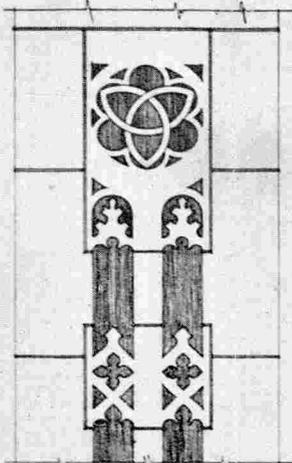
EAST ELEVATION



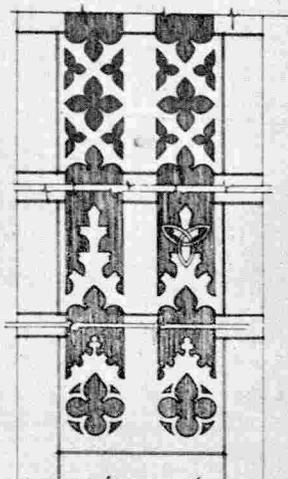
NORTH ELEVATION



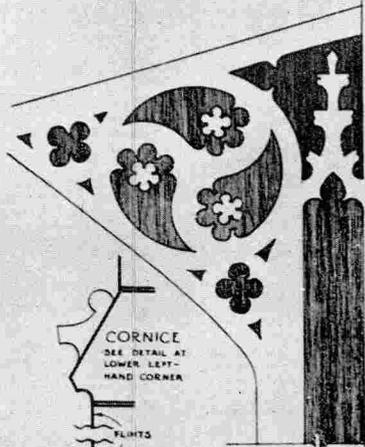
BUTRESS 'c' AND 'e'
UPPER PORTION



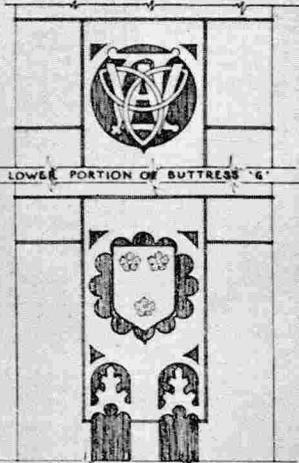
BUTRESS 'c' AND 'e'
LOWER PORTION



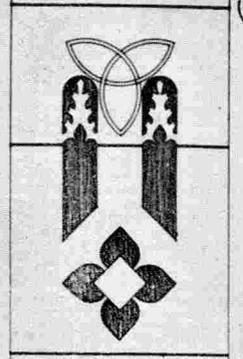
LOWER PORTION OF CENTRE
MULLION OVER SOUTH DOOR



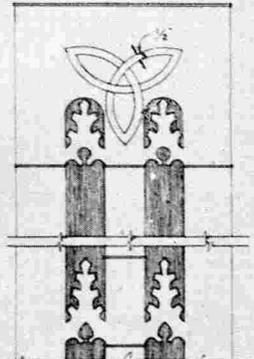
TOP PORTION OF MULLION
OVER SOUTH DOOR



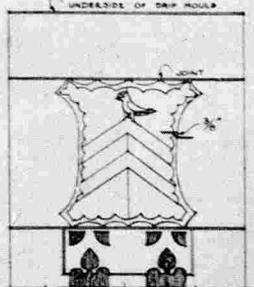
LOWER PORTION OF BUTRESS 'g'



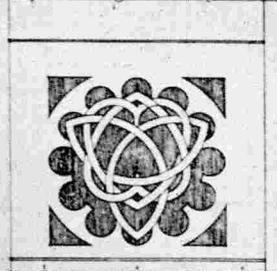
UPPER PORTION OF
SOUTH OCTAGONAL BUTRESS



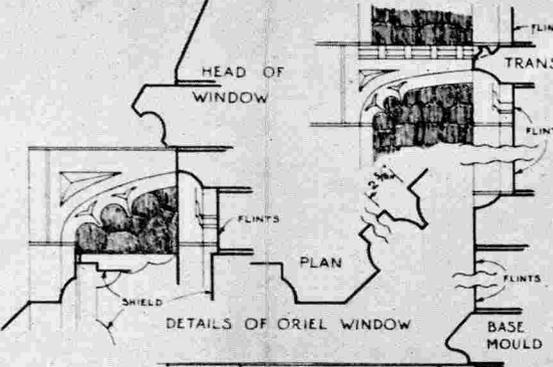
SOUTH OCTAGONAL BUTRESS
LOWER PORTION SOUTH SIDE



SOUTH OCTAGONAL BUTRESS
LOWER PORTION S-E SIDE



NORTH OCTAGONAL BUTRESS
LOWER HALF OF UPPER PORTION



DETAILS OF ORIEL WINDOW



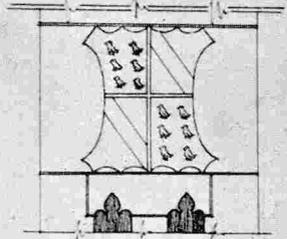
LOWER PORTION OF BUTRESS 'i'



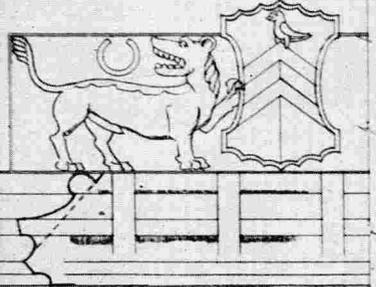
LETTER 'A' IN BUTRESS
ON NORTH ELEVATION



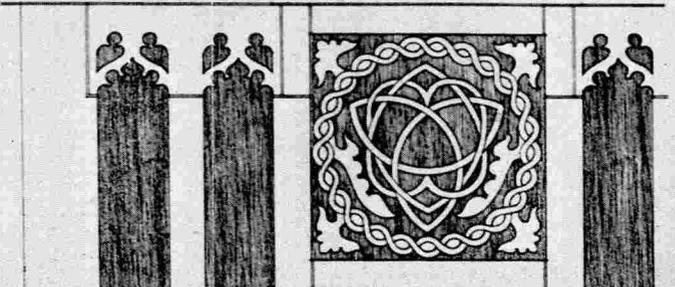
PANEL OVER
NORTH DOOR



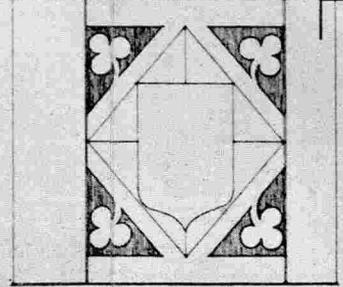
NORTH OCTAGONAL BUTRESS
LOWER PORTION N-E SIDE



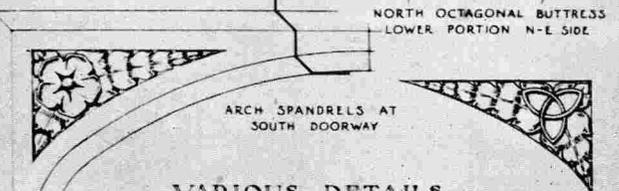
CORNICE AT ORIEL CHIMNEY
(TYRELL WITH SUPPORTERS)



CENTRE PANEL AT BASE OF ORIEL CHIMNEY



SIDE PANEL AT BASE OF ORIEL CHIMNEY

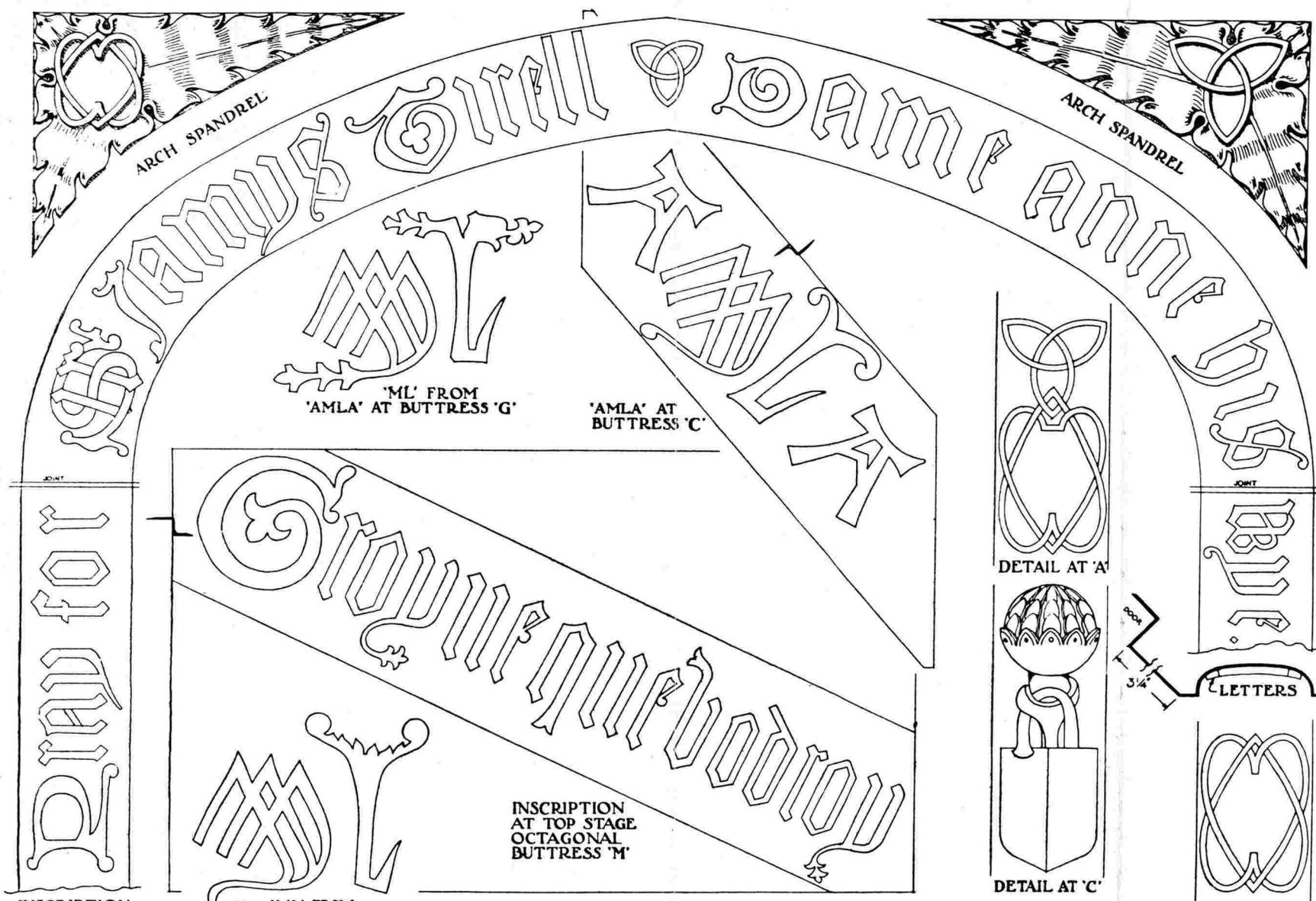


ARCH SPANDRELS AT
SOUTH DOORWAY

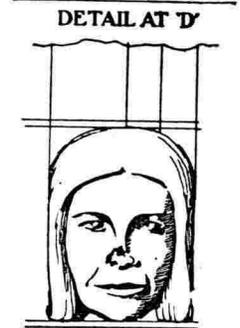
VARIOUS DETAILS
OF CARVINGS AND
FLINT INLAYS

INCHES 12 9 6 3 0 1 FOOT

GIPPING CHAPEL SUFFOLK ENGLAND

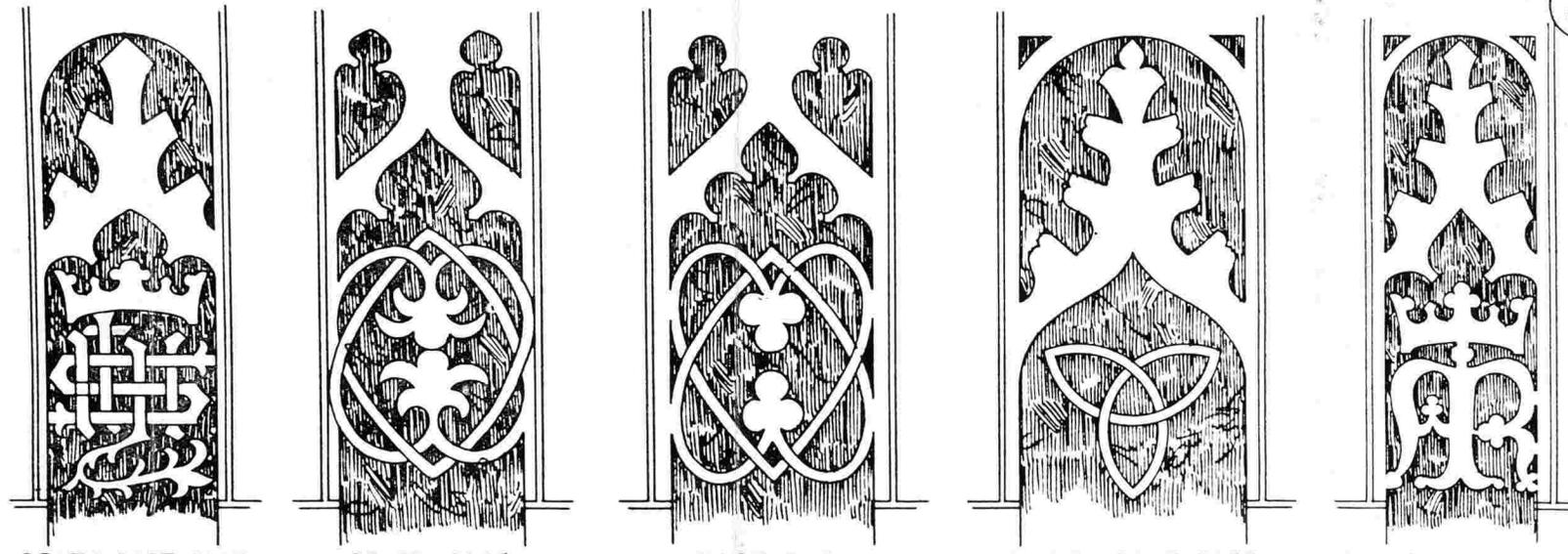


GIPPING CHAPEL SUFFOLK ENGLAND



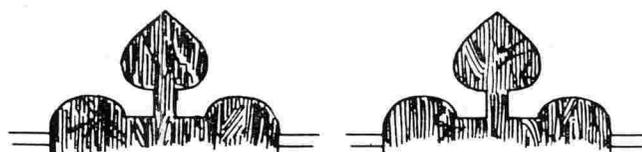
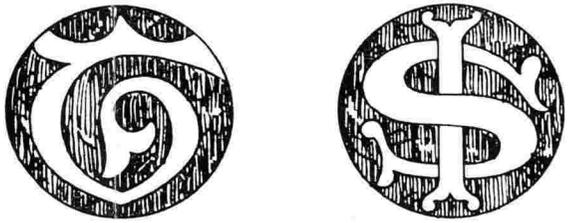
VESTRY DOOR
SCALE OF FEET
0 1 2 3

PLATE 1. THE GIPPING CHAPEL
SUFFOLK ENGLAND



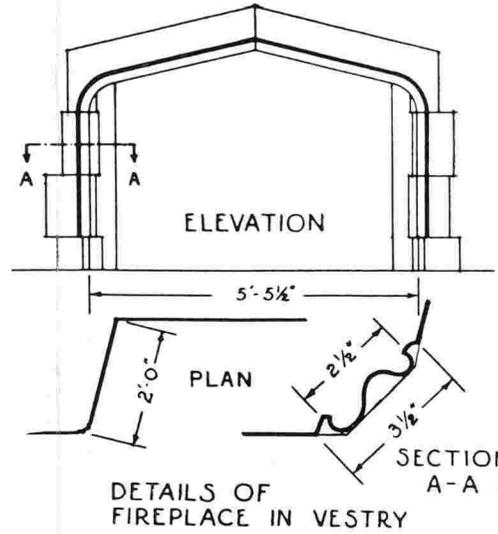
SOUTH EAST FACE SOUTH FACE EAST FACE NORTH EAST FACE NORTH FACE
 UPPER STAGE OF SOUTH OCTAGONAL BUTTRESS UPPER STAGE OF NORTH OCTAGONAL BUTTRESS

SCALE OF INCHES FOR THE ABOVE DETAILS
 0 5 10 15

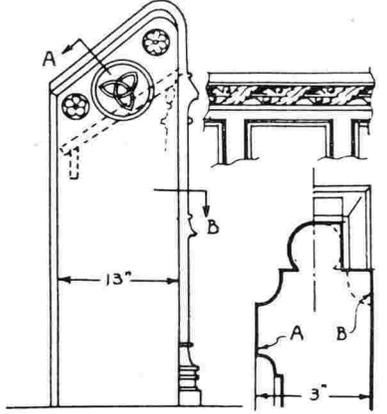


NORTH FACE OF LOWER STAGE OF NORTH OCTAGONAL BUTTRESS

SCALE OF INCHES FOR DETAILS
 0 3 6



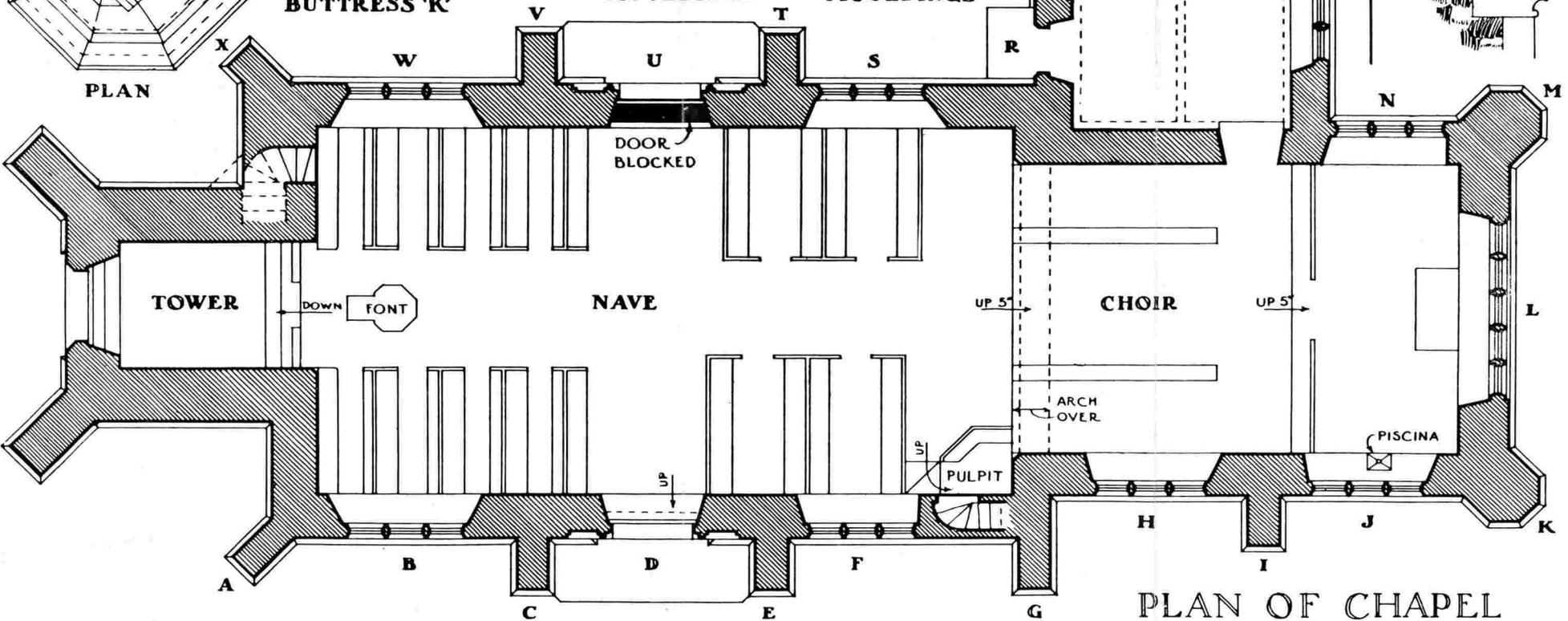
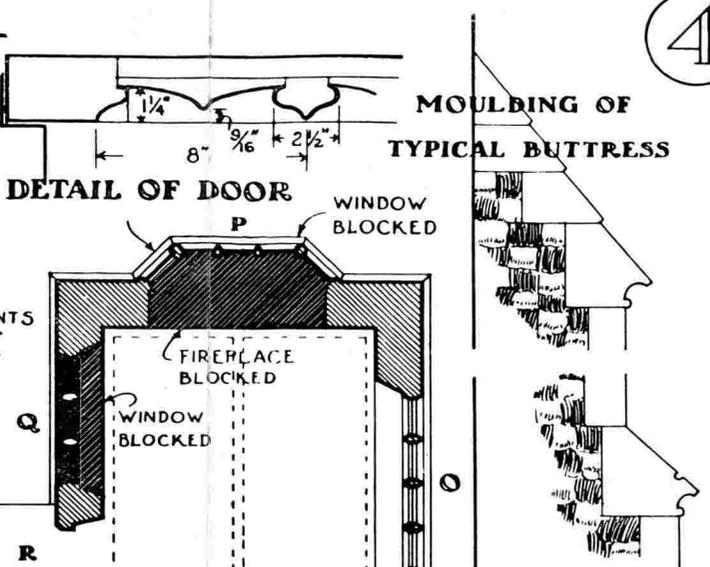
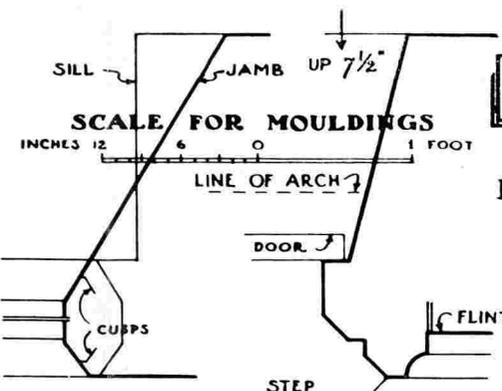
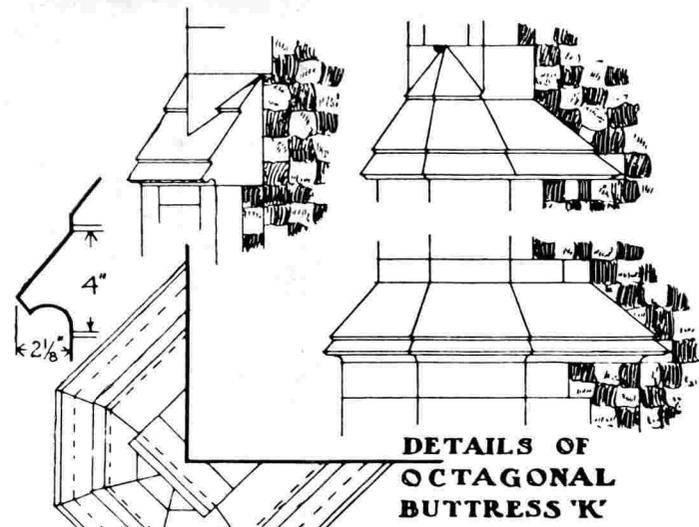
DETAILS OF FIREPLACE IN VESTRY



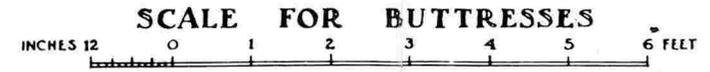
ELEVATION SECTIONS

DETAILS OF A BENCH END

GIPPING CHAPEL SUFFOLK ENGLAND



GIPPING CHAPEL SUFFOLK ENGLAND



Had the inscription read "Pray for the souls of etc," no such inference as the above would probably have been made. This inscription proves nothing, moreover, one way or the other, except the probability that Sir James and his wife were living at the time when the words were cut in the stone.

Sir James married Anne daughter of Sir John Arundell of Lanherne, Cornwall.

In the "Memoirs of Sir James Tyrell" (Rev. W. H. Sewell) there is to be found an interesting story of the Tyrell family (See S.I.A., V. 125-180).

The author of the article in question, who has devoted much study to the elucidation of the story regarding the murder of the Princes, and Sir James' connection with it, states positively that it is "utterly unworthy of serious consideration."

Sir James Tyrell, though he was executed in 1502 on a charge of treason, in connection with his friendship with De la Pole, Earl of Suffolk (rival to Henry VII), was certainly up to the immediate close of his life, one of the ablest men of his day, and from both Richard II and Henry VII he received the highest honours for his unrivalled services to his country and sovereigns.

The family of the Tyrells were for many centuries connected with the village of Gipping and one branch of this distinguished race was descended from the Tyrell who was responsible for the death of William Rufus in the New Forest. The father of Sir James—William Tyrell—was Sheriff of Norfolk and Suffolk in 1446, and up to the end of the 19th century members of this ancient family were living at Gipping.

There is no doubt that the building was erected as a *private* chapel for the family who lived at the Hall nearby, and that it has only been used as the village church during comparatively recent times.

The "Mother Church" proper for Gipping was the Parish Church at Stowmarket, in which is the Tyrell Chapel. The family have always been buried here and in the North aisle are to be seen memorials of the Tyrell family that go back for more than five hundred years.

The original building, it will be noted, is quite small, especially as it seems probable that the North "Vestry" (Chapel) was built a few years later than the Nave and Chancel.

The Tower too, which is a badly built modern stucco addition, seems out of place. Probably erected in the last century, it was possibly added, one can imagine, to make the chapel "look more like a church!" In any case it seems an excrescence; as one would imagine that a tower feature was never intended in the original.

It will be noted that the interesting black and white diaper pattern of the wall surface suddenly terminates just above the springing of the roof (See photo of East End) and also in a similar position on the North Gable of the "Vestry." From this fact, and also for the reason that other similar buildings of this period were usually finished with flat roofs and parapet walls, leads one to the conclusion that the present pitch roofs are not as old as the rest of the building. Doubtless at one time the chapel was allowed to fall into a bad state of repair, and rather than restore the original battlemented parapets and flat lead roofs, which might have been a costly operation, it seems quite likely that the parapet walls were taken down and sloping tile covered roofs were substituted and placed over the flat ceilings of the first roof.

That the original building was finished with a flat roof seems to be further confirmed from the fact that the ceilings of the chapel and vestry are of the usual shape of this period.

Having arrived at this conclusion, the author of this article has indicated on the elevation of this building by dotted lines, what might reasonably be inferred to be the outline of the original parapet walls. The building restored to this form, and with the Tower out of the way, would have a much more satisfactory appearance than it has now with the projecting eaves.

The main dimensions of the building are as follows :

	<i>Length</i>	<i>Breadth</i>	<i>Height in Centre.</i>
Nave ..	33 feet	18 feet	20 feet
Chancel ..	21 "	14 $\frac{1}{4}$ "	19 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
" Vestry " (Chapel)	13 $\frac{1}{4}$ "	10 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	19 "

The room on the North side though now used as a Vestry, was (in all probability) originally used for other purposes, perhaps as a private devotional chapel.

The wall, west of the doorway leading from the Chancel bears traces of a former opening of some kind. This perhaps was a window like the one in the opposite wall of the Chancel, or it may have been the original priests' door before the present North chapel was built.

The room contains a good fireplace (See Dwg. 3) uncovered only recently. It is an open question whether this interesting feature so far as the exterior is concerned was part of the original plan. The form is so much more that of a Bay Window of this period. In any case, the exterior has some finely designed flint panel work in the base, with five excellent carved heraldic shields of the Tyrell family and connections in the upper panels of the bay. Surmounting the whole is the Tyrell shield with supporters (See details I). The coat of arms consists of two chevrons within a bordure engrailed, differenced with a martlet to denote 4th son. Supporters are two tigers passant

regardant. It is to be noted that the dignity of Knight-Banneret was originally conferred on such gentlemen as had signalised their valour in two royal battles and such knights were allowed to display their arms as barons did, and to bear arms with supporters as in this instance.

As will be seen from the detail drawings, there is repeated on the walls of Gipping Chapel in a great many forms, the badge of Three Long Bows, borne by Tyrell. That this interlaced and endless knot was suggested by the assonance between Tyrell and the French *Tirailler* and *Tirailleur* seems to be quite probable.

Occurring six times on the walls of Nave and Chancel in different places in the label "AMLA." The explanation of this inscription has puzzled archæologists for a long time, and no sure interpretation of these letters has been reached to satisfy everyone.

One writer asserts that the letters stand for "Ave Maria Laetare Alleluia," while another authority supposes them to be a Hebrew charm "Atar Melech Leonlau Adonai"—Thou (art) King for ever O Lord.

These two suggestions appear to be somewhat far-fetched and as Rev. H. A. Harris suggests, the four letters may represent nothing more than a "posy" name, perhaps that of Sir James Tyrell's wife Anne.

The letters in this label take on different and somewhat fantastic shapes, especially the letter "M" (See Dwg. 2 and photo of buttress C) but as the tail of the letter cannot be said to be crossed, it cannot particularly designate the Virgin Mary.

Among other inscriptions, monograms and devices scattered profusely about the flint work which are of interest is the old French motto—*Groyne que Vodroy*—"Let him complain who will"; this may be found to be a motto of the Arundells.

On the South buttress of the church is a shield bearing the Darcy arms—then there are the letters “I” and “T” entwined which stand for Sir James Tyrell—the letter “A” in two hearts for Dame Anne—the letter “I” and “S” probably stand for James.

Also to be found is the sacred monogram for Jesus—Maria is represented by the letter “M” and a very elaborate monogram occurring once only, containing the Tyrell’s knot or badge resembling the triquetra or semicircle entwined, combined with the letters “W” and “A.”

Several panels about the building show the interesting and evidently favourite device of the two hearts entwined around the Tyrell badge, which also makes a good geometric design for the craftsmen who executed this work.

On the North Side of Nave, over the door (which is blocked) in a wheel-like design are the letters “G” and “T”—a monogram of “I” and “S” combined—and the letter “R.” The interpretation of this cannot be stated satisfactorily, though one solution has been given as follows: “Gratias Tibi Jesu Reddo”—I return to thee Thanks O Jesus.

The interior of the building does not contain much that is of interest, though there is a little carving on one or two of the benches, including the Tyrell knot or badge..

Three years ago a very diminutive stairs in the South wall was uncovered, this evidently led to the rood screen at the entrance to the chancel.

At one time the glass of the East Window must have been allowed to fall into bad repair, and fragments of it have been patched and put together with but little care as to its original design.

The ten uppermost lights were once filled with angels holding shields with the emblems of the Passion of our Saviour.

On one of the shields are represented two bleeding hands, two bleeding feet, and in the centre a bleeding heart. The most Northern of the upper lights represents a body in plate armour of the 14th century—perhaps Sir James Tyrell. Second upper light represents an ecclesiastical reading from a book held in the left hand. It is supposed to represent the Abbot of St. Osythe.

In the third is the Blessed Virgin Mary. Fourth to the South a male figure weeping with a nimbus, meant no doubt for the beloved disciple. In the fifth a female figure with long hair flowing down the back, reading a book, perhaps intended for Dame Anne Tyrell. In the 2nd and 3rd and 5th of the lower lights the canopies are more or less perfect. The 3rd lower light represents a peacock's tail in a boar's mouth, which is the Tyrell crest. On one piece of glass the following words are scratched—Edmd Tyrell Patrom : Richard Chilton Curate 1756.

The five shields on the exterior of the North Bay have the following heraldic devices :—

- (1) Clopton impaling Darcy.
- (2) Tyrell impaling Darcy. Sir Jas.' mother, whose Christian name Margaret is to be seen among the fragments of glass in the East Window.
- (3) Tyrell impaling Arundell. Quarterly : 1 and 4 Six swallows, three, two, and one (Arundell) 2 and 3 A bend. (Carminow).
- (4) Arundell (quartering Carminow) impaling Morley.
- (5) Tyrell impaling Morley. Sir Jas.' Uncle and Aunt of *Heron*, Essex.

Tyrell (of Gipping) Arg. 2 chevrons az. within a border engrailed gules a martlet.

Heron Hall, East Horndon, Essex, pulled down in 1798.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

Sir James Tyrell, 4th son of William Tyrell, High Sheriff of Norfolk and Suffolk 1446 and Margaret, daughter of Robert Darcy of Maldon, Essex (shields 2 on bay). James Tyrell was Knighted 1471, made a Knt. Banneret 4th July, 1482, beheaded for (so called) treason 6th May 1502.

He married Anne daughter of John Arundell of Laherne Co., Cornwall. They had two sons.

REFERENCES.

- (a) *Sir James Tyrell Chapel* by Rev. W. H. Sewell, M.A., Yaxley, Suffolk (*Journal of Royal Archaeological Institute*, Vol. XXVIII, March, 1871).
- (b) *Memoirs of Sir James Tyrell* (*Suffolk Institute of Archaeology* Vol. V, No. 2, 1878).
- (c) *History of Stowmarket* (Hollingsworth).
- (d) *East Anglia Notes and Queries* I, 128.
- (c) *Additional Manuscripts* 19106.

NOTE.

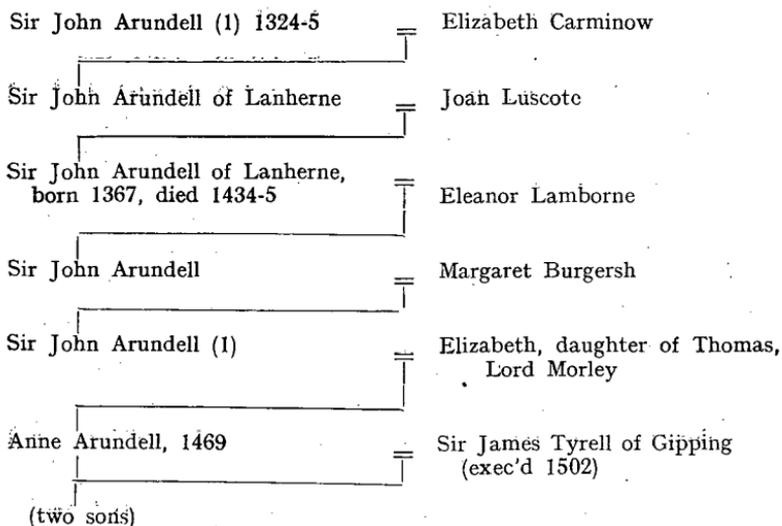
As the existing South Door is of much later date than the rest of the building, the author in making his drawing, has shown the design of the present North Door (blocked up) in the South Doorway as they were evidently both identical.

PHILIP J. TURNER.

TYRELL-DARCY Robert Darcy of Maldon by his wife Alice (née Fitz-Langley) had two sons and 6 daughters, of whom

- Eleanor* m. Sir William Tyrell of Heron
- Margaret* m. William Tyrell of Gipping
- Alice* m. John Clopton.
- Catherine* m. Robert Crane.

CARMINOW PEDIGREE.



HERALDRY IN GIPPING CHAPEL.

TAKEN ABOUT 30 YEARS AGO (Mar. 5, 1931).

SHIELDS AMONG THE REMAINING GLASS IN THE EAST WINDOW.

- (1). Or three nails sable. Shield of the Passion.
- (2). A heart, between two hands in chief, and two feet in base. Shield of the Five Wounds.
- (3). A spear with reed and sponge in saltire. Shield of the Passion.
- (4). A crown of thorns. Shield of the Passion.
- (5). Two whips in saltire. Shield of the Passion.
- (6). Gules, a cross moline argent. (Beke or Bec. A quartering of the Willoughbys).
- (7). Beke or Bec.
- (8). Sable, six martlets, two, two, and two argent. Arundell.
- (9). Argent two martlets sable. A portion of an Arundell coat.
- (10). Quarterly 1, Sable a cross engrailed or. Willoughby. 2, Beke. 3, Or, a lion rampant sable. Welles. 4, Gules a fessè, dancettèe between six cross crosetts or. Engaynè.
- (11). Crest. A boars head erect argent, out of the mouth a peacock's tail ppr. Tyrell of Gipping.
- (12). Three coats per pale. 1 Arundell. 2 Beke. 3 Willoughby.

Sir Thomas Tyrell, Kt. of Gipping, son and heir of Sir James Tyrell, and his wife Anne, daughter of Sir John Arundell, married Margaret daughter of Christopher, Lord Willoughby.