

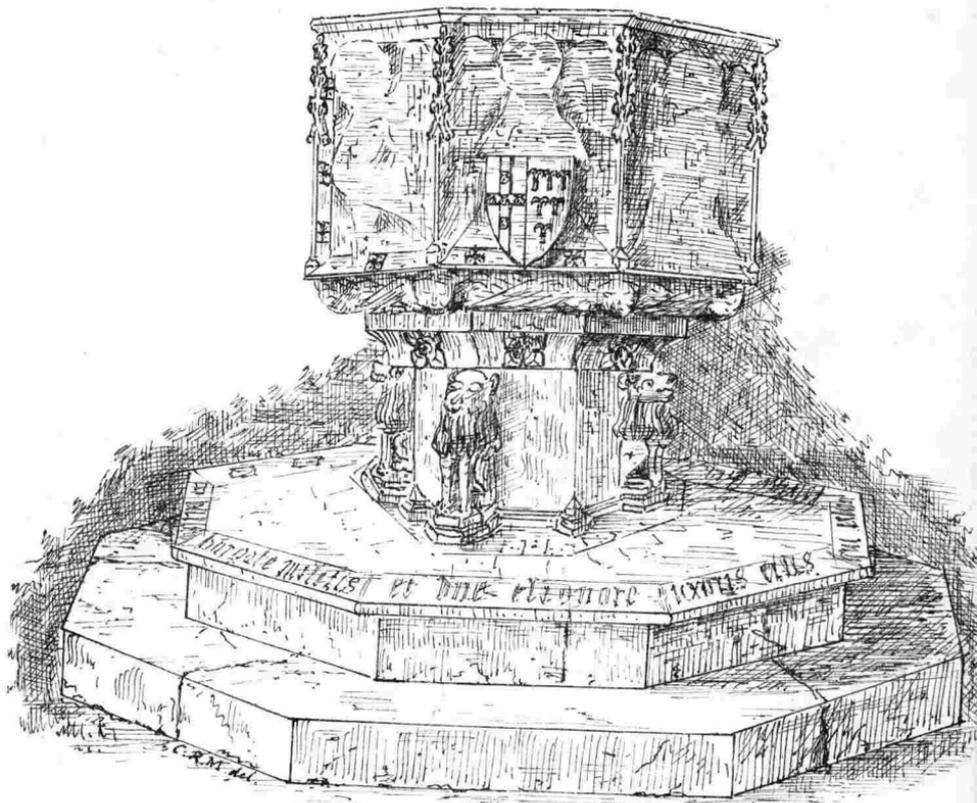
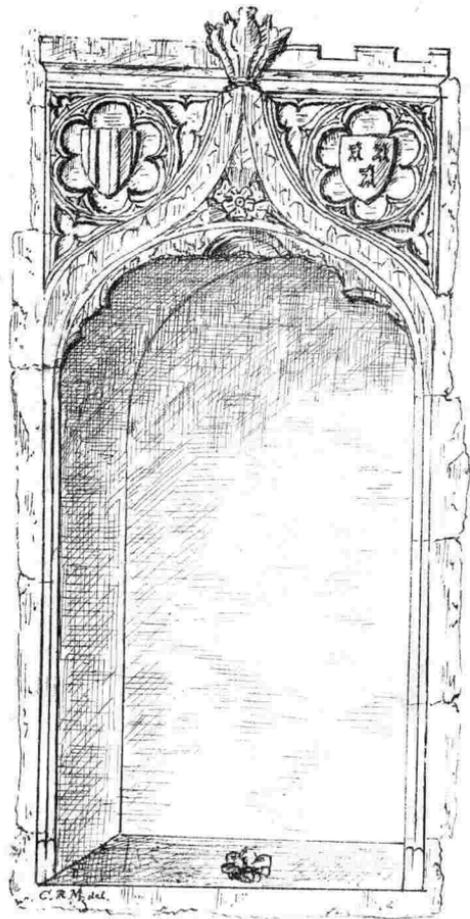
NOTICE OF BURGATE CHURCH, SUFFOLK:  
ITS ARCHITECTURE, MONUMENTS, &c.

[READ MAR. 13, 1851.]

THE parish church of Burgate, in the deanery of Hartismere, is one to which archæologists have been attracted by the fine brass remaining there, and, accordingly, it may, perhaps, be well known to many members of our Society. It has not, however, as far as I am aware, received any detailed notice of its principal features, and there are several points in it which render it, I think, worthy of a brief description. Any account of the manorial history of the parish I must leave to those who are competent for the task, and have access to the necessary documents and authorities. My present object is merely to communicate to the Society my notes of the building as it is, and its contents—a purpose, I trust, not unacceptable, when we remember how little has been done for the topography of the county, and how many interesting examples of ancient architecture lie scattered in its several churches.

The plan of Burgate church consists simply of chancel, nave, and south porch, with a square tower at the west end. The date of its erection may be safely attributed to the middle of the fourteenth century; the older portions being of pure decorated character, although it has received several additions of later date. From a certain similarity in these decorated portions to the architecture of the neighbouring church of Redgrave, it is not improbable that the same person was the architect of both buildings. If so, there needs no better proof of his high qualifications than a glance at the magnificent chancel of Redgrave, not unworthy to be compared with those noble edifices which in the fens of Lincolnshire compensate for the absence of natural beauty. At Burgate, however, we find but the skeleton of its original form. The destruction of its east window, and the blocking up of others at the sides, have made it appear but a homely and melancholy building; and it requires some attentive observation to

*Piscina. Burgate church.*



*Font. Burgate Church.*

re-construct, in the mind, its appearance when fresh from the builder's hands. That there was a church here of much earlier date than the present one is probable; but, beyond some ancient coffin-lids, there are now no indications of any style older than the decorated.

To begin our survey with the chancel. The east window, as I have already noticed, no longer remains in its original state: it was probably filled with flowing tracery, but it is now a nondescript, with wooden mullions, thoroughly deserving the unjust fate of its predecessor. The side walls are altogether destitute of windows; although, if they were examined, they might be found to contain two on the south side, and one on the north, of which traces remain externally. These were most likely similar to those now remaining on the north side of the nave—good decorated windows of two lights. The south side of the chancel contains a doorway, of the same period, elegantly moulded, with a bold hood on the inside. The dripstone is continued in a stringcourse, which ran below the windows. Near the east wall is a piscina, of which a sketch is adjoined; (*See Plate I.*) it appears to have been an insertion at about the year 1400, as its spandrils shew the arms of Sir Wm. de Burgate and Eleanor (*Vise de lou*) his wife, whose tomb will be described hereafter. It had an ogee canopy, from which the crockets have been hewn away, and the shields are set in sixfoils. It has suffered the mutilation of the cusps to the arch, but is still an interesting ornament. A short time ago it was concealed by a wooden erection used as a vestry, but this the present rector has judiciously removed to the opposite side. On the north side of the chancel was a projecting sacristy; this is now gone, but the doorway leading to it remains; the dripstone of its arch is supported by well-carved heads, one of which shews the square head-dress worn by Queen Philippa. To the west of this is a lofty pointed arch, enclosing a shallow recess; there can be little doubt but that this was intended for the representation of the holy sepulchre at Easter, with the ceremonies used by the Romish church. These recesses, or Easter sepulchres, as they are called, are not of very common occurrence: a few remain, very highly ornamented, as at Heckington\*, Lincolnshire; Hawton†;

\* Engraved in *Vetusta Monumenta*, vol. iii.

† Published by the Cambridge Camden Society: folio.

Notts.; and Northwold\*, Norfolk; but it is probable, as the custom was general, and every church must have required some arrangement for its observance, that *wooden* erections were in use, which have now perished. In the centre of the chancel stands the fine tomb of Sir Wm. de Burgate, which I will describe when I have noticed the rest of the church.

To proceed to the nave. There is no chancel arch, nor does it appear that there ever was one. On the south side are three windows of perpendicular character, and a good decorated doorway leading to the porch. On the north side is one similar window, and two others of earlier date, which are doubtless the original ones; the perpendicular ones having been inserted, as was so commonly the case, in order to admit of a different style of painted glass, with which they were once filled. These decorated windows are of two lights, and lofty in proportion to their width; their elegant appearance makes us regret that the taste of later times should have required the destruction of the remainder. The inner door of the south porch is of a good decorated character, but the porch itself is perpendicular; it has a window of two lights on each side. The belfry arch and the tower are decorated. The west window, in the tower, is of two lights, the lower half being filled with masonry, and pierced with two narrow openings; the intention of this does not appear. Externally the tower shews a quatrefoiled circle in lower stage. The four belfry windows are decorated, of two lights, and above them, in each face, are three quatrefoiled circles, twelve in all, just below the battlements, forming an unusual and very ornamental finish to the tower.

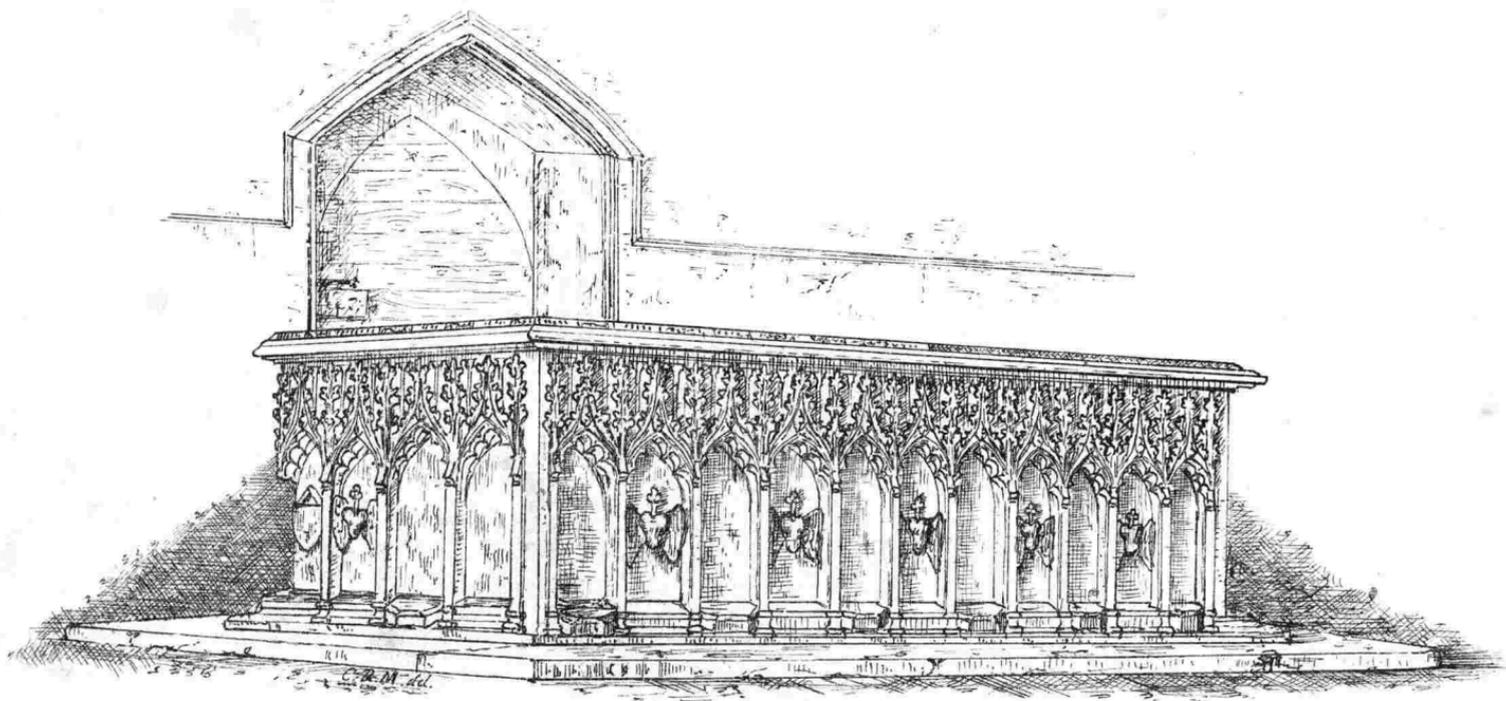
The font, standing at the west end of the nave, is worthy of notice, and is shewn in *Plate I.* p. 209. It is octagonal, and the sides of the bowl have been sculptured with the well-known symbols of the Evangelists, alternating with angels, which probably all held shields. Seven of the sides have been barbarously hacked away, so as merely to shew the outline of the design; and the eighth, that to the west, has scarcely suffered less, only that the shield remains in front of the angel. This shield bears the following arms: A cross charged with five escallops, impaling (*Argent*) six

\* Engraved in *Vetusta Monumenta*, vol. iii.

chess-rooks, three, two, and one, (*Sable*) ; *Rookwood*. The first of these coats is probably that of *Weyland* ; but the colours are not expressed, and the same charges were borne by the families of *Bigot* and *Villiers*. I regret that I am <sup>*Coygeshall*</sup> unable to account for the occurrence of these arms ; the match may be familiar to more experienced genealogists, but none of the pedigrees I have examined have given me the explanation. John de Rokewood, of Stanningfield, who married one of the co-heiresses of Sir William de Burgate, was grandson of Robert de Rokewood, by Mariotta his wife, daughter of Sir William de Weyland ; but this match would require the arms on the dexter side to be those of Rokewood, impaling Weyland on the sinister side ; and the reverse is the case on this font. There is no match of a Weyland with a Rokewood mentioned in the account of the Rokewood family in the *Collectanea Topographica et Genealogica*, vol. ii. The font at Stanningfield is there mentioned as having the arms of Rokewood. The remaining sides of this one at Burgate were most likely ornamented in a similar manner ; one probably shewed Burgate impaling Visedelou, and the other two may have been Burgate and Rokewood singly. The shaft of the font has four sejant lions, placed very irregularly with respect to the bowl. Immediately round the stem are some encaustic tiles, with patterns of good design, but they are mostly concealed by whitewash and plaster. The upper step at the base of the font has the following inscription running round the margin ; the letters are incised in the stone and filled up with a black substance—the words in brackets have been erased. [*Orate pro a'ib'*] **Will'mi Burgate militis et D'ne elionore uxoris eius qui istum fontem fieri fecerunt.** Sir William de Burgate, whose tomb remains in the chancel, with the the brass of himself and his wife, died in 1409, and this may be about the date of the font. His daughter married a Rokewood, as stated above ; but if the font was erected in his lifetime, as there is no reason to doubt it was, it is somewhat inexplicable why the match of Weyland (if it be so) with Rokewood should be represented above. Perhaps some member of the society, more versed in Suffolk genealogies, can solve the difficulty : what is required is a match of a Weyland (or possibly Bigot)

with a Rokewood before 1409, and their connection with Burgate.

Beneath the belfry arch are some fragments of decorated tracery, which may have been part of the original east window, and also of some coffin stones of an early date. The open seats in the nave retain most of their ancient poppyheads, good plain examples of the fifteenth century. The pulpit is well carved, and one of the common specimens of the time of James or Charles I. There are a few more encaustic tiles in one or two of the pews on the south side, with the fleur-de-lis and vine leaf in raised patterns; another has three crowns for the see of Ely, or St. Edmund. A very few fragments of stained glass remain in one of the perpendicular windows. There is one other object of interest to be noticed before proceeding to the monumental remains—this is the church-chest, now standing in the chancel. A cursory visitor would probably pass it over without remark, for seen from a short distance there is nothing to distinguish it from any other chest of the simplest and plainest construction. A closer inspection, however, shews it to be highly curious. Unlike many ancient chests, of which examples exist, it has no wood carving of tracery, &c., nor is there any ornamental work in iron. But the front and sides shew the hand of some painter of the fourteenth century, and parts of his design may yet be made out. The front has a diaper and side border of foliage of red colour, enclosing a subject, half of which is obliterated; the sinister half is better preserved, and shews the figure of a knight on horseback; the knight wears the camail, jupon, and horizontal baldrick of the reign of Richard II.; he leans back on his horse, and his right arm is raised over his head, apparently grasping a sword; his left arm rests at his side, on the horse's back, and holds a kite-shaped shield, emblazoned with a griffin or wyvern. His jupon has an elegant flowing pattern painted in red. The horse appears to be advancing through water, to which he stoops his head. There has, no doubt, been another figure in front of the knight, and I think there are faint traces of a tilting spear driven at the former knight, and his leaning position may represent him about to be unhorsed. That some "passage of arms" is here exhibited there can be little question, and



*Tomb of Sir Wm de Burgate, 1409.  
in the centre of the Chancel, Burgate, Suffolk.*

\* \* \* *It having been found impossible to complete the engraving of the Burgate brass in time for this part, it will be issued with Part VI.*

ERRATA.

P. 220. For fig. 4 read fig. 5 ; for fig. 5 read fig. 6.

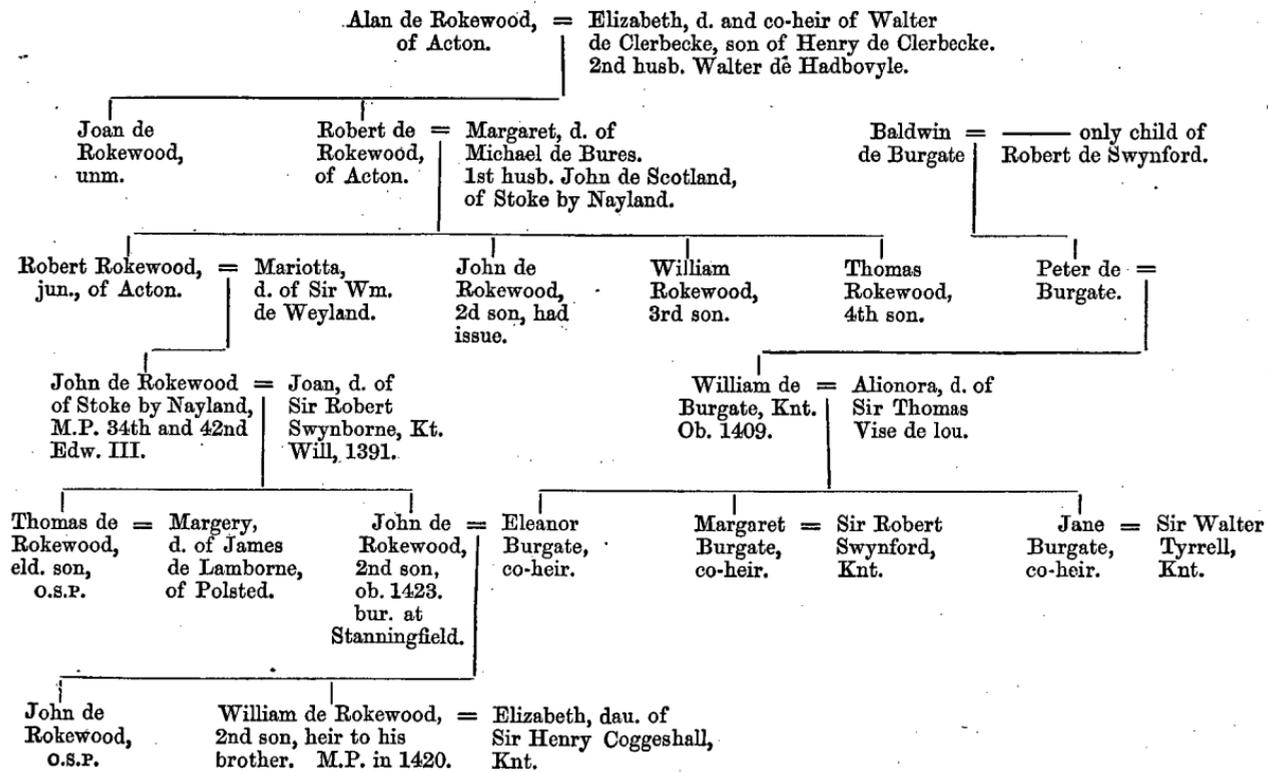
it is much to be regretted that the design is now so imperfect. Whether it was an illustration from one of the popular romances of the middle ages, or recorded some feat which may have prompted the founder's benefactions to the church, cannot now be ascertained. There is no reason to think that the painting was intended for any other purpose than the front of the chest, as the borders shew the subject to have been complete in itself; and the sides of the chest are also diapered with flowers as in front. As a specimen of fourteenth century art, it deserves careful preservation, and is worth a little pains from any one interested in such subjects to elucidate its meaning\*.

To turn now to the monument of Sir William de Burgate. This beautiful erection stands in the centre of the chancel, a position by no means common in parochial edifices, but intended, perhaps, to keep the memory of the deceased founder or benefactor more perfectly in view, and to serve as if it were a bier, round which perpetual masses might be said for the repose of his soul. The design of the monument will be seen from the accompanying sketch: (*See Plate II.*) the ends and sides consist of a series of small canopied niches, some of which contain shields, others winged hearts—symbolizing, perhaps, the soul freed from mortality, and a comment on the words of the Preacher, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return to God who gave it;" and others have pedestals at the base, which once held "weepers," or else figures of saints. A slab of Purbeck marble covers the tomb; and in it are inlaid the brass effigies of the knight and his lady. (*See Plate III.*) The former is habited in a leathern jupon, or surcoat, confined by the baldrick; on his head is a pointed bascinet, with the camail appended to it: the stone underneath his head shews the indent of a tilting helmet and crest. At his left side hangs his sword, and on his right, the misericorde or dagger. His hands are joined in prayer. His legs are armed with plate; his feet, which rest on a lion, have pointed sollerets; and the whole is a good example of the armour of the reign of Richard II. and Henry IV., without any indication of the transition to *complete plate armour*, which came into fashion about this

\* In Harty Chapel, Kent, is a chest carved with two Knights tilting. *Glossary of Architecture, art. Chest.*

time (1409) or rather earlier ; but this only proves that the custom was general to represent the deceased in the actual habits worn in life. On the left of the knight is the figure of his lady, Alianore, daughter of Sir Thomas Vise de lou, of an old family, originally settled at Shelfanger, Norfolk. Her dress is very simple, consisting of a kirtle and mantle, the latter confined by a silken cord in front : her head-dress is the characteristic *crespine*, or caul, covered by a veil : and at her feet is a dog,—the emblem of fidelity, as the lion at her husband's feet expresses his courage and generosity. These figures are about four feet seven inches high : above them is a double canopy in brass, of good plain design, and between the pinnacles were four shields, now gone. In the engraving which Gough has given of this brass in his *Sepulchral Monuments* (he has reversed the whole) two of the shields shew the bearings ; they were : Paly of six, *argent and sable*,—Burgate : and, *argent*, three wolves' heads erased, *gules*,—Vise de lou. A marginal inscription runs round the edge of the slab, the words alternating with foliage : what remains is as follows :—**Will'm's De Burgate miles D'ns De Burgate qui obiit in vigilia S'ci Jacobi Apost ..... Domini mill'mo CCCC nono Et Alianora uxor eius filia Thome Vyldelou militis que obiit ..... die.....** These last blanks have never been filled up, the lady being still alive when the monument was erected. It is somewhat doubtful whether this Sir William de Burgate was the founder of the present church, or only its benefactor or restorer. The architecture of the older portions can hardly be later than 1350, sixty years before his death : so that unless he died at a very great age, it is more probable that he was only a benefactor : and this seems corroborated by the piscina above mentioned, which bears the arms of himself and his wife, and differs in style from the decorated portions of the church, and would at once be pronounced of early perpendicular work, *c.* 1400 : and the font, stated to be his gift in the inscription round it, is of similar character.

The connection between the families named in the foregoing remarks will be more clearly shewn by the following portion of their pedigrees, as given in the *Collectanea Top. et Gen.*, ii. 130.



I may add that a Sir Robert de Burgate, living *temp.* Edward I., perhaps brother of Baldwin mentioned above, was son of Peter de Burgate, and gave lands in Gislingham to the Knights Templars\*.

Besides the monument described above, there are remains of several coped coffin-stones in the church and churchyard. One of these has been engraved†, and appears to be as early as the twelfth century.

Before concluding these notices, it may be as well to give the more modern monumental inscriptions in the church;—a subject too often neglected by the church-tourists and brass-rubbers of the present day: though sometimes a less agreeable task than appropriating heel-ball knights and priests, the service which is rendered to genealogy and local history by accurate notes of modern as well as ancient memorials, cannot be denied. In the present case I have the more pleasure in recording the few inscriptions that remain, because the brass is the only monument mentioned under Burgate in the "Summary Catalogue of Sepulchral Monuments in Suffolk," published in the *Topographer* and *Genealogist*‡.

In the chancel are stones for the following persons:—

Arthur Henry, son of the Rev. C. R. Ashfield, Rector, and of Anne his wife, died Nov. 21st, 1839, aged 11.

Spencer, wife of Robert Pykarell, Rector, and daughter of John Towers, Bishop of Peterborough, died 16th Feb., 1657-8, aged 37. Arms: *sable*, a swan *argent* and a chief *ermine*—Pykarell—impaling a Tower triple-towered—Towers.

Robert Pykarell, M.A., Rector, died 5th June, 1681, aged 75. He had three sons: Robert, William, and John; and two daughters, Elizabeth and Mary: (John and Mary deceased.) Arms: Pykarell impaling three goat's heads erased—Watkins.

Mary, relict of Robert Pykarell, and daughter of William Watkins, of the City of London, Gentleman, died 26th Feb., 1704-5, aged 68. Arms: Pykarell impaling Watkins.

William Pykarell, Gent., died 17th Oct., 1733, aged 65. Arms: Pykarell.

Robert Pykarell, M.A., Rector, died 25th July, 1738, aged 70. Arms: Pykarell.

Rev. Thomas Monro, B.D. Rector of Burgate and Wortham, died 22nd Feb., 1731-2, aged 64.

James Bacon, son of Sir James Bacon, Rector, died 9th Nov., 1649. Arms: *gules* on a chief *argent*, two mullets pierced, *sable*—Bacon; quartering Barry of six, *or* and *azure*, a bend of the second *gules*, Quaplude.

On two of the small square paving stones: James Martin, buried 10th April, 1675. Sophia Martin, 12th April, 1715. One or two other stones have had inscriptions, now obliterated.

\* *Quo warranto*, 726.—Tanner's *Notitia Mon.* p. 527.

† Boutell's *Christian Monuments in England and Wales*, p. 18.

‡ Vol. ii. p. 160.

Such is the present condition of Būrgate church, and if it cannot boast of much architectural beauty to strike the eye, or many treasures of medieval art to attract the archæologist, its want of these advantages may itself be my excuse for bringing it out of the obscurity which might otherwise be its lot; and I should be more than repaid if others should be stimulated to place on record the contents of some other and worthier buildings, that yet enrich the district to which our Society directs its labours.

C. R. MANNING.

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## QUARTERLY MEETINGS.

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NEWMARKET, JUNE 13, 1850.—*The Rev. Professor Henslow, V.P., in the Chair.*

The members met at the house of Mr. Staples, at Moulton, soon after ten o'clock, to witness the opening of a circular mound in that gentleman's grounds. A trench was cut to the centre of the mound, which is about 15 feet high; but nothing whatever was found indicative of a sepulchral origin. It is not improbable that it might have been the site of a small watch tower, as, upon digging along the outer line of the trench around the mound, evidences of a stone wall were found.

The party next proceeded to Cheveley Park, where their numbers were considerably augmented. Here, on a raised ground, surrounded by a deep foss, several very interesting portions of a castellated edifice had been exposed, through the liberality of his Grace the Duke of Rutland, and under the direction of John Fairlie, Esq. The Castle would appear, from the recent excavations, to have been a parallelogram, flanked at the angles by round towers, and with a strong round-towered gateway at the entrance to guard the drawbridge or pass. Nothing, however, has been seen above the ground but a small fragment of ivy-covered wall; and of its history little or nothing is at present known, either authentic or traditionary. Not far from the centre, a well of large diameter was discovered; and the removal of the rubbish with which it had been filled brought to light some fragments of moulded brick and hewn stone of the 16th century, one of which bears the arms and crest of the Cottons, who formerly held the manor, and, it is said, built themselves a house of brick here; which was their principal residence as late as 1632. Some remains of earthworks, &c., are traceable for a considerable distance outside the moat. His Grace the Duke of Rutland has since directed the researches to be continued; and it is hoped on a future occasion to be able to communicate the result of his Grace's kindness.

The party then adjourned to Cheveley church; a cruciform edifice, wherein, through the zeal of Mr. Fairlie and the Rev. J. T. Bennet, the rector, several curious architectural features had been for the first time brought to the knowledge of archæologists. A paper, by Mr. E. K. Bennet, was here read. This paper will be printed in a subsequent number of the Proceedings.

The Company next proceeded to Woodditton, and having inspected the church, which contains some good old oak seats, a fine brass, &c., assembled at the termination of the Devil's Dyke, where a paper was read by Mr. S. Tymms, describing the course and construction of this remarkable work; and recapitulating the arguments for and against assigning its formation to the Britons, Romans, Saxons, and Danes. (See p. 167.)