

GREAT WALDINGFIELD CHURCH.

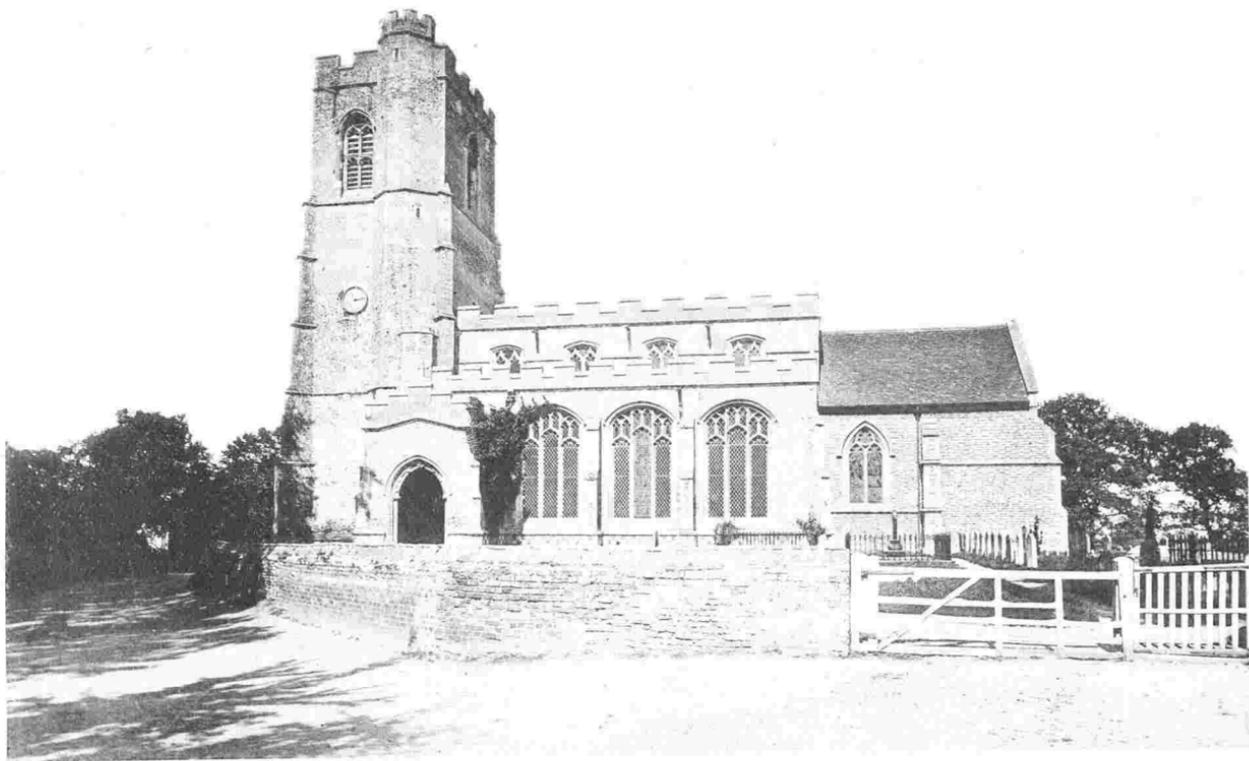
BY REV. CHARLES ALBERT STOKES, M.A.

This Church, in the Archdeaconry of Sudbury, and Diocese of Ely, is dedicated to S. Lawrence. The Tower, Nave, and Aisles were probably rebuilt by John Appleton at the end of the 14th century. Of John Appleton there are further memorials existing in the adjacent parish of Little Waldingfield. When the above-named portions of the Church were rebuilt, the old chancel was left standing; but the chancel was rebuilt, as will be described further on, by the Rev. W. P. Baily, Rector, and his family, in the years 1865 to 1869.

By the beginning of the present century the Church had fallen into considerable disrepair; it was partially repaired at a cost of £500 raised by rate in the years 1827-29. Rev. Francis Cresswell, Rector.

The north Chapel was re-seated, re-floored, and re-roofed in 1875, by John Braithwaite, Esq., of Nottingham, at a cost of £200.

In the years 1876-7 the Church was thoroughly repaired under the direction of the Rev. Francis J. Braithwaite, rector, and a committee, at a cost of £1663, raised by subscriptions. Mr. Hakewill, of London, was the Architect. The works done consisted of the following:—The Roofs of the Nave, Aisles, and Tower were taken off, and after being made thoroughly sound, were re-placed and re-covered with lead. The roofs are of English oak. The nave Aisles and Tower were re-floored and re-seated. The walls and floors of Tower were made sound. West arch was re-opened, clerestory windows re-glazed, bells



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re-hung, and one re-cast. These works were executed before the re-opening of the church A.D. 1876. In 1877 the tracery of the aisle windows was made good and windows glazed. The south and west doors were repaired, and a new north door, an exact copy of the old one, was hung. South porch was re-roofed, paved, and glazed, and stone work repaired. These details of the restoration of the church will serve to show that the original character of the parts dealt with was preserved.

Nothing has been said so far as to the details of the re-building of the chancel in 1866 and following years. The architect was Mr. Butterfield: the cost including the stained glass in the windows was about £1000, undertaken by the rector, the Rev. W. P. Baily, and his family. The walls were new faced inside and out; new east and south window frames, new tiles to floor and oak sittings; new roof.

There were traces left of an Early-English east end in a broken "roll" under the window. The present east window is of dimensions of another old window found bricked up in the wall. There was a "priest's door" on the south side of the chancel, and a screen went across the arch north of the chancel. The priest's door was removed to the school, but the screen is not in existence now, though it appears to have been used as a vestry screen after the re-building of the chancel. The old oak string A.D. 1100 was replaced in the chancel. The south window before the re-building was a narrow square-headed window made up of odds and ends from the old church.

The reredos was given to the church by Misses Emily and Louisa Baily: the marbles, of which it is formed, having been collected by them from the ruins of temples in Rome and elsewhere. They were made into mosaics in Rome by Saleri, and placed in their present position under the direction of Mr. Butterfield. The oriental alabaster forming the cross in the reredos came from a small red granite temple near the Sphinx; the granite in the slabs over the credence, from mount Sinai; the syenite from a

fragment of the statue of Rameses II., Thebes. Over the credence there is the text—

“The Lord alone shall be exalted in that day and the idols He shall utterly abolish.”

The rails in the chancel sittings and under the chancel arch were from the chancel of S. Michael's Church, Cornhill, London; a church of Sir Christopher Wren: they are supposed to have been by Grinling Gibbons. Sir G. Scott ordered them to be removed, as out of character with his improvements at S. Michael's, and they were bought by the Rector. The old altar rails, which used to form three sides, are now in the rectory.

The pulpit was placed in the church at the time of the chancel restoration. It is of oak and walnut. There was a corresponding lectern, but that is now in Little Waldingfield Church.

The Font is old (with the exception of the cover), but there is no record of its history. The ends of the nave benches are also old, and are worth attention; as also the string-course in the clerestory with its ornaments.

The vestry was rebuilt in 1887, at the cost of Rev. F. J. Braithwaite; Mr. Fawcett, architect. Cost £340. There was a sacristy, but this was pulled down many years ago.

On the south wall (exterior), over the clerestory, there is an inscription in black-letter; over the west door (exterior) there were carvings relative to the martyrdom of S. Lawrence; conspicuous among them is said to have been “the gridiron”; but about sixty years ago the workmen, when their master was absent, chipped the carvings away, and their place is now filled with plaster. There appear to be no emblems of the martyr within or without the church.

The brass lectern was given by Mrs. Braithwaite, in memory of her husband (Rev. F. J. Braithwaite, rector). It is an exact copy of one placed in Little Gidding Church, by Nicholas Ferrar. There is an original lectern, very similar, in Southwell Minster.

Other rectors commemorated in the church are Thomas Boyce, Francis Cresswell, these by tablets. The west window preserves the memory of William Percival Baily, rector. There are also monuments to members of families once resident in the parish.

The painted windows may need a short description.

Chancel	{	E. window, by Gibbs, London, pres. by MISSES BAILY
1869		S. " " " " " L. BAILY, ESQ.
Church	{	W. window, tracery copied from old window glass by Gibbs, pres. by MISSES BAILY
1877		S. aisle centre, by Westlake, pres. by MESSRS. BACON
		S. E. window, old glass re-set, REV. F. BRAITHWAITE
1886		N. W. window, glass by Lavers & Co., pres. by MISS BAILY
		N. " " " " " REV. F. BRAITHWAITE
		(window next) " " " " " MISS BAILY

The organ is the gift of Mrs. Braithwaite.

The five bells as existing previous to 1800, were in that year recast into six and rehung: in 1876 one was recast again. The peal now consists of six bells. Weight of tenor 13 cwt.

The clock was made A.D. 1786.

It may be interesting to note that during the present century a sum of at least £4,500 has been spent in repairing and furnishing the church; or a sum of £1,000 since 1865.

The Registers of the church date from A.D. 1539 and are continued to the present day, with occasional gaps of not more than three or four years.

The advowson belongs to the Master and Fellows of Clare College, and came into their hands in 1727. The patron before this date was the above-named William Powle. Mr. John Powle was patron in 1657, and was the son of Mr. Paul Powle, and baptized 1608, in this church.

The manor of Waldingfield Hall was granted to Geoffrey Carbonel in the 13th century. Sir Robert Crane was lord of the manor in 1639.