

NOTES ON LAVENHAM CHURCH AND PARISH.

COMMUNICATED

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The Lordship of Lavenham has been held from the time of Henry II by the family of the De Veres, Earls of Oxford, Hereditary High Chamberlains, founders of the Priory of Earls Colne, and of Hedingham Castle in Essex which they made their chief residence. In Lavenham, they possessed as a residence the manor house, the foundations of which may yet be seen in the grounds of Lavenham Hall. From time to time the Earls occupied this house, and doubtless much of the prosperity which Lavenham anciently enjoyed was owing to the patronage and protection of this powerful family. Their care for its higher interests are shewn by the grandeur and magnificence of the parish church.

The De Veres continued owners of Lavenham until the reign of Elizabeth, when Edward De Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, sold Lavenham to Paul d'Ewes, the father of the Antiquary Sir Simon d'Ewes. Stow relates that this reckless Earl rode into London to his house by London Stone with eighty gentlemen in a livery of Reading tawny, and chains of gold about their necks, before him; and one hundred tall yeomen in the like livery, to follow him, without chains, but all having his cognizance of the blue boar embroidered on their left shoulder. He is said to have been the first who brought perfumed gloves and such fineries out of Italy into this kingdom.

But the chief interest for our present purpose lies in the history of the 12th, 13th, 14th, and 15th Earls, all of whom were named John.

John, 12th Earl, a stout Lancastrian and friend of Henry VI, married Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of Sir John Howard; but neglecting to obtain the license of the crown for the marriage, he was fined £2000. This marriage brought the Barony of Plaitz to the De Veres. This Earl, with Aubrey his eldest son, was beheaded by Edward IV in 1461.

John, 13th Earl, second son of the preceding Earl, married for his first wife Margaret Neville, daughter of Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury, and sister of Richard Neville, the "stout" Earl of Warwick who fell at Barnet Field. Margaret was the Grandaughter of Thomas de Montacute, Earl of Salisbury, whose only daughter, Alice, married Richard Neville, son of Ralph, 1st Earl of Westmoreland, by his second wife Joane de Beaufort, daughter of John of Gaunt and Katherine Swynford, bringing into that family the Baronies of Montacute and Monthermer. On the death of Thomas, the father of Alice, the earldom of Salisbury became extinct, but it was revived in favour of her husband, who thus became Earl of Salisbury.

John De Vere married secondly Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Richard Scroop. The earl after the battle of Barnet, where he was associated with his brother-in-law the Earl of Warwick, fled the country and was until the death of Richard III in banishment in Picardy. At this time his countess is said by Speed to have been in such poverty, "that she had to live upon charity and the work that she made with her needle." When Henry of Richmond decided upon the invasion of England, the Earl, who had escaped from his prison at Hammes, was one of the first to join the Prince. At the Battle of Bosworth Field he commanded the vanguard and mainly contributed to the victory.

As soon as Henry was seated on the throne the Earl was restored to the honours and possessions of which he had been deprived, and to which were added numerous other manors forfeited by the adherents of Richard the 3rd. He was also made Constable of the Tower and

Lord High Admiral, and on the accession of Henry VIII he was restored to his hereditary office of Lord Chamberlain. It is told of the Earl that when Henry VII visited him at Hedingham he entertained the king so sumptuously and made such a display of his retainers, that the king in some alarm said "By my faith, my lord, I thank you for my good cheer, but my attorney must speak with you." And the result was that his lordship had to pay 15,000 marks for his display.

The Earl was a knight of the Garter, and died 1513, having been fifty years Earl of Oxford.

He was succeeded by his nephew John, 14th Earl, a man of diminutive stature and nicknamed Little John of Campes, Castle Campes in Cambridgeshire, being his usual place of residence. He married Anne, daughter of Thomas, Duke of Norfolk, but dying without issue in 1526 the Baronies of Badlesmere and Plaitz fell into abeyance.

This Earl was succeeded by his cousin John, 15th Earl, one of the nobles who addressed the pope in favour of the king's divorce from Queen Katherine. The second son of this Earl, Aubrey De Vere, married Margaret, daughter of John Spring, of Lavenham, and upon the extinction of the descendants of John, the 16th Earl, Aubrey's elder brother, the descendants of this marriage succeeded to the Earldom. But this noble family which had played a leading part in the history of England from the time of the conquest was destined to live but comparatively a few years more. In 1702 the title became extinct on the death of the 20th Earl without male issue.

The first recorded notice of the family of Spring in connection with the parish of Lavenham occurs in the year 1459. But looking to the position these eminent wool merchants held at this period, it is probable that the family had been established here earlier. Thomas Spring, the first of the name, died in 1440, leaving by Agnes his wife a son, Thomas the second, whose monumental brass is preserved in the vestry. He died 1486,

leaving by his wife Margaret two sons, Thomas third of that name, and James. Also a daughter Cecilia. The effigies on the brass represent four sons and six daughters, but the above-mentioned sons and daughters are the only children named in his will.

By his will, which is in Latin, he gives his soul to the Omnipotent God and his body to be buried in *Vestibulo eccl'ie Beati Petri Ap'li De Lauenh'm*. He gives to the Rector *p'och mee xv.s ut p'e oret p'an'a mea ..* To his spinners, fullers and tenters, *filatrib', fullonibus et tentoribus meis*, 100 marks to be distributed at the discretion of his executors. For the building of the Tower, *ad edificationem campanil in stepyll eccl'ie p'och de Lauenh'm*, he gives 300 marks. He also gives 200 marks towards the repair of the roads around Lavenham. After gifts, *fratribus ordinis minoru' de Babwell, de Sudbury and ordinis Augustiniensis de Clare* he declares his wife Margaret and his son Thomas his residuary legatees and his executors. Margaret the wife appears to have died before her husband according to the date of her death recorded upon the brass. His will was proved Sept. 12, 1486.

Thomas Spring, the third of the name, surnamed the rich clothier, made his will 1523, and it was proved in July, 1524. In it he styles himself Clothmaker and "verely knowing that there is no thing more sure or more certeyn to any creature in this Wretched World than deth..... And nothing more vnsuer and vncerteyn than the dreadful houre therof,..... Item, I bequeth my soule to almighty god to his blessed moder mary and to all the holy company of hevyn. And my body to be buried in the Church of Lauenh'm before the awter of Saint Kateryn where I will be made a Tombe with a parclose thereabout at the discre'on of myn executors. Item, I will that Immediately after my decesse in as hasty tyme as it may be conueniently doon there shalbe a thousand masses songen for the welth of my soule." Then after bequests to the ffreres in Thetford and the nonnes of Thetford, and the towns and parishes in which he has

landes and ten'ts to haue a masse w^t Dirige in euery church, he "geve and bequeth to the fynysshing of the Stepul of Lauenh'm two hundred pounds." He then makes various bequests dividing the bulk of his property between his wife Alice and his eldest son. But a special bequest is made towards the marriage of his daughter Bridget then a young girl and perhaps a favourite child. Bridget, afterwards became the wife of Aubrey de Vere and Grandmother of the 19th Earl of Oxford.

Alice, the widow of Thomas the rich clothier, was his second wife and daughter of Thomas Appleton, by Margery, daughter and heir of Robert Crane of Stonham. She survived her husband about fourteen years, her will being proved in 1538. It is a somewhat lengthy document containing many references to Lavenham. She directs that her body may be buried by "my late husbnde Thomas Sprynge Esquier afore the aulter of St Kateryn wⁱⁿ the parishe church of Lavenham." There are various bequests for masses for "to be songe Daily wⁱⁿ the parish Church of Lavenham.....at which masses I will other my Doughter margaret Rysby, orells my son William Rysby to be present and to offer at euery of the said masses a penny. also I will that there be ordained xiiii poure folk to be present at the said Diriges and Masses.....there to praye for my husbonde Thomas Spryng, and all christen, of which nombre I will six to be those poure men which be my late-husbond's bedmen and myn and the other vii to be poure women and widowes every one to have every day a penny." To the alter of St Kateryn she gives a vestment and a messe book, and directs masses to be said for her own, her husband's, her father's and her mothers souls, at the said aulter. To the churchwardens of the said church of Lavenh'm for the tyme being and for the Reparacions of the same church vi.li xiiii.s iiiii.d She directs an obite or anniuersary to be kepte wⁱⁿ the parish church of Lavenh'm by the terme of twenty years, the

charges thereof she relinquishes unto the discretion of her sonne in lawe William Rysby and Margaret his wife. She further gives to the poure folke euery yere for the space of fyve yeres viii Loods of woode to be delivered in and at the feast of Cristmas. She also gives ffourty pounds to th' amending of the high wayes betwene Lavenh'm and Groton.

Alice appears to have possessed more, than one house in Lavenham. One of these houses, Branches with its farm, she gives to her daughter Bridget, and she further doubles the bequest of her late husband to this daughter "so beyt she bestowe herself in mariage to such a husbonde other by hir frends counsell or hir own, as will assure her of a hundreth m'rks in good Lande by the name of Joynto^r afore the Day of hir mariage or for terme of hir lyfe, with assurance made unto hir for Joyntour, Doon and p'fourmed." Bridget doubtless carried out the wishes of her parents when she married Aubrey De Vere.

The extent of the possessions of the Spring family appears from the numerous manors of which Sir John Spring died possessed in 1549. The schedule comprised the manors of Brentillighe, Eldnewton, Mylding, Whatfield, Netherhall; Brettenham otherwise Willehams, Cockfield, Hepworth, Pepers, Bowers, Barrards in Whatfield, Woodhall, Lenhall, and divers hereditaments in Suffolk, with the manors of Bukenham and Thompson in Norfolk. (*History of Hengrave.*)

The parish of Lavenham was divided into three Manors; viz., Lavenham Overhall, Lavenham Nether Hall, and Lannams. These three manors have been from time immemorial held by the same Lords, and have been so long united that it is not certain that they could now be distinguished. On the execution of the 12th Earl by Edward iv, when the vast possessions of the Earls of Oxford were all forfeited, these manors were granted to the Duke of Gloucester, afterward Richard iii. On the accession of Henry viii the Lordship was restored

and remained in the Earls of Oxford until 4 Eliz. 1562, when Edward de Vere, 17 Earl, sold it to Sir Thomas Skinner, Alderman of London, who in the 43 Eliz. 1601 alienated it to Isaac Woden. In the 9 Jac 1. 1611, Paul D'Ewes became Lord by purchase, and he was succeeded 6. Charles I. 1630, by his son Sir Symonds D'Ewes.

The rectory was appurtenant to the manor and valued in the King's Book at £20 2s. 11d. The Earls of Oxford presented until near the end of the 16 century, later presentations being by the D'Ewes until 1713, when the rectory was purchased by the master and fellows of Gonville and Caius College Cambridge, for the sum of £710 15s. 0d.

The following list of rectors is taken from the Davy MSS.

- 1302 NIC. DE WYTCHERCH. Aliciam Vere Com. Oxon.
- 1312 ROB. DE ELMHAM. Rob. de Vere com. Oxon.
- 1334 RIC. DE STOKE. Joēs de Vere
- 1354 WILLIAM DE LAVENHAM. Same
- 1361 JOēs DE PELHAM. Under will of Matilda de Vere Comitessa
- 1386 JOēs POLAND. Same
- 1400 JOēs PYGOT JUN^r. Same
- 1416 JOēs SADDLE. Ric de Vere
- 1444 WILL. FALLAM. Alicie com. Oxon. dñō de Lavenham
- 1453 WILL. MORTON. Joēs com. Oxon.
- 1459 GEO. VERE. ad Coll. dm. Epi. p laps
- 1462 JOēs WALTER. ad præ. Dm Rg
- 1475 HEN. BOOST.
- 1477 THOM ASHBY.
- 1486 JOēs GIGGLES from St. Mich. Crooked Lane, London. John Vere com. Oxon.
- 1497 THOM. APPLETON. Same
- 1508 THOM. STACKHOUSE. Com. Oxon.
- 1529 WILL. BASSE. Robt. Drury Mil. pat. per Inquis.
- 1558 CHTOF. CHAPMAN ad pre. altij John Vere com. Oxon.
- 1559 WILL DAY S.T.P. Præpos. Eton ad præ. Dñce Rñce min. ætate Ed^{ds} com. Oxon.
- 1571 WILL RAINOLDS AM Ed. com. Oxon.
- 1578 HEN COPPINGER S.T.P. ad præ. Will. Greenhall pro. hac vice
- 1662 GUL. GURNALL ad præ Thōe Bowes de Bromley
- 1679 ROG YOUNG ad præ. Willoughbei D'Ewes Bart.
- 1688 CAR. TURNER. Simond D'Ewes Bart.
- 1710 WILL. KINNERLEY. Same

1729	THOMAS WRIGHT AM	Thom. Gooch STP Ma ^r et Soc. Coll. Gonv. et Causi, Cantab.
1730	JOHN SQUIRE AM	Cantab.
1763	JOHN DAVY	Do.
1792	JAMES BUCK	Do.
1825	RICHARD JOHNSON	Do.
1855	J. M. CROKER	Do.

John Giglis or de Liliis a Luccese was collector of the Apostolic chamber in England and Canon of Wells. He was appointed Bishop of Worcester by a bull of Pope Innocent viii in 1497, when he resigned the living of Lavenham.

In 1578, William Rainolds, the then rector, having joined the Church of Rome, the living was presented to D^r. Coppinger whose monument is now on the north wall of the chancel. D^r. Coppinger held the living for 45 years, but not without great trouble and cost. The patrons, the Earls of Oxford, claimed exemption from the payment of tithes for their park. This D^r. Coppinger successfully resisted, though at a cost of £1600, no mean sum in those days. He was the fourth son of Henry Coppinger, of Buxhall, a family now represented by the Rev. Henry Hill, of that place; he was elected a fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, and a Prebendary of York. He was also Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge, but resigned the latter preferment when presented to the living of Lavenham, 1578.

On the death of Henry Coppinger in 1623, the living was presented to his second son, Ambrose; who died 1644 and was buried at Buxhall. This rector's name is omitted from the above list. About the year 1639 he had for his curate Willian Gurnall, who had just taken his degree at Cambridge, and who afterwards became a fellow of his college, Emanuel. On the death of Ambrose Coppinger, in 1664, Gurnall was at the request of the parishioners presented to the living by Sir Symonds D'Ewes, and the appointment was confirmed by an order of the House of Commons. In the above list the presentation purports to have been made by

Thos̄ Bowes. Sir Thomas Bowes married a sister of Sir Symonds D'Ewes, and was probably a trustee. Gurnall continued to minister as a Presbyterian for eighteen years, until the year 1662 when the Act of Uniformity was passed. In August of that year he took the oath, by which he declared his previous ordination invalid, and gave his assent and consent to the Book of Common Prayer. On the 22nd of the same month he was canonically ordained, and confirmed as incumbent of Lavenham. He was the author of "*The Christian in Complete Armour*" a popular theological work published at intervals during the Commonwealth. His conformity naturally excited doubts of his sincerity and he seems to have accepted his new position with some mental reservation, for among other matters he could not bring himself to wear the surplice and kept a curate to perform those duties which necessitated the use of this vestment. The length of his sermons no doubt made amends for his irregularities and it is to be hoped that the curate was not mulcted of the surplice fees. He died 12 Oct., 1679, and was buried at Lavenham.

Such a rich and prosperous town, an important centre of the wool trade, as Lavenham was in the 15th and 16th centuries, could not be without its Guilds, of which there were three, viz.: The Guild of St. Peter granted by John, 15 Earl of Oxford in 1547, having its hall in High Street; the Guild of the Holy Trinity granted by John the 16th Earl, with its hall in Prentice Street, and the Guild of Corpus Christi granted by John the 15 Earl 1529, with its hall in the Market place.

This hall of the Corpus Christi Guild is a fine specimen of the timbered house of the time of Henry vii or early Henry viii, for there seems to be a doubt whether it was built expressly for the Guild. Part of the building is still inhabited, and what was probably the hall and offices of the guild is still used as a granary or wool store. It has served successively as the Town Hall, the Bridewell, and the Workhouse. Beneath are

cellars, in one of which tradition says, that the aged martyr Rowland Taylor, rector of Hadleigh, was confined for a night when on his way to the place of his martyrdom, Aldham common.

The parish church of Lavenham, dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul, consists of a chancel with a vestry at the east end, a nave with aisles extended eastward, a south porch, and a magnificent tower at the west end. The length of the church is stated to be 156 feet, the width 68 feet, the Tower being 141 feet high and its width 42 feet. There is, however, some difference of opinion respecting the exact height of the tower, Mr. Biddell of Lavenham Hall stating the height to be 137 feet.

With the exception of some decorated work in the chancel, the church was built near the close of the perpendicular period, somewhat later than the two fine churches at Bury St. Edmund's, but contemporary with its rival at Melford and the glorious chapel at Cambridge, which was not completed before 1534.

Commencing with the chancel we have an excellent east window, with fine flowing tracery of the decorated period, and on the south one window of three lights of the same period. On the north side traces of a similar window, now blocked by the Coppinger monument, may be observed.

It is stated by Ryece, a Lavenham man, born 1628, that the east window had four escotcheons, two whereof are with Springe clothing mark, and two are with this coat.

*Argent on a chevron between 3 mascles gules, 3 cinquefoyles or.**

At the nether end of the window was this written:—
Orate pro animabus Thomas Spring et Alicice uxoris ejus qui istas fenestras vitreas fieri fecerunt Anno Dm̄ 1527. When Sir John Cullum made his church notes, circa 1770 the east window had the following escutcheons, Copinger,

* These arms were granted to Thomas Spring de Laynam in com. Suffolk, temp. Henry VIII.

D'Ewes impaling Clópton, D'Ewes, D'Ewes impaling Symonds.*

The east end within the altar rails is the oldest part of the building and almost the only remaining part of the earlier church. The fine chancel arch and piers, are also a part of the earlier church. On the south side the junction of the new and old work is very evident; near the piers is the moulding of an earlier window, at the back of which the stair leading to the rood loft has been built; one of the shafts of the pier has been cut away to admit the door opening on to the rood loft. A second door on the south led to the rood loft gallery which crossed the south aisle. The piers themselves have been almost encased in the new work; this is very obvious in the base mouldings. In connection with this I may add that when the late restoration was in progress the workmen came upon what may have been the foundations of this earlier church, about one foot within the lines of the present building.

In the chancel are some fine old stalls with misereres, the subjects representing, a woman milking herself, two cranes picking at a human head, a pelican feeding her young, a man holding a pair of bellows as a fiddle and using his crutches as a fiddlestick, a man playing a stringed instrument, a man with a hood on his head sitting. On the floor is the brass of a child swathed in its *chrysom* or the white cloth with which infants were invested immediately after their baptism, bearing the following inscription:—*Immatura morte, nisi quod a Deo Opt. Max. ita decretum, ex misera hac vita ereptus die ix Julii, diebus a nativitate decem, a baptismo quatuor, Clopton D'Ewes armiger, filius et hoeres apparens Simond's D'Ewes equitis aurati, et domine Anne conjugis suce filice unice et hoeredis Gulielmi Clopton militis; beatam cujus animam fide mediis sibi optime cognitis imbutam ceternus (ut confiditur) miserecordiarum pater inter beatum sanctorum chorum in cœlis elocavit.*

* By favour of G. Milner Gibson Cullum, Esq.

Several large slabs mark the burial places of members of the Culpeck, Nevill, Buck, Tyrell, Steward, Davy, and Squire families.

Attached to the east end of the chancel is a vestry built by Thomas Spring the second, in which, as we have seen, he directed that he should be buried. His brass with his mark in an escutcheon represents himself his wife and ten children kneeling and in shrouds; it has the following inscription. Orate p̄ aīab Thome Sprynge qui hoc vestibulū fieri fecit in vita sua Et Margarite uxor^{is} ej^{us} qui quidam Thomas obiit septimo die mensis Septembris Anno Domini millmo CCCCLXXXVI et p̄ d^{omi}ca Margarita obiit — die mēs — A^{no} d^{omi}m millmo CCCCLXXX — quor^{um} aīab pp̄icet^{ur} ds^{us} Amen.

On either side of the chancel are chapels, extentions of the aisles and divided from the chancel by screen work. That on the north has some excellent flint panel work, though it cannot compare with its sister chapel in the beauty of its details. On the exterior is the remains of an inscription in fine bold lettering, which shews that this chapel was built by Simon Branch and Elizabeth his wife *Simonis Branchi et Elizab. istam Capellam* is all that now remains. In 1580, according to Stow, a John Branch sprung from this Lavenham family was Lord Mayor of London. According to Reyce's church notes there was in this chapel "upon a marble grave stone under a statue of brass this epitaph, orate p̄o anima Clementi Heigham qui obiit xxvj die Septembris A^{no} D^{omi}n milimo ccccc cujus animæ propicietur Deus Amen. Above arms of Heigham on a single escutcheon."

The chapel on the south side, which is 35ft. 3in. long by 20ft. 5in. wide, was built by Thomas Spring the rich clothier, and Alice his wife, as appears from an inscription below the battlement which runs thus Thome Spring armig. et alicii uxoris [qui istam*] capellam fieri fecerunt Anno Dom. milimo ccccc vicessimo

* Sir John Cullum's MS.

quinto. The chapel, therefore, was not completed at the time of Thomas Spring's death, 1523. In the east window there were 4 escocheons, 2 with the Spring clothing mark, and two with the Spring arms, and at "the nether end of the window was there written, Orate pro animabus Thomœ Spring et Aliciœ uxoris ejus qui istas fenestras vitreas fieri fecerunt Anno dñi 1527." (*Breviary of Suffolk.*) The roof this chapel is very fine, the cornice composed of foliage and shields bearing the arms and initials of Thomas Spring. The principals spring from stone shafts, on which are small statues. The cornice is carved, having shields bearing the arms of Spring, his crest (a stags head holding in the mouth a sprig of vine) and the letters T and S. Under the window runs a rich string course of leaves and fruit, and the door leading into the chapel has the founders arms carved in the spandrils. On the parapet are shields also bearing the Spring arms.

The wood work throughout the church is singularly fine. Screen work of great beauty separates the Branch and Spring chapels from the chancel and aisles; there are also many old seats with fine poppy heads and rich panelling. The rood screen is of oak, the earliest wood work in the church. In the south aisle is a seat of late screen work sometimes associated with the De Veres. In the heads of the arches are shields, now for the most part blank; but the centre shield has a crest, a dolphin bowed upon a helm. Upon shields on the west side Davy gives the arms of Spourne, *Sa a chevron or betw. 2 dolphins embossed & effrontè in chief or a crescent in base az.* and of Clare. Sir John Cullum gives shields in the south window of the church bearing the arms of Spourné, De Vere for the 13th Earl, and Spring.

In the north aisle is a chantry chapel, now known as the Spring seat, an enclosure of screen work of the most exquisite details. It is a rare specimen of the semi classic style which came into fashion in the reign of Henry viii. An illustration of this chapel appeared in

the Builder, Feb. 8, 1879, and attention was there drawn to the surface ornaments of the mouldings, the hollow reticulated carving of the uprights, the panels once covered with rich interlacing tendrils and leaves, the heads ornamented with figures of hogs and animals and shields bearing the arms of Spring. It was suggested that this chantry chapel was probably the work of foreigners, and that the work resembles the canopy work over the stalls of Henry VII chapel usually assigned to Flemish workmen. The carving of these chapels is not cut out of the solid, after the manner of the other wood work at Lavenham, but is made up of separate pieces of wood either attached to the main structure by wooden pegs or fitted into grooves something after the method of modern cabinet makers. In some of the hollows traces of colouring remains, but the body of the work does not appear to have been painted.

The date of this chantry chapel can be pretty nearly fixed. Thomas Spring, who died 1523, directed by his will, proved July 1524, that his body should be buried before the altar of St. Katherine, and that his tomb be made with a *parclose* thereabout. In the report of the Commissioners on Public Records for 1837, p. 59, there is a notice of a licence for Thomas Jermyn, Esquire, exor. of Thomas Spring, deceased, to erect a chantry in the church of Lavenham, temp. Henry VIII. The chantry was, therefore, not erected until after 1524, and probably not until after 1527 when Sir William Waldegrave the co-executor of Thomas Jermyn died; for if Sir William Waldegrave had been living his name would have probably been upon the license. Again, Alice the widow of Thomas Spring, directed her body to be buried by her late husband, afore the altar of St. Katherine. Alice died 1537, and it is a fair assumption that the *parclose* round the tomb was completed before her death. If the work had been still unfinished, Alice, who in her long and carefully drawn will had so evidently her late husband's wishes and desires at heart, would surely have made provision

for its completion. In the window of this chapel is a quarry with the arms of Spring.

Against the wall of the north aisle is a brass with the following inscription.

Continuall prayse these lynes in brasse
 Of Alleine Dister here
 A Clothier vertuous while he was
 In Lavenham many a yeare
 For as in lyefe he loved best
 The poore to clothe and feede
 So withe the riche and all the rest
 He neighbourlie agreed
 And did appoynt before he died
 A* yearlie rent
 Whiche shoulde be every Whitsontide
 Amonge the poorest spent.

et obiit Anno d^m 1534.

Dister and his wife are represented kneeling with six children behind him. A label from his mouth has, *In manus tuas Domine commendo spiritum meum.*

The nave measures 91ft. 6in. by 25ft. 9in. and is divided into six bays of very beautiful proportions. The capitals of the pier shafts are finished with a delicate Tudor flower, and the spandrils of the arches are filled with good panelling; above is a rich cornice and a band of quatrefoils in lozenges and blank shields alternately.

The roof of the nave was formerly painted, and over the rood loft the intersections of the beams were ornamented with the following arms and emblems. 1. Vere supported by an angel. 2. An eagle with a label across it, emblem of St. John. 3. A bull with wings couchant with a label, emblem of St. Luke. 4. An angel holding a shield

Quarterly 1 and 4 Quarterly 1 and 4 Montague
 2 and 3 Monthermer
 2 and 3 Neville

* Spiäll. *Cullum MS.*

5. The letter **C**. 6. An angel holding a label, the emblem of St. Matthew. 7. A winged lion couchant with label, the emblem of St. Mark. 8. What appears to be Spring's mark. (*Church notes* 1826.)

The clerestory has large three light windows with transoms, giving an extent of fenestration which has suggested to some authorities the idea of Flemish influence. The higher lights still contain a few pieces of stained glass, notably the mullet of the De Veres, sad remains of what must have been a fine example of heraldic decoration. I gather from Kirby that when he visited Lavenham previous to 1748, when his Historical account of that church was printed, these windows had then been destroyed; but happily notes of them have been preserved in the MS. of Sir John Blois, a copy of which is among the Davy MSS. According to the Blois notes there were 58 coats of arms illustrating the numerous and princely alliances of the De Veres.

1. Gu. a fesse between 6 martlets O.
2. Bohun, E. of Northampt, with the mullets.
3. A. a cross G.
4. O. a cheveron G. empaled by Vere.
5. Per pale O and V. a lion rampant G.
6. V. a lion rampant A.
7. G. 7 mascles O. 3. 3. 1. empaled with Ufford.
8. Barry undeè of 6 B. and A.
9. Monutacute.
10. Ufford.
11. A. a chief indented B.
12. Per pale G. and B. a lion rampant A.
13. O. 3 tortoises, 2 and 1 a label of 3 points B.
14. Erm. like annulets *with one another*, Gu. qu. if Lo. Molins
15. A chief indented Sa. with 3 beasants.
16. Gu. a bend A. with 3 coquils purpur
17. Vere and Howard, empaled with B, a bend A. quarter A a salt. ing^d G.
18. Vere emp^d. with party p. pale O. and V. a lion rampant G.
19. Vere & V. a lion rampant A.
20. Vere, & the 7 mascles. See 7.
21. Vere, emp^d with Samford.
22. Vere, emp^d with Mortimer.
23. Barry of 6, A. and B emp^d with O. a bend betw 6 martlets G
24. O. a mauch G. empaled with, G. a bend A.

25. Vere empaled with that bend.
26. That bend empaled with A. a fess G. with 3 plates.
27. Vere quarters 17 Coates.
28. A. a chevron and a bordure ingragled S. a chief gu. with 3 mullets pierced A.
29. That Coat impaled with A. a chief indented S.
30. Mortimer:
31. Barry of 10. A. and G.
32. O. a fesse between 2 chevrons G.
33. Howard.
34. Scales.
35. Warren.
36. Plais.
37. Arundel.
38. Lozengy, A. and B. empaled by Scales.
39. O. a lion rampant B.
40. G. a cinquefoil Erm.
41. B. 3 5 foyles O.
42. Gu. a cross moline A.
43. Vere quarters Howard, and empaled with Montague quartering Monthermer and Nevil.
44. Vere quarters B, 3 caps like crowns O. 2 and 1.
45. Vere, and Barry of 10 A. and G.
46. Vere and Ufford, with a flower de lis
47. Plantagnet, and O. a lion rampant sa. le double queue
48. Vere and O. 2 bars G.
49. Bulbeck, and a Coate Barry
50. The Coate with mascles, empal. with a 5 foyle erm.
51. Ufford, empal^d with Norwich.
52. Courtney, with O. a lion rampant B.
53. Scales, and B. 3 5 foyles O.
54. Also with Courtney and Arundel.
55. And with 3 bends G. and Ufford.
56. Vere quarters G. a bend A. with 3 coquils S. the quarters Clare.
57. And A. a chief indented S. with 3 bezants.
58. And he quarters Ufford and Arundel and Scales, and Warren and Seageaux, and Howard, and Barry of 10 A. and G.

MS: Church Notes pen. Sir. Blois p. 292.

I am indebted to the Rev. H. L. Elliot for having most kindly prepared the following illustrations of these arms.

1. *Beauchamp* of Essex and Berkshire.
2. *Bohun* of Northampton.
3. *Vere* of Addington, Northamptonshire.

4. Vere impaling *Stafford*.
[Sir George Vere, younger brother of the 13th Earl mar. Margaret dau. of W^m Stafford of Frome co. Dorset.]
5. *The Earl Marshal. Bigod*, Earl of Norfolk.
6. Vert a lion rampant arg. [vulned on the shoulder gu.] *Bolebec* or *Bulbeck*.
7. *Ferrers of Groby* (as heir of De Quincy) impaling *Ufford*.
[The 3rd Baron Ferrers of Groby, mar. Margaret, dau. and co-h. of Robert de Ufford, Earl of Suffolk.]
8. Probably, Barry wavy of 6 arg. and az., for *Samford*, or *Sandford*.
The coat is quartered by Vere.
9. Montacute
10. Ufford
11. Arg. a chief indented az. ? *Glanwill*.
12. per pale gu. audaz. a lion rampant arg. *Norwich*
13. or three torteaux, two and one, over all a label of three points az.
Courtenay
14. ? erm. three annulets one within the other gu. ? *Fytton*
15. [arg] on a chief daucetly sa three bezants ? *Bavent* ? *Walton*.
16. gu on a bend arg three coquils [? coquilles, or scallop shells, az. or] purple. *Bissett*. [This coat was quartered by Wentworth. The Wentworth motto "En Dieu est tout," is still in one of the Clerestory windows.]
17. Quarterly 1 and 4. Vere. 2 and 3. *Howard*
Impaling,
Quarterly 1 and 4 azure a bend arg. [but *or*. a crescent for difference.
Scrope] 2 and 3 arg. a saltire engrailed gu. *Tiptoft*
[The second wife of the 13th Earl was Elizabeth dau. of Sir Richard Scrope, Knt. and widow of W^m Viscount Beaumont. I believe that this marriage was celebrated after 1507, but am not sure.]
18. Vere, impaling *Bigod*. [For the 2nd E. of Oxford]
19. Vere, impaling *Bolebec*. [For the 3rd E. of Oxford]
20. Vere, impaling *Quincy*. [For the 4th E. of Oxford.]
21. Vere, impaling *Samford*. [For the 5th E. of Oxford]
22. Vere, impaling *Mortimer*. [For the 6th E. of Oxford]
23. *Grey* [of Codnor. ?] impaling, *Furnival*
24. *Hastings*, impaling, *Foliot*. [For Sir Hugh Hastings of Gressing Hall, Norfolk, who mar. Margery dau. of Sir Jordan de Foliot, sis. and co-h. of Sir Richard, and Thomas Foliot.
Sir Hugh was a son of the second Lord Hastings by his second wife. See extinct Peerage under "Hastings E. of Pembroke."]
25. Vere, impaling *Foliot*. [Alphonsus de Vere, father of the 7th E. of Oxford.]
26. *Foliot*, impaling, arg. on a fess gu. three plates. ? *Ettum*.
27. Vere, quarterly of 18.
28. ?

29. The same, impaling, *Harsick*.
30. *Mortimer*.
31. [Barry of 10 arg. and gu. was borne by *Thornell* of Suffolk; but I think this may be intended for] *Baddlesmere*, i.e., arg. a fess between two bars gemel gu.
Thè 7th Earl of Oxford mar. Maud dau. of Bartholomew, Lord Baddlesmere, and sis. and one of the co-hs. of Giles, Lord Baddlesmere, Baron of Leeds, Kent.
32. *Fitz Walter* 33. *Howard*. 34. *Scales*
35. *Warren*. 36. *Plaiž*. 37. *Arundel*.
38. *Scales*, impaling, Lozengy arg. and az.
39. or a lion rampant az. Probably for *Percy*. [Sir Hen. Percy, of Athol, mar. (as her second husband) the dau. of W^m Lord Bardolf, and widow of the 5th Baron Scales.
40. *Bellomont, Earls of Leicester*.
41. *Bardolf*
42. *Beke* of Eresby,
43. Qtly. 1 and 4. *Vere* 2 and 3. *Howard*
impaling, Qtly 1 and 4 Qtly 1 and 4 *Montague* 2 and 3 *Monthermer*
2 and 3 *Nevill of Salisbury* (i.e. *Nevill* with a label gobony arg and az.
[For the 13th E. of Oxford and his 1st wife. She d. 1482.]
44. Quarterly 1 and 4 *Vere*
2 and 3. az. three crowns or [a bordure arg.]
The latter is a coat of augmentation, granted by Richard II. to Robert de Vere, Marquis of Dublin, and 9th Earl of Oxford. It is composed of the arms of St. Edmund, with a white bordure for distinction. On a shield on the Porch it is borne in the 1st and 4th Quarters.
45. *Vere*, impaling, *Baddlesmere*. (see No. 31.)
[For the 7th Earl.]
46. *Vere*, impaling *Ufford*
[For the 8th Earl]
47. *Plantagenet*, impaling, *Welles*.
[For Sir John Welles, K.G. Viscount Welles, who mar. Lady Cecily Plantagenet, dau. of Edward IV.
The Lady being of Royal Descent, her arms are placed to the dexter.]
48. *Vere*, impaling, *Harecourt* ??
49. *Bulbeck*, impaling;
50. *De Quincy*, impaling *Bellomont* of Leicester. [Sayer de Quincy, mar. Margaret, dau. and co-h. of the Earl of Leicester, and was shortly after created E. of Winchester.]
51. *Ufford*, impaling *Norwich*
[For Robert de Ufford 2nd Baron de Ufford, who mar. Margaret sis. of Sir John Norwich.]
52. Quarterly 1 and 4. *Courtenay* 2 and 3 *Ridvers*

53. *Scales*, impaling *Bardolf*
 [For Robert de Scales 5th Baron Scales]
54. *Scales*, impaling, Quarterly 1 and 4 *Courtenay* 2 and 3. *Arundel*
 [For Robert de Scales, 2nd Baron Scales, who mar. Evelina dau. of
 Hugh de Courtenay, and sis. of Hugh E. of Devon.]
55. *Scales*, impaling Qtly 1 and 4. *Walisborough* 2. and 3: *Ufford*.
 [For the 7th Baron Scales, who mar. Emma, dau. of John Walis-
 borough.]
56. }
 57. } ?
 58. }

We have just seen that the arms of Neville for the first Countess of John 13th Earl, were upon the roof over the rood. The same arms are also upon various parts of the building. With the exception, therefore, of the upper part of the Tower, the Church would appear to have been all but completed during the life time of the first Countess, and we can well imagine, how, after all the trials and troubles of her early life, she would watch the progress of the work and anxiously look to the time when she should see its completion. The Countess, however, died before the Clerestory received its glass, for the work must have been done after the Earl married his second wife. According to the Blois list, on the 17th shield, De Vere impales Scroop and Tiptoft the arms of the second Countess, and as the Earl died in 1513 the glazing of the Clerestory and completion of the nave must be assigned to the first decade of the 16th century.

Passing out of the church the south porch arrests attention, rich as it is in architectural and heraldic ornamentation. The front and buttresses are panelled, the decoration being quatrefoil and trefoil shaped flowers, similar to those repeated on the battlements. In the centre above the arch is a canopied niche, on either side of which are three shields encircled by the garter, and bearing the arms and quarterings of four Earls of Oxford. In the spandrils of the arch are boars, the cognizance of the De Veres, and on the plinth of the buttresses, mullets. As years pass away these coats carved in stone become more difficult to read. But some years ago

accurate drawings and notes were made by Miss Johnson, the daughter of the late rector. As these drawings and notes have been kindly placed at my disposal, I have thought it desirable to record them in our proceedings. In one or two instances I have supplemented them from the Davy MSS.

Commencing from the west the first shield is that of Robert 9th Earl, who was created Duke of Ireland by Richard II. He married Philippa daughter and heiress of Ingelram de Courci, Earl of Bedford, and granddaughter of Edward III. Quarterly 1 & 4 az. 3 golden crowns within a bordure, 2 & 3 De Vere impaling De Courci, Quarterly 1 & 4 Barry of six vaire and gu. 2 & 3 a fesse.....*

The second shield is that of Aubrey, 10th Earl, who married Alice daughter of Lord Fitzwalter. De Vere impaling Fitzwalter, a fesse between two chevrons.

The third shield is for Richard 11th Earl and Alice his wife, daughter and coheiress of Sir Richard Serjeaux. De Vere impaling Serjeaux. quartering Warren, 1 & 3 arg. a saltire sa. between 12 cherries slipped proper. 2 & 3 Checky(?)† Kirby describes this shield as De Vere impaling Neville.

On the fourth shield is that of John the 12th Earl De Vere impaling Howard. At the base of this shield are 2 boars passant each charged with a mullet.‡

The fifth shield bears 1 & 4 Quarterly, 1 & 4 De Vere, 2 & 3 Howard, 2 & 3 Quarterly, 1 & 4 gu. six escallop shells arg 3 2 1 Scales, 2 & 3 Lozengy§

This is the shield of John, 13th Earl. The shield has for supporters boars, and the Earl quarters Howard in right of his mother, sole daughter and heiress of Sir John Howard, the elder half brother of Sir Robert Howard who married the heiress of Mowbray, and was the ancestor of the Dukes of Norfolk. In her right the Earl

* A fesse in chief a file of 11. points. Kirby.

† and ‡ Davy MSS.

§ Kirby describing this shield gives De Vere impaled with the arms of Howard, Duke of Norfolk, including the demi lion on an escutcheon granted as an augmentation after the battle of Flodden Field.

quarters also the arms of Lord Scales her grandfather.

In the 9th volume of the Journal of the Royal Archæological Institute is an illustration of the seal of this Earl of Oxford, a beautiful specimen of the seals of the time of Henry vii. Vere quarters Howard with antelopes for supporters, the crest a boar. The late Mr. Gough Nicholls, the writer of this article in the Archæological Journal, adds, that the boar was from the earliest period of heraldry one of the cognizances of the family, and that it alluded through the Latin *Verres* to the surname of Vere.

On the sixth shield this Earl impales with the arms of De Vere and Howard those of his first wife, Margaret Neville, daughter of Richard, Earl of Salisbury. 1 & 4 Quarterly, 1 & 4 De Vere, 2 & 3 Howard, 2 & 3 Quarterly, 1 & 4 Scales, 2 & 3 impaling. 1 & 4 Montacute quartering Monthermer, 2 & 3 Neville a saltire and in chief a label of 3 points. On the dexter side of this shield is a boar, on the sinister side a harpy, on its breast a mullet.

Remains of this and other badges of the Earl may be recognized in the clerestory windows. Besides the mullet there is an example of *the Jack*, or windlass for bending the bow; this device is possibly a rebus upon the Christian name of the 13th Earl. Other examples are those of the *Chair of Estate*, a badge of the office of Lord Chamberlain, and of *the fiery cresset*, or fire beacon, a badge of the Lord High Admiral. Both these offices were held by the 13th Earl. In a late number of the Transactions of the Essex Archæological Society is a paper by the Rev. H. L. Elliot; in which the subject of the badges and devices of the De Veres is ably treated and illustrated.

This Earl was a learned and a religious man as well as a munificent one. According to Weever he contributed largely to the finishing of St. Mary's Church, Cambridge. Greatly also he must have contributed towards this Church of Lavenham, this beautiful porch

being in all probability more especially his work. It was probably built while his first wife was yet alive, for the arms of his second wife are absent, this would appear to fix the date somewhat before the close of the reign of Henry vii.

The great feature of Lavenham Church is its unrivalled tower. This is best seen from the approach by Lavenham Hall, whence its bold simplicity and noble height may be best appreciated. Passing into the church by the great western door, the interior of the tower is seen to be decorated with an arcade beneath which runs a stone bench. A newell staircase with a good door and an admirable hand rail cut out of the solid masonry leads to the belfry, which boasts of a peal of eight bells second to none in the county. The great tenor bell is one of the finest ever cast in the foundry of "Colchester Graye." The following is a record of the inscriptions on the bells taken in 1826.

1. Miles Graye made me 1625
2. Henry Pleasant made me 1702
3. Hic mens usus erit populum clamore vocare 1603
Richardus Bowler me fecit
4. Henry Pleasant made me 1703
5. Jacobus Fuller et Antonius Hormesbye
Gardiani Ecclesie de Lavenham
Richardus Bowler me fecit 1703
6. Henry Pleasant made me 1702
7. } William Dobson Founder 1811
8. }

The western door has a segmental pointed arch, the soffit of which is richly panelled with quatrefoils. On the exterior, the doorway is deeply recessed; it has an ogee dripstone beautifully crocketed, which passing through the string course appears again on the upper side and was originally terminated by a finial. The mouldings are rather poor, the caps are octagonal and bell shaped, and the bases are exceedingly stilted, pointing to the rapid debasement of the style.

In the Eastern Counties buttresses built at the close

of the sixteenth century are frequently ornamented with elaborate flint work. The example of St. Mary's, Stratford, lately visited by our Society, will be in the recollection of many members, where the initials and trade mark of the founder are used for ornamentation. At Lavenham the buttresses have shields bearing arms. Upon the western buttresses are these arms as given in the Davy MS. *2 swords in saltire in chief a mullet in base the letter p. 2 swords in saltire between 2 fleur de lis and in chief the letter p and a sun or star in base. 2 swords in saltire, in chief a crown, in base a p. 2 Keys in saltire, wards upwards.*

It has been suggested by high authority that the 2 Keys standing alone may refer to some gild of St. Peter. But the gild of St. Peter, at Lavenham was not granted until 2 Edw. vi., and the buttresses must have been finished before this date. The same authority inclines to the opinion that the other arms are but examples of what the late Mr. Gough Nicholls called "sham Heraldry" and there I must be content to leave the question.

Round the base of the Tower is a rich panelled band in compartments, which are ornamented with foil work of varied detail: also with shields, some bearing the initials or trade mark of the Springs, others the arms of De Vere and Howard for the 13th Earl, or of Montague and Neville for his first countess.

The Tower appears to have been left in an uncompleted state. It now ends in a parapet having panels with coarsely executed shields bearing the arms of Spring *arg. a chevron between 3 mascles gu.* This coat was not granted until after Henry viii had been some years on the throne, and it will be remembered that Thomas Spring, who died 1523, left by his will £200 to the finishing of the steeple. Can it be that the work was hindered by the question of the King's divorce, the fall of Wolsey, and the looming storm of the reformation?

It remains but to call attention to the parapet of the nave which is a pierced battlement with openings,

partly filled up with a large conventional leaf, perhaps a Tudor flower, rising upwards; the intermediate spaces are enriched with boldly carved foliage in square panels. The coping is continuous, differing from that at St. Mary's Stratford; which is only used in its legitimate horizontal position. This points to later work.

In conclusion, mention must be made of a tomb in the church yard which bears what Kirby calls an "odd jingling epitaph" over one John Wiles, Batchelor, who died A D 1694

*Quod fuit esse quod est, quod non fuit esse quod esse.
Esse quod est non esse, quod est non est erit esse.*

The following translation appeared in the Gentlemen's Magazine 1840, p. 321. "That which has been, is the same as that which is: that which has not been is the same as that which has been. To be is the same as not to be; that which is not, is not, it will be, to be."

A more amusing interpretation appeared some years ago in Blackwood's Magazine, on the supposition that the name of the deceased was Toby Watt. That which was Toby Watt, is what Toby Watt was not; To be Toby Watt is not to be what Toby Watt is; Toby is not, he will be.

According to the reviewer in Blackwood the relatives of John Wales (or Wiles) borrowed the inscription, which is said to exist elsewhere.

In Horsham Church, Sussex, is the same distich, with these lines after it

Vita malis plena est pia mors pretiosa corona est
Post vitam mors est post mortem vita beata

Cullum MS.

I cannot close these few crude notes better than by expressing pleasure in the thought, that this noble work of the de Veres and the Springs has fallen into the care of the ancient house of Gonville and Caius. Under the fostering love of that College, and more especially owing

to the energy of the present rector, a former distinguished fellow of the college, very much has been done towards restoring the building to its original condition and beauty. The de Veres and the Springs have passed away, and there can be no renewing of the many heraldic emblems and devices which, in the pride of their heart, these families scattered broadcast over the building. But we may hope that the day is not far distant when the work of restoration shall be completed, and when these windows shall again be filled with rich stained glass; then, and not till then, will the visitor be able to realize all the beautiful combinations of colour and form, of stone and glass, which in the 16th century were the glory of the parish church of Lavenham.

EDW. M. DEWING.

This paper was prepared for the meeting of the Suffolk Archæological Institute, at Lavenham, August 7, 1877.