

After a thorough examination of the ruins of Sibton Abbey, and two stone coffins, which had been unearthed ten years previously (tiles, &c., found here are engraved *Gent. Mag.* 1806, 17), the party walked back to Sibton Church, where the Vicar gave them a hearty welcome, and a brief account of his church.

### SIBTON CHURCH.

BY REV. JOHN L. M. MOORE, M.A.

Sibton Church was founded, or rather the original church on that site was founded, and dedicated in honour of St. Peter, in the reign of William Rufus, by Robert de Cadomo, son of Walter de Cadomo. A member of the same family founded a monastery in this place in the year 1149, about fifty years later, in the reign of King Stephen. "The oldest portion of the church" is the south doorway, which is Norman work with banded shafts. The church originally consisted of a Nave and Chancel. About the beginning of the 14th century, the present chancel arch was added, and a Porch to protect the then old south doorway; the porch was removed at the restoration in 1872. In the 15th century the Tower was added with spire, and the window heads filled with Perpendicular tracery, and at that time the beautiful oak roof was placed over the Nave with its carved figures on either side of the King posts, and various shields bearing the arms of families residing in the neighbourhood at that time. The next addition to the church was made in the 16th century; that period was marked by the suppression of the Abbeys and Monasteries, and amongst them Sibton Abbey about the year 1540. Thomas, Duke of Norfolk, to whom King Henry VIII. promised the revenues of this and another far more important Abbey, that of Thetford, in Norfolk, endeavoured in vain to prevent the dissolution of these Abbeys. Contemporaneous with the suppression of Sibton Abbey, came the enlargement of Sibton Church; the Duke of Norfolk appears to have allowed the stones of the Abbey to be used in the building of the present north aisle of this church. The north aisle was built by the executors of the will of Robert Duckett, who was living in 1533, and after the dissolution of the Abbey, the Abbot and Convent endowed the vicarage. The architect at the time of the last restoration remarked that the arcade dividing the nave from the aisle, was placed there in the time of Henry VIII., but the stones were undoubtedly worked in the time of Stephen. The north doorway, too, plainly told him that it was made for a thicker wall in the time of Edward II., and brought to this church in the time of Henry VIII.,

when the Abbey was destroyed. There is one more witness to the close connection between the Abbey and the Church. The arch, from the chancel to the chancel aisle,—over the present organ—was originally more lofty when forming a part of the Abbey, but is now cut down to the level of the wall plate of this chancel. This church was very carefully and reverently restored in the year 1872, by J. W. Brooke, Esq., and Mrs. Scrivener. The only matter for regret is that the porch, built in the 14th century to protect the old Norman doorway, was not also restored. This, besides being a protection, would have added much to the beauty of the church. At the last restoration a very handsome screen was discovered at the west end of the church of the same date as the roof. It was used simply for the purpose of partitioning off a dark closet at the base of the tower, and for hiding the stairs to the belfry and organ loft. The best part of that screen was preserved and now stands at the entrance to the chancel. It is interesting to find in the minutes of a town meeting in 1813, a petition to the Bishop for leave to remove the old screen with the King's Arms surmounting the same from within the chancel arch, because it very much obstructed the light from the east window into the nave; also for leave to remove the stone font, because it was a great impediment to the proposed erection of an organ gallery at the west end. In the same year the wooden spire was taken from off the steeple, its weight being represented to be injurious to the tower. There was a lofty Elizabethan pulpit in the middle of the south wall until 1872, when it was reduced to its present height, and placed in its proper position. The font, now near the north door, is ancient, an octagon, with the symbols of the Evangelists thereon. There appear to be many allusions to Sibton Church in old Wills. Robert Drewrye left 12d. to the High Altar in 1464; Agnes Snellyng, widow, in 1493, desired to be buried in Sibton Church yard, and bequeathed 3s. 4d. to the High Altar; Thomas Seman paid 20d. to the High Altar in 1539 in recompense for tithes not duly paid. Some of the mural tablets and brasses are worthy of notice. They almost all bear the name of Barker (alias Chapman) or Scrivener; the Barker memorials are in the nave and chancel, the Scriveners in the north aisle, which is specially set apart for the Abbey. The oldest brass bears date 1475, John Chapman, formerly Barker. Then we have Edmund Chapman 1511; Edmund Chapman 1574. This brass bears the following inscription:—

Here was my native soile and here	Here doe I Edmund Chapman torne
I led a quiet lyef	To that same soile againe
Full seventy yeres and here to me	W <sup>ch</sup> brought me forth and fostred me.
By Margaret my wyffe	Prolonging lief in vayne
Eightsonnes and daughters fyve were	And wishe that eache man could
And here I yelded have	This leasson learne of me
My dett to death my flesh to wormes	Here so to live, and so to die
My body to the grave.	To live eternally.

Another brass, dated 1582, in memory of John Chapman, bears this inscription:—

Remember that thou art but dust  
When death doth call to earth, thou must.

A hundred years later the fine mural tablet on the north wall of chancel was erected to Sir Edmund Barker, Knight, Lord of the Manor of Peasenhall, and Pensioner in Ordinary to King Charles II. (the name Chapman is now dropped). This man was remarkable for his piety and prudence, his loyalty to his Prince, conformity to the Church, candour to his friends, and conjugal affection to his dear and well deserving wife. Sir Edmund Barker married Mary, eldest daughter of the Right Worshipful Sir William Cooper of Ratling Court, Kent, Baronet, by whom he had two children, who died in their infancy. He was succeeded by a Francis Barker. About the same time lived and died at the Abbey House, John Scrivener, who was equally remarkable for his piety, loyalty, reverence for his Church, and love of his country. This is the first notice we have of the name Scrivener in these walls. He died in 1682, aged 83. His son Thomas, married Elizabeth, daughter of William Grudgefield of Fressingfield, by whom he had 14 children. There is a tablet to the memory of one of these children, Dorothy, who died on the 18th Feby., 1734, aged 85, and in the tablet appears the inscription, she was "remarkable for her extraordinary piety towards God, and her extensive charity to the poor." There are tablets also to the memory of the Rev. Charles Scrivener, 1737, who resigned the living of Wilby, and came to end his days at Sibton; and Charles, his son, 1751, who married into the Bedingfield family of Bedingfield, and is handed down to us as a man whose mind was adorned with every virtue, to which were added, by the assistance of an excellent understanding, all the accomplishments becoming the son, the husband, and the friend. Next must be mentioned John Freston Scrivener, who married Dorothy, the daughter of Dr. Roger Howman of Norwich, and left one only daughter, Dorothy, who became the wife of John Fisher, Lord Bishop of Salisbury; John Freston Scrivener died in 1797, and just 34 years later a tablet was placed in this church to the memory of his only daughter, who, however, was buried by the side of her husband in St. George's Chapel, Windsor, September, 1831. The decoration of the interior is due to the munificence of the late J. W. Brooke, Esq. The beautiful organ was presented by the late Mrs. Scrivener. There is still a work to be done. The church is not complete without the porch and the spire. Let us hope that one day the old south door will again be protected, and the church again point upwards to the skies.

## VICARS OF SIBTON.

Books of Institution at Public Record Office, f. 29.

- 1603 Nicholas Widley, M.A., signed terrier 1613. Patrons were feoffees of the late Duke of Norfolk. He also held Darsham.  
(See Vol. vi., 375.)
- 1617 Stephen Norton. Dec. 3. Patron, Edrus Chapman als Barker.
- 1650 William Whitefoot signed terrier.
- 1661 Thomas Dawson, with Peasenhall. July 3. Patron, Edus Barker, Esq.
- 1665 Fenn signed terrier.
- 1699 John Skoulding cum cap. Aug. 4. Patron, franc. Barker, Gen. S. Manning.
- 1712 Joës Carter. Oct. 26. Patroness, Eliz. Barker, vid.
- 1748 James Carter, B.A., with the Chap. Jan. 24. Cai. Coll. Cam., B.A., 1742; Vicar nearly forty years; d. Dec. 26, 1786, æt 66. Patroness, Elizabeth Barker, Spinster.
- 1787 Francis Leggett, with Peasenhall. Jan. 26. Rector of Bedford. Patron, Eleazar Davy.
- 1821 Sterling Moseley Westhorp, M.A., with Peasenhall Chap. Caius Coll. Cam. (Gent. Mag. xci., 273.) B.A., 1818; Deac., 1818; Pr., 1819.
- 1871 to 1891 William Bromley, Ch. Coll. Cam., B.A., 1866; M.A., 1869; Deac., 1867; Pr., 1868; formerly Curate of Huddersfield, 1867-69; St. Giles, Shrewsbury, 1870; Pres. Vic. of Manorbier, Pembs. Patron, J. W. Brooke, Esq.
- 1892 John Leach Mitchell Moore, Ch. Coll. Cam., B.A., 1866; M.A., 1870; Deac., 1866; Pr. 1867; formerly Curate of Tamworth, 1866-69; Garboldisham, Norf., 1869-71; Glemsford, Suff., 1872-74; Rector of Kilverstone, Norf., 1875-78; Vicar of Hapton, Norf., 1878-87; Vic. of Manorbier, Pembs., 1888-91. Patron, J. K. Brooke, Esq.

## WILLS FROM THE PROBATE REGISTRY AT IPSWICH.

*Robert Drewrye* of Sibton, 1464, to be bu in the churchyard of St Peter's Ch, Sibton, to the High Altar, of Ch of Sibton 12d. to Ch of Peasenhall, and to Ch. of Badingham: *It lego fribs ordinis sci francisci de Donewic; It. lego frabs ordinis Augustini de Orford.* Fol. 119.

*Agnes Snellyng*, of Sibton, widow, 17 Feby 1493, to be buried in the church of Sibton, to the High Altar 3s 4d; to the repairs of the Church 20d; to the use of the *Rood lofte* in the same 20. To the Convent of *fryars Preachers Dunwiche* 5s for half a trental; to the *Grey Friars Dunwiche* 5/ for the same. To the Prioress and Convent of *Bruisyard* 4s to pray for her soul; also an honest secular priest to sing for her soul for half a year in the Church of Sibton; also for her late husband Robert Snellyng. Prob. at Ipswich, May 26, 1594. F. 158.

*Robert Stannard* of Sibton, to be buried in the Ch. yard of Sibton, to the High Altar 12<sup>d</sup> and the reparation of the same 2<sup>s</sup>, and to the *Abbot of Sibton* 13<sup>s</sup>. 4<sup>d</sup>. I ordeyne to my exors Syr Ric. Clerk vyc of Sypton, and Joan my wife. F. 133.

*Robert Cooper*, alias Gardynere, of Sibton, 4 Sept. 1483, to be buried in the Chapel of the blessed Mary in the Monastery of Sibton. F. 27.

*Gilbert Marshall*, of Sibton, 20 November 1483, to be buried in Sibton Church yard, to the *high Altar* of the same 4<sup>s</sup>, to the reparation of the Church 20<sup>d</sup>, to the building of the *Chapel of St. Mary* founded in the *Monastery of St. Mary*, at Sibton 20<sup>d</sup>: to Sir Thomas Sibton, monk, in the said Monastery for a trental 10<sup>s</sup>. F. 23.

*Robert Snellyng*, of Sybton, I will have a secler priest to syng for my sowle by ye term of half a yere: I will that the *convent of ye Grey fryars at Donwiche* have x<sup>s</sup> to syng a trentall for my sowle. *Prov. at Blytheborow xx Sep. 1490.*

*Margaret Rabet*, of Sibton, 5 November 1497, to be buried in the ch of *St. Peter of Sibton*, to the High Altar 12<sup>d</sup>; to the reparation 5<sup>s</sup>. 8<sup>d</sup>. to the *Friars of Orford* 20<sup>d</sup>; to the *Black Friars, Dunwiche* 20<sup>d</sup>. F. 225.

*Katheryne Barker*, of Sibton, 23 April 1511, Bu. in the Ch of Sibton, to High Altar 3<sup>s</sup>. 4<sup>d</sup>; to *Monastery of Sibton* 10<sup>s</sup>/; a trental for a priest to pray, 1 year, for her, in Sibton Church. F. 208.

*William Wykham*, of Sibton, 1512, to be buried in Sibton Ch yard to my Lord *Abbot of Sibton* 3/4 to each priest of his brethren 4<sup>d</sup>; to each *Novice* 2<sup>d</sup>; to *Sibton Church* 13<sup>s</sup>/4. F. 313.

From Sibton the party drove through the green woodland to Dennington, where stands one of the noblest churches in the Eastern Counties. Here the rector, the Rev. G. Castleden and Mrs. Castleden, entertained\* a large party, augmented by several of the principal inhabitants in the locality, on the pretty rectory lawn, whilst the church bells provided the music, the tenor bell being possibly one of the best in all England. After a visit to the gardens, the party assembled in the remarkably fine parish church.

Mr. T. E. Key, architect, who has made a special study of the edifice, read an interesting paper.

\* Similar hospitality was accorded to the members of the Institute by Rev. E. C. Alston, a former rector, in 1859. See Vol. III., 407.