

THE ANCIENT CHAPEL OF BURES.

On the high ground overlooking the village of Bures St. Mary stands the Chapel Barn. Its massive walls and the ecclesiastical character of its ornaments stamp the building as a place of worship, erected early in the thirteenth century. A close inspection of the interior brings to light piscina, consecration cross, and aumbry, indelible proofs of an early sacred edifice. In many points the Chapel Barn resembles the barn once 'the Chapel of St. James, Lindsey. It stands about three-quarters of a mile distant from the Parish Church of Bures, and was, undoubtedly, a manorial chapel, or place of worship frequented by the lords of Tanys Manor, Bures, and his dependants.

The origin of the foundation of the chapel has long been a mystery. Standing as it does upon a lofty mound between the reaches of the river Stour, it was but natural that tradition should arise connecting it with the coronation of King Edmund; hence it has been frequently styled St. Edmund's Chapel of Bures. Edmund, upon landing to assume the throne of East Anglia, "was conducted to Suffolk, and raised to the regal dignity at the town of Bures, with the assistance of Humbert, the venerable prelate, by whom Eadmund was anointed and consecrated king. Bures, it should be mentioned, was of old a town belonging to the Crown, and is the boundary mark between Essex and Suffolk, being situated on the Stour, a river which, summer and winter, flows with extreme rapidity." Thus wrote the chronicler, Geoffrey of Wells, in the twelfth century. But he mentions naught of a chapel standing to mark the site of the ceremony.



J.S. Corder 1901

The Old Chapel Bures

OLD CHAPEL, BURES.

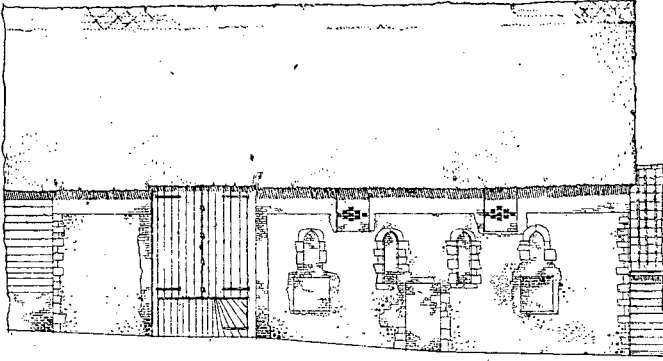
Further, the legend of St. Edmund has caused some writers to assert that when Ailwin fled with the relics of St. Edmund to London, in the year 1009, he rested awhile at the Chapel of Bures. The truth of these traditions cannot be accepted any more than the truth of the existence of an underground passage from the Chapel to Smallbridge Hall; both properties once formed part of the possessions of the Waldegrave family.

The small amount of information connected with the history of the Chapel lies in the fact that the benefice was a *donative* and did not, therefore, come under episcopal jurisdiction. No reference to the Chapel is made in the two thirteenth century returns, which give an account of churches and chapels in 1254 and 1291, viz., the "Norwich Taxation" and the "Taxation of Pope Nicholas"; a reference, however, to a Register of Stoke Priory (Cott. MS. Appendix. xxi., f. 61) shows it to have been then standing.

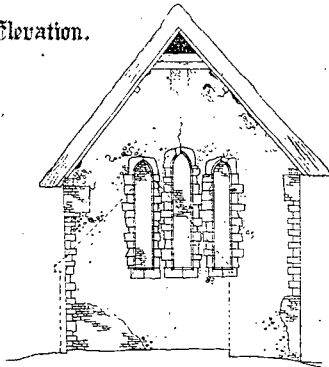
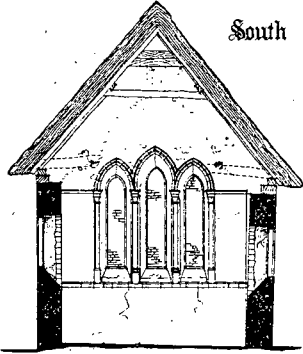
The Church and Rectory of Bures had been given to the Priory of Stoke by Gilbert de Clare, as also was the Chapel of St. Mary, standing within the churchyard. Consequently, when Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury and Cardinal of Rome, at the petition of Gilbert de Tani, dedicated his chapel in his Manor (*curia*) of Bures, the said knight took oath before the Prior and Convent of Stoke never to attempt anything to the prejudice of the mother church of Bures by reason of the said chapel and its dedication. Gilbert de Tani, his family, and all his homage, were still permitted to worship in the parish church, and, further, should Gilbert de Tani, his family, and homage attend the chapel for divine service on feast days, he and all his dependents were, without let or hindrance, to attend the services of the parish church on that day as other parishioners.

St Stephen's Chapel Dures.

6 5 4 3 2 1 0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45
 Scale of Feet.

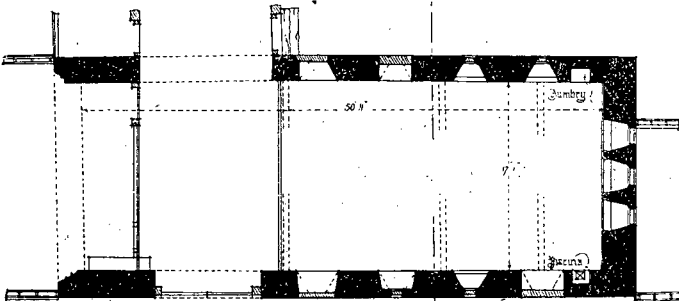


South Elevation.



Cross Section. looking East

West Elevation.



Plan.

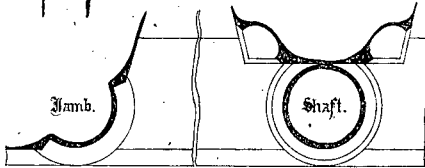
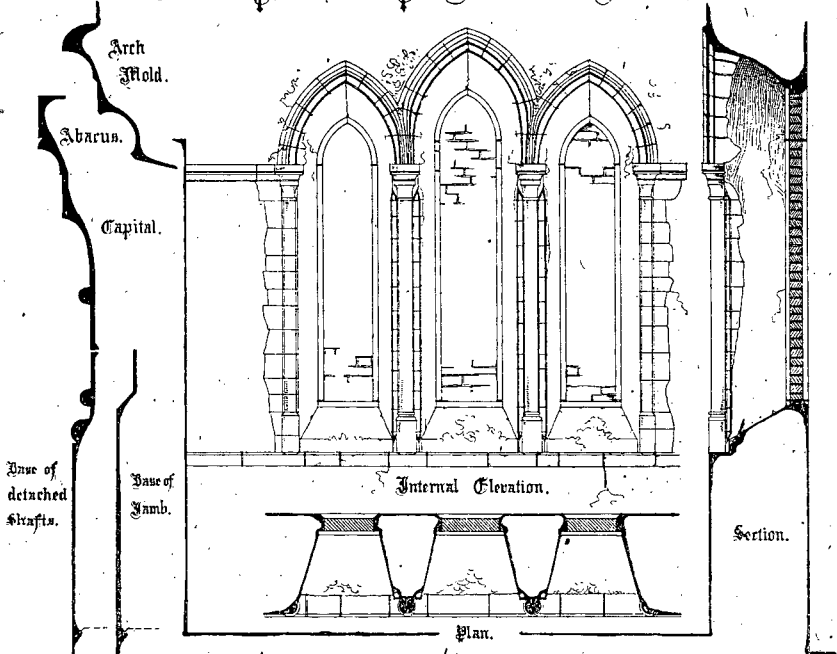
In the two charters which give the above information we have both the name of the founder and the probable date of its dedication. Stephen Langton's dedication of the chapel seems to have been in person, i.e., between his arrival in England, July, 1213, and his death, July, 1228. It is not surprising to find in later grants connected with the chapel that it was dedicated to the Archbishop's patron saint, St. Stephen.

Michael de Poynnynges, knt., granted to William Baud, knt., the Manor of Bures Tany with the donation of the *Chapel of St. Stephen* in the said manor (Close Roll, 36 Edw. III.), 1362.

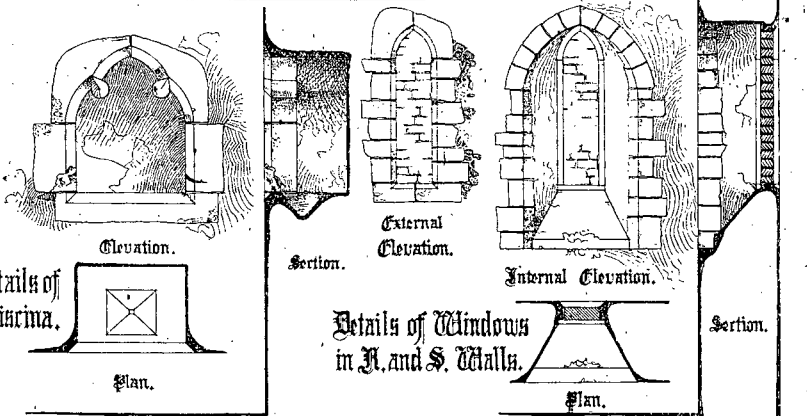
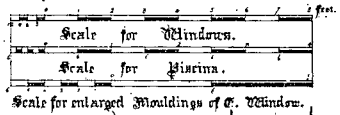
William Bawde, of Smallbridge, was late seised of the Manors of Smallbridge and Tanyes with the advowson of St. Stephen in the said Manor of Tanyes, and enfeoffed of them a certain John Kirkeby, 42 Edw. III. (1368). The said Kirkeby, re-enfeoffed Bawde and others to the use of Bawde and his heirs. On Thursday, after the Assumption of the B.V.M., 49 Edw. III. (1375) Bawde released his rights to the other feoffees, Simon, Bishop of London, and others.

The dedication of the Chapel to St. Stephen by Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, raised a point of deep interest in the history of the building. It seems probable that this famous archbishop was connected with a family of the same name then living at Bures, for we find a Stephen de Langton acquiring lands in that village from one John de Standon, of Bures. This Stephen de Langton, according to the *Testa de Neville*, held a fourth part of a knight's fee in Bures; and his wife, Matilda, held half a knight's fee in the same township of Robert Daquillon for life, in 1290. At the same time lived Silvester de Bures,

St Stephen's Chapel Bures. Details.



Details of East Window.



whose descendant Joan married Sir Richard de Waldegrave, Speaker of the House of Commons, 1382.

This marriage brought with it, into the Waldegrave possessions, the manors of Smallbridge and Tany, known as Sylvester manors, and with them the donation of the Chapel of St. Stephen. Sir Richard de Waldegrave in his will, dated 1410, bequeathed a missal to the altar of St. Stephen's Chapel. The chapel remained part of the Waldegrave possessions on the death of Joan, widow of Sir William Waldegrave, 1481. The subsequent history of the chapel corresponds with the history of Tany's manor, held by Sir William Waldegrave, 7 Nov., 1554, and by his descendants. A history of the family is given in the fourth volume of the Proceedings of the Institute.

The lands of the Tany family lay chiefly south of the Stour; Richard de Tany (son of Gilbert de Tany) and his wife Margaret held lands at Ixworth, 1247.