



* PAKENHAM : CHURCH : SUFFOLK *

Prior to its Restoration.

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WALTER HAGREEN AQUAFORTE FECIT. 1850.

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PAKENHAM CHURCH.

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Of the early history and foundation of this church there appears to be but little account; indeed, all that I could collect from the British Museum, affords no record of its founder. It was probably, (like other churches in the neighbourhood) in connection with the Abbey of Bury St. Edmund's.

It appears to be of very early date; probably its first erection was about the end of the eleventh century, the southern and western doorways, with the two tower arches, belonging to the Norman period; and the general plan of the building, two parallelograms separated by the tower, as at Iffy, further warrants the opinion that it was originally a Norman church.

The Norman tower was most probably half as high originally as the present octangular turret; and it is from about that point that the gathering over, or arching to support the diagonal sides of the octagon, commences.

It becomes a question, whether part of the original church was not from some cause or other rebuilt, or whether the windows, which appear northward and southward, were merely insertions. There is certainly a distinction in the masonry of the one and the other. The Norman work is of Barnack stone, which was most frequently used in that period; while the work to which I

refer, as done in the subsequent century, is either of Caen stone or clunch.

The windows and door, with other parts of the chancel are among the first period of early English or first pointed, the windows being narrow lights, with lancet heads; and soon after it would appear, larger ones were either built or inserted, on the north and south sides of the nave, and being of two lancets, with quatrefoil under one common arch, which gave rise to the next period of first pointed, viz., the adoption of mullions with quatrefoil heads within the arch.

There is in this, as in many, indeed most churches, a difficulty in accounting for the existence of features of distinct period. About the same time that the windows last referred to were probably introduced, an arch was inserted in the south side of the tower, which must formerly have communicated with a transept, as remains are still traceable, and the heights marked by the weather stones of the roof on the outside.

It is not evident for what purpose this transept was erected; but it was most probably a chapelry, there being a window above the arch looking from the belfry into the chapel. The position is unusual for a Lady Chapel, otherwise I should be inclined to conjecture such to have been its purpose. The Church is dedicated to St. Mary.

The last alteration appears to have been at the end of the 16th century, when the large windows in the east and west end, and others in the chancel were introduced, and probably the north porch was erected; at the same time it is most probable the octagonal tower was added to the original Norman substructure, the old arches of the Norman belfry being entirely removed, and the present buttresses built, to assist to support the additional weight of superstructure.

I should observe, from what I have been able to inspect of the roof, that it was probably new about the middle of the 14th century.

This church is now undergoing the restoration of the south transept, and a north transept is also erecting: the nave with the tower, are also about to be restored.

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