

NORTON CHURCH.

THE church at Norton is situated centrally in a parish of 2,400 acres, on an easy slope to the south. It is dedicated to St. Andrew, to the honor of whom as many as forty-seven churches in the county have been built.

In plan, the church consists of a chancel with north vestry; nave with aisles; south porch and west tower.

The most ancient part of the fabric is the chancel, and the most curious feature of it the miserere stalls or chairs therein, which are of the Decorated period. The falling seats are all carved. Among those on the north side are the martyrdom of St. Edmund (the accredited design, as in the east clerestory window of the nave of St. Mary's, Bury); the martyrdom of St. Andrew; and the pelican feeding its young, with an inscription from 7 Eccles. 36.

"In omni opere memento finis."

Those on the south side have grotesque figures bearing some resemblance to those to be seen on the font.

The roof of the chancel is of the kind known as the collar braced roof. The cornice is very wide, and appears formerly to have been coloured. The wide and, in some instances, elaborate cornice is one of the most remarkable peculiarities of the Suffolk timber roofs. "It is perhaps (as has been remarked) too flat and too wanting in projection to be either bold or graceful, but its plan is curious and worth noting."

The south wall of the chancel was rebuilt in 1832, the architect copying the old work and the inserted Perpendicular windows. In these are figures of St. Christopher, St. Margaret, and St. Andrew, in stained glass.

In the windows of the north aisle are several coats of arms, including those of Bardwell, singly and impaled; and of Golding of Suffolk.

The altar chairs were made from timber out of the roof of the north aisle. The iron-work on the vestry door is good. A chest in the vestry has on it the date T.B. S.B. 1604, the year probably in which it was made to supersede a very much earlier one of the same form, but of a larger size.

The pew or gallery belonging to the manor of Little Haugh was built by the Macros. It contains a monument to his daughter, Mrs. Staniforth, and other members of that family.

The nave, aisles, and tower are in the Perpendicular style, and appear to have been in the course of erection between 1447 and 1480. The nave is separated from the aisles by three good arches on each side. The lodgments of a rood appear near the chancel arch, and the remains of a stoup are visible near the north door.

The font is very fine. The basin is octagonal, resting on a shaft of similar form; the angles of which are relieved by grotesque figures of men and animals having blank shields suspended from their necks. One of the figures is that of a "wode" or wild man of the woods, carrying a club. The wild man of the woods, or the "wode," is the crest of the house of Woodhouse; ; but as nothing has been traced to identify this noble family with either the church or town, and it was customary to employ men dressed as "wodes," and bearing clubs, to clear the way for processions, it may have a symbolical allusion to baptism preparing the way for the entry of the child into the bosom of the church.

The basin is elaborately sculptured with the symbols of the Evangelists on four of the panels; the alternate faces having the pelican, denoting love,

Signat avis Christum, quæ sanguine pascit alum nos;
the unicorn, the emblem of strength; the double-headed eagle; and a figure, half a bird and half a beast. The

basin is supported by heads of angels alternately placed between hearts, the latter attached to the basin by slipped quatrefoils.

The tower was in course of erection in 1447 as we gather from the will of Walter Mannyng, who bequeathed to the new campanile 20*d*. It contains three bells, but one of them is cracked and not fit for use.

Against the tower wall under the gallery is a monument of the 16th or 17th century, on which bread is placed on Sundays for distribution after service, according to the will of the donor, Peter Bales, esq., to which has been added a similar benefaction from John Fisk, esq.

At the east end of the south aisle was the chapel of Our Lady; and on the north side that of St. John the Baptist. To the altar of the Blessed Mary, John Irby, in 1478, bequeathed "*pannu' de lino cu' manut'gio consili;*" and bequests of sheep, wheat, barley, malt, &c. are frequent for the support of her light. There were also images of the Trinity, St. Kateryn, and St. Lawrence; the latter under a niche of tabernacle work. The figures in the east window of the south aisle were collected from different parts, and the heads restored by the kind help of Miss Rickards, of Stowlangtoft; one of them seems to be the head of St. Apollonia, or of St. Agatha.

There were two gilds in the parish named in honor of St. Andrew, and of St. John the Baptist, both of them being fraternities of men and women. The latter was the town gild, and had its hall or place of meeting in Up-street.

SAMUEL TYMMS.