

NOTES ON FRESSINGFIELD CHURCH.

FRESSINGFIELD Church is situated on a gentle declivity in the midst of a beautiful and spacious vale. It is a large and very ancient structure, and parts of it, especially the south porch and the east window of the chancel, are in the Decorated style, which is the original character of the church. It is also of note for being the burial place of Doctor William Sancroft, Lord Archbishop of Canterbury.

The church, which is dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul, consists of a nave, chancel, and two aisles. The chancel is 44 feet 8 inches long, and 19 feet wide. The communion table is raised two steps, and railed off, and the floor within the rails paved with white and red pammments. Over the communion table, in four compartments, are the Lord's Prayer, Commandments, and Belief; there are two windows on the south side, and only one small one on the north, with an arch dividing it from a chapel, which is a continuation of the north aisle, though separated from it by a stone arch. In the windows are the following arms in glass:—

In one window the following seven shields, placed 1, 2, 3, in line; 4 under 1; 6 under 4; 5 under 3; 7 under 5:—

1—*Breuse*, impaling *Ufford*. 2—.....quartering *Philibert de Savoy*, Gu. a cross Arg. 3—*Hastings*, Or, a maunch Gu., imp. *Spencer*, quarterly Arg. and Gu., in 2 and 3, a fret Or, over all a bend Sa. 4—*Breusé* impaling *Sharde-lowé*, Arg. a chevron Gu., between 3 cross crosets fitcheé 5—*Hastings*, impaling..... 6—*Breuse* impaling *Stapleton*, Arg. a lion ramp. Sa., armed Or. 7—*Debenham*, Sa., a bend bet. 2 crescents, imp. *Hastings*, Or.

In two other windows are the arms of Bohun and Toppesfield:—*Bohun*, Gu. a crescent in an orle of martlets Or. Dom. Reg., 1516. *Toppesfield*, cheq. Or and Gu., on a fess Arg. 3 martlets Sa.

The nave is 57 feet 10 inches long, and 20 feet 4 inches wide. In the south east corner stands the pulpit, which is an hexagon of oak, and dated 1609. Near the west end, and towards the south side, stands the font, which is quite plain, octagon. Against the west end is a small gallery, built in 1700; above this are the arms of James the second, dated 1687, and under them these lines:

Qui leo de Juda est ut flos de Jesse leones
Protegit et flores magne Jacobe tuos

The whole church is irregularly seated and pewed with oak and deal; some of the oak seats are handsomely carved on the back part, those at the west end are ornamented with escutcheons containing the following symbols:

North Side. 1—The cock. 2—The hand, impaling a flagon. 3—I. H. S. 4—A pillar with scourges and cord. 5—The cross the crown of thorns and nails. 6—The spear and sponge (saltierwise). 7—The ladder, hammer, and pincers. 8—The vestment imp. on a table dice.

South Side. 1—Lozenge and saltire coupéd. 2—A knot. 3—P. and S. surmounted by a mitre. 4—Two keys in saltire. 5—Two swords in saltire.

The nave is divided from the aisles by three arches on each side, over which three arches are six small windows. In the east end of the nave, over the arch dividing it from the chancel is a window, in which are two shields, apparently the same. That in the right is Az. three crowns Or. In one or two of the windows on the north side, in circular compartments, are the letters B. and W. in different circles.

The south aisle is 48 feet 3 inches long, and 11 feet 7 inches wide, and at the east end there appears to have been a chapel, the roof being painted.

The north aisle is 46 feet long and 11 feet 7 inches wide, and the chapel at the end 25 feet 5 inches long, by 12 feet

8 inches wide; the upper part of the east window contains in stained glass, figures of Apostles.

In the second window on the north side is the following coat of arms. *Thorpe*, cheq. Or and Gu. on a fess Arg. 3 mart. Sa. There are also other coats of arms as in the chancel. In the north east window of this aisle is the symbol of the Trinity, and on the seats in shields, are, 1—Two wolves rampant supporting a crown. 2—A cup with sun issuing out of it, and on each side the letters apparently N and P. in old English characters.

The roofs are of oak, handsomely carved and covered with lead.

On the north side is a porch with a stone-groined roof, and on the south side is another porch, which requires a more particular description. On the roof in the centre is the Virgin Mary, and southward of her Saint Edmund. On the inside of the arch are crowns and roses in several mouldings, over the arch are two large roses and two niches. An engraving of this porch is given in *Davy's Architectural Antiquities of Suffolk*, No. iv.

The steeple is a square tower of flints, embattled, with four buttresses. In it are eight bells, one with this inscription: *Scorum Meritis Pāngamus Cantica laudis*. Over the east end of the nave is a stone arch for the saints' bell, and over it a cross.

MONUMENTS, INSCRIPTIONS, ETC.

In the south wall in the chancel, is a small friese consisting of a moulding ornamented with roses, which probably surmounted a niche in the wall, which might have served as a monument. Within the communion rails on a flat stone, are the figures of a man in armour bareheaded, and a woman in the dress of the times, in brass, and under his feet is a greyhound collared, in the collar roses: under them a brass plate, and in black letter the following inscription in two lines:

Orate pro aiabus Willi Brewes Armigeri filii et hæredis Thomæ Brewes milit. et Elizabeth uxoris ejusdem Willi qui quidam Willus obiit xxviii die octobris, Anno Dei m.cccclxxxix, quor. aiabus p'piciet Deº. Amen.

Above are 3 shields of arms. 1—In the middle, *Brewes*, a semé de croslets and a lion rampant biqueued, ducally crowned. 2—Left hand side, *Brewes*, impaling Quarterly, 1 and 4 a bend cotised, 2 and 3 a chevron between 3 spears heads. 3—Right hand side, *Brewes* impaling *Hopton*, a chevron, a label of 3 points Erm.

There are several stones deprived of their brasses, in the chancel and in the nave. An altar stone in also to be found in the chancel, as mentioned by Camden Society, 4th ed. p. 22.

In the north aisle is a stone with inscription to Dorothy, wife of Francis Bedingfeld, with arms above and crest.

In the churchyard on the right hand side of the south porch, is a handsome table monument of black marble, to the memory of Archbishop Sancroft.

Arms—See of *Canterbury* impaling *Sancroft*, Arg. on a chevron between three crosses patée Gu. three doves of the first.

On the right side:—

P. M. S.

Lectór, Wilhelmi, Nuper Archipræsulis,
(qui natus in Vicinia)

Quod morti cecidit, propter hunc
Murum jacet: atqui resurget: In
Interim semper paratus Esto, nam hora qua
non pietas Dominus venturus est.
Obiit 24º Nov. Anno Domini, 1693
Ætatis suæ 77.

Over his head the following verse.

“As the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”

St. Matthew xxiv. 27.

On the left side:—

P. M. S.

William Sancroft was born in this parish. Afterwards, by the providence of God, Archbishop of Canterbury; who, after he had lost all

which he could not keep with a good conscience, returned hither to end his life, where he begun it, and professeth here, at the foot of his tomb, that as naked he came forth, so naked he must return; "the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; as the Lord pleaseth so come things to pass. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

On the south west side of the churchyard there is a messuage called the *Guildhall*, with a piece of land containing 1a. adjoining, and a close called Town-close, containing 7a. 1r. 32p. convey'd by William Sancroft, in 1704, for the benefit of the parishioners of Fressingfield.

JAMES BEDINGFIELD, R.D.

ADDITIONAL NOTES ON FRESSINGFIELD CHURCH.

Fressingfield Church, erected probably somewhere about the 13th century, in the Decorated and Perpendicular styles, consists of a chancel, nave, north and south aisles, a chapel on the north side, two porches, and tower at the west end.

The tower is of four stages, with good upper windows and battlemented parapet.

The south porch is like many others in Suffolk and Norfolk, a handsome erection, with parvise above; the approach to which is a mural staircase from the interior of the church. Within the chamber, in the north wall, is the embrasure of a window looking into the church, on which side however, it has been blocked up. The ceiling of the porch is deeply groined; the knob or central boss contains a figure much defaced, and the boss near the outer arch has a shield with the arrow and crowns of St. Edmund. The outside is panelled in flint, and is decorated with niches, one on each side of the parvise window, with stone panels carved with roses beneath. The spandrils of the gate way, are carved with palm branches tied with ribbons. The parapet is handsomely indented.