

BUCKS CHURCHES.

Stretwiley.

With much regret that our efforts and those of several other Societies to preserve the integrity of this unique church have proved unavailing one read in a local paper (Aug. 6) that a tender for the erection of the unnecessary vestry, with its consequent destruction of the original Norman wall face on the south side of the chancel, has been accepted. The report referred to continued: "The restoration of the tower is also very necessary, as the Roman cement is constantly falling off." The tower has unfortunately suffered a good deal in the past at the hands of those who thought they were beautifying it, in the hacking of the stone face to receive the cement stucco. It presents a difficult problem. Let us hope at least that we may be spared from 20th century Norman.

St. Peter's, Stantonbury.

Having received instructions from the Vicar, the Rev. A. Newman Guest, to examine and report upon the recent interesting discovery of what had been supposed to be a "Norman" Arcade on the north side of the nave of this most curious ancient church, I found that the two fine pointed arches of two orders, of simple chamfers, the easternmost arch being slightly higher than the other, though not Norman, were very good and graceful Early English work (circa 1200). The Chevronwork hood-mould over each of them was, in my opinion, either removed from a still earlier arcade, or from some other portion of the fabric, and re-set in its present position. I should imagine that this is at least as old as the reign of King Stephen (1135). The double order of the arches rests in the centre on a quatrefoil column and capital of a section by no means unusual, save that the length of the bell is greater than the average work of the date quoted. These arches in their outer jambs pay on to smaller caps and corbels with leaf ornament of the type very usual in Bucks Churches. The base of the quatrefoil shaped pillar has been ruthlessly hacked about, and, judging by the height at which the jambs of the arches are stopped above the floor-line, it would, so far as can be determined at present, suggest that a dwarf wall existed under both arches.

If funds permitted, the north aisle should be rebuilt on old lines, care being, of course, taken to disturb no old walling that could be left in situ. I have evolved a scheme for this, but it is too early to say much about it. Reverence for old work, and reparation, rather than "restoration," should, I think, be constantly kept before those who undertake it: no new feature should be suffered that may compete with those brought to light.

It is but just to say of this recent "find," or re-discovery, of these interesting remains, that the existence of these two arches was known and recorded in RECORDS. It is difficult to understand an act of vandalism that hid such work *at all*: still worse was the method used in the doing of it.

The stone in this arcade differs from that used in the north windows of the chancel, where Totternhoe church stone from near Dunstable has been introduced, the softness of which has enabled the carver of this work of the perpendicular period to put much character and raciness into the heads forming the dripstone terminations, and adds one more to the many interesting features of a church which I first visited and loved nearly half-a-century ago.

E. SWINFEN HARRIS, F.R.I.B.A.

Holy Trinity, Bedford.

The works of repair, of which an excellent account by the vicar appeared in our last issue were completed at midsummer and a commemorative service held on July 2nd. A small debt remains to be wiped off.

Upton Church.

The vestry of this church has been enlarged. In the process no part of the original Norman structure has been touched.

R. L. REYNOLDS.

West Wycombe.

By direction of the Rev. Upton Wooler and his committee, and under the advice of Mr. W. Niven, necessary repairs are being carried out on the north side of the old timber building known as the Church Loft. The latter discovered that, at the end adjoining the archway, there had been four small cells. It is hoped that measured drawings of this rather remarkable building may be given in our next issue.