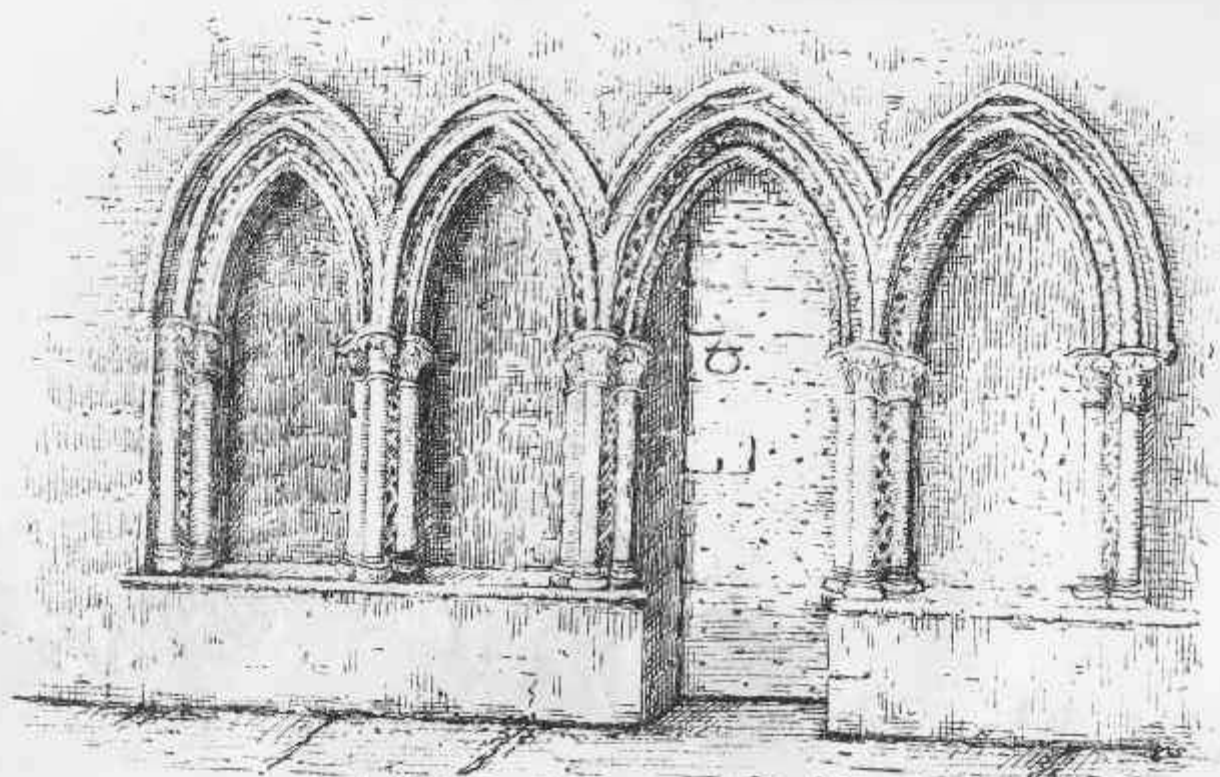


CHETWODE.

We have been kindly enabled to give in our present number a sketch of the Parish Church of Chetwode, dedicated to St. Nicholas, and of the Sedilia in its Chancel. Chetwode seems to have derived its name from the Saxon word "chit," a cottage, and the "wood" in which the few cottages composing the village formerly lay scattered, being, in fact, part of the old forest called "Rockwood." It is still pronounced "Chitwood" by the common folk. In Domesday Book, amongst the particulars of the Manor, it is stated that there was "mast for 100 hogs," shewing that there then existed within its limits many more oak and beech trees than at the present time. In the year 1244 the Priory at Chetwode was founded by Sir Ralph de Norwich, and the Nave of the Church belonging to it was, in 1480, by the award of the Bishop of Lincoln, the arbitrator appointed by agreement between the parishioners and the owners of the Priory, opened to the parishioners, the dilapidated old Parish Church (dedicated to St. Martin), being at the same time turned into a Chapel to the Priory Church, and the Chancel being taken down. In this award special direction was made for the annual observance of the



Chetwode Church



Sedilia in Chetwode Church

Festival of St. Martin, the Patron Saint, which the Convent of Nutley, or Notley (to which, in 1460, the Priory had been *propter paupertatem et destitutionem Canonicorum* annexed), bound themselves and their successors to keep for evermore with the utmost solemnity. A full copy of this award is given by Lipscomb in his History of Bucks. No traces of the old Parish Church now remain, it having been allowed to fall into utter decay. It stood near to the Manor House, about a quarter of a mile east from the Priory Church.

The present Church (which adjoins the Priory House, formerly the property of the Bisleys, and now of Walter Henry Bracebridge, Esq., and Mary Holte Bracebridge, his wife) is 58 feet long and 25 feet broad. At the west end is a small tower, with a ridge-tiled roof, built (according to Browne Willis) about the year 1583, in the time of Queen Elizabeth, when the Church was contracted about 40 feet and the west part pulled down (as appeared by a plan in Browne Willis's possession), and a wall run across and the present tower erected. In this tower are two bells, the biggest whereof bears the inscription, in old characters, "*Me tibi, Christe, dabit J. Chetwode quem peramabat*" This bell is traditionally said to have been brought from St. Martin's, the old Parish Church. The Church had formerly two small cross aisles — that on the south side no longer exists, having been, as Browne Willis says, taken into the Priory House about the year 1582; that on the north side, looking like a porch, may be seen in our sketch, and belongs to the Chetwodes, having been, Browne Willis again asserts, assigned to one of that family by the Convent of Nutley, on his annexing to this Convent a Hermitage or Chapel at Chetwode, dedicated to St. Stephen and St. Lawrence, about the time of the appropriation of the Parish Church. The present Incumbent, the Rev. E. L. Smith, has endeavoured to find out the position of this old Hermitage, and is inclined to think that a little plot of land to the south of the Priory House, about twelve yards square, and surrounded by a moat six feet deep, must be the site of it; and this view is confirmed by Mr. Bracebridge. It is probable that upon digging into this plot the foundations of a Chapel would be discovered. The last institution to the Hermitage recorded was of one John

Cowpere, in 1359. Browne Willis's plan shewed on the north side of the Church an antique cross and a well. Nothing now remains of either of these; the latter, therefore, probably never existed except in the plan before mentioned.

Our sketch shews a handsome Early English five Lancet window at the east end, and another window of the same period on the north side of the Chancel. There is also another of the same date on the south side of the Chancel. The east window was formerly filled with handsome stained glass (date 1244), but this having been nearly destroyed, the remnant of it was, in 1842, removed into the window on the south side, and the east window was filled with modern painted glass, after the same pattern, at the expense of Mr. Bracebridge. On the south side of the Church, towards the west end, are two half-length windows in the Early Decorated style.

"We also give a sketch of the Sedilia on the south side of the Chancel of this Church.

The old Priory House is no longer standing, the present house, which inherits the name of "The Priory," having been built about the year 1833.

A singular privilege is still exercised by the Chetwode Family, or their lessee, viz., that of taking every year, between the 29th October and the 7th November, toll in respect of all cattle passing along the drift roads within the townships of Prebend End, Gawcott, Lenborough, Bourton, Preston-cum-Cowley, Hillesden, Tingewick, Barton, and Chetwode. This is called the Rhyne toll (quaere derivation?) and was granted to one of the Chetwode Family for having killed a wild boar which at one time ravaged that neighbourhood. The jaw of the animal is still in the possession of Sir J. N. L. Chetwode, and was exhibited at the Annual Meeting of the Society last year at Buckingham.

At the same time was exhibited an Exorcism, in Latin and English, on a scroll of parchment seven feet long by four inches wide and illuminated, a document which was prepared for the benefit of one of the members of the Chetwode Family, and is still preserved by Sir J. N. L. Chetwode. Whether or not the purpose for which it was made was effectually answered, we have not been informed.