



St. Simon
ORCHARDLEIGH CHURCH, SOMERSET

From a Photograph by Mr. S. Pitcher

The Ancient Glass at Orchardleigh, Somerset

BY THE REV. CHRISTOPHER WOODFORDE, M.A., F.S.A.

IN quiet seclusion upon an island in a lake stands the little church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Orchardleigh. In its windows remain some excellent examples of English glass-painting of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Nothing is known of the history of the glass before the nineteenth century. From about 1440 onwards Orchardleigh belonged to the Champneys family, and it seems probable that they were responsible for the glazing at various periods during the remainder of the century.

Soon after the beginning of the nineteenth century a good deal was done to the fabric of the church. Buttresses were added to the walls; a new porch and doorway were added to the w. end of the nave; a transeptal erection for a family pew was added on the north side of the nave. It was presumably at this date that the remains of ancient glazing were made secure in the various windows of the church. How much glass then remained is shown by a series of water-colour drawings made in 1843 for the extra-illustrated copy of Collinson's *History and Antiquities of Somerset* known as the Braikenridge Collection.¹ These serve to show that very little glass has been lost between that date and the present day. At some earlier time a careless game-keeper destroyed four of a series of figures of the Twelve Apostles by firing his gun in their direction.² By 1879 the church was in a dilapidated condition and overrun with ivy. A thorough but careful restoration took place under

¹ Preserved in the library of the Somerset Archaeological Society in Taunton Castle.

² *Proc. Som. Arch. Soc.*, xxxix, i, 29. The Braikenridge Collection shows only the eight figures to be seen to-day.

the supervision of Sir Gilbert Scott. Photographs of the exterior of the church taken before the restoration have been preserved and are useful to show the position of some of the glass before this restoration took place. Messrs. Clayton and Bell were entrusted with the releading and rearrangement of the glass. They left with the incumbent a note of the ancient glass with the dates that they assigned to it. Their own books record 'to the order of the Rev. W. A. Duckworth, the restoration of the ancient glass for the East Window. West Window, ditto. Two side windows in Chancel and small window over door. The South Nave Window'. An old cartoon book contains an entry showing that canopies and quarries were drawn for the windows. No figurework is mentioned and no actual drawings remain.¹ To-day the glass remains as Messrs. Clayton and Bell left it. It is best described window by window.

THE EAST WINDOW. The middle light contains a youthful nimbed and tonsured figure holding in his left hand a crozier with an auxilium and in his right hand a clasped book [Plate VII]. He is vested in an alb, apparelled at the foot, with girdle and crossed stole, embroidered amice and cope fastened with a morse. The figure, which stands upon a pedestal with a tiled floor, is carried out wholly in stain. There is no indication as to whom the figure is meant to represent. For some reason or other it is labelled 'St. Augustine' in the Braikenridge Collection. Around this figure are grouped angels gathered together here from various windows. Four of them belong to one period. They are three-quarter length and rise from clouds. They all play upon musical instruments. Two, in the upper parts of the lights, are feathered and wear diadems and amices. The angel in the northern light wears an ermine cape also. He holds a bagpipe, while the other angel plays upon a psaltery. The two other angels wear albs and amices. They both play upon lutes. The two angels occupying the middle portion of the outer lights wear albs and amices. They also play upon musical instruments. Some at least of the canopy-work above them appears to be ancient. In the tracery light immediately above the central light and in the space below the

¹ I am indebted to my friend Mr. Reginald Bell for searching the records of the firm.



The Holy Trinity
ORCHARDLEIGH CHURCH, SOMERSET

From a Photograph by Mr. S. Pitcher

pedestal upon which the male saint stands are two smaller figures of angels playing upon harps.

It is not altogether clear where these figures stood before the restoration of 1879. The large figure of the male saint seems to have been in its present position. The dates assigned to them by Messrs. Clayton and Bell may be regarded as approximately correct; the large figure of the saint, 1480; the four angels next mentioned, 1450; the two angels in the middle of the lights, 1510; the two other angels, 1540. The last date is probably rather too late. The glass-painting is English and is therefore unlikely to have been done after the Reformation. They were probably painted *c.* 1520, although the style differs from that of the angels already dated 1510.

NORTH AND SOUTH CHANCEL WINDOWS. These windows contain the figures of the apostles. They carry emblems and scrolls inscribed with sentences from the Apostles' Creed. The names beneath them are modern. They are as follows, North window, i. St. Bartholomew with a knife. He has been given part of the text appropriate to St. Philip—*Inde uenturus est iudicare* (for *iudicare*) *uiuos (et mortuis)* and the end of the text appropriate to St. Thomas—(*resurrex*) *it a mortuis*. ii. St. Jude with a boat. The figure appears to be modern, but a drawing of it appears in the Braikenridge Collection. He is given part of the scrolls of St. James the Less and St. Simon, namely *Ascendit ad caelos, sedet ad (dexteram dei patris omnipotentis)* and *...ione cemissionem* (for *remissionem*) *peocatorum* (for *peccatorum*). St. Simon's text is *Remissionem peccatorum*. iii. St. Simon with a fish [Plate IV]. He bears the text proper to St. Jude—*Carnis resurrectione*. iv. A figure named *St. Matthias*, but with no emblem. He bears the words proper to him—*Et vitam eternam: amen*. Between the words *eternam* and *amen* has been inserted a piece of glass with *esurr* upon it, being part of the word *resurrexit* from St. Thomas's text. South window, i. St. Matthew holding a halbert with its head resting upon the ground. This is an unusual way of representing the emblem, but it is shown thus in the drawing in the Braikenridge Collection. He is given the first part of the text appropriate to him—*Sanctam ecclesiam catholicam*. The phrase *sanctorum communionem* is always added to St. Mat-

thew's text. There has been a good deal of restoration here, and no doubt the last two words were originally to be seen. ii. St. Andrew with his cross. He has his proper text, but in a very abbreviated form—*Et ī iheu chrīm (f)iliū ēū (un)icū dīmū (n)ostrū* for *Et in ihesum christum, filium eius unicum dominum nostrum*. iii. St. John with chalice and demon. He has his proper text—*Pass' sū pontio pilato, crucifixus, mortuus (et sepultus)*. iv. A figure made up partly of St. Philip and partly of St. Bartholomew. The basket of loaves indicates St. Philip. But the text proper to St. Bartholomew, *Credo in spm̄ sanctum*, runs partly across the upper part of the figure, the scroll being painted upon the figure and not leaded in.

The date 1410 given to these figures by Messrs. Clayton and Bell is too early. They were painted *c.* 1440–1450. The photographs taken before the restoration of the church give some information as to their original setting. Two apostles were in the south-east window of the nave, while two others were in a nave window further west. This latter window was an insertion and is now replaced by the restoration of the original door. There is no indication of the position of the four other figures.

The two lateral chancel windows contain other ancient glass besides the figures of the apostles. In the tracery light of the south chancel window is a fine *I.H.C.* monogram carried out in stain and set upon a blue patterned background. It is of about the same date as the figures of the apostles. Before the restoration it was in a circular tracery light of the south-east window of the nave. In the tracery light of the north chancel window is a head of the Deity. This was in the tracery light of the destroyed western window in the south wall of the nave. It has been cut down to fit its present position. The drawing in the Braikenridge Collection shows a larger panel with the upper part of a figure of the Deity with arms raised. It is of about the same date as the sacred monogram.

In a small window over the priest's door is a representation of the Holy Trinity. The Father sits upon a rainbow with hands raised [Plate V]. Between His knees is the crucified Son. The Holy Dove does not now appear. The background is decorated with seaweed pattern. The nineteenth-century photographs do not show where this glass was before the 1879



A Male Saint
ORCHARDLEIGH CHURCH, SOMERSET

From a Photograph by Mr. S. Pitcher

restoration. It was not in its present position. It is probably earlier in date than the figures of the apostles, but it is the same style of workmanship. Clayton and Bell's date of 1410 is too early.¹ There is new glass in the panel, namely, the figure of the Saviour on the cross, excepting the lower part of the legs and a piece of the halo, the background above the head of the Father and by His right hand.

SOUTH WINDOW OF THE NAVE. Here are representations of a winged ox and a winged lion. They are the remains of a set of symbols of the Four Evangelists and stand for St. Luke and St. Mark.² Before 1879 one was placed in each of the nave windows. They are of about the same date as the figures of the apostles.

WEST WINDOW. In the upper and lower parts of the two main lights are four angels, three of whom are playing upon musical instruments. Golden rays spread downwards from the clouds beneath them. There are also preserved clouds and rays from beneath angels now lost. Part of the canopy work around them seems to be ancient. These angels are of the same kind as the earliest set in the east window. The middle part of each light is occupied by the upper half of a large figure beneath a canopy. In the right-hand light is a nimbed and bearded king. He wears a girded robe ornamented with fur, and a mantle with ermine cape; in his left hand he holds a sceptre. His right hand rests upon the hilt of a sword. He presumably represents St. Edward, King and Martyr. In the left-hand light is a puzzling figure [Plate VI]. As it now appears a bearded man, wearing a black doctor's cap and the

¹ In Herbert Read's *English Stained Glass*, London, 1926, the figure of St. Simon and this panel are illustrated (pl. 41 and fig. 10). St. Simon is dated 'middle of the 15th century' and the Holy Trinity 'first half of the 15th century'.

² 'The interpretation of the "four living creatures" in John's vision of the Divine Majesty (Rev. iv. 6 ff. R.V.: *animalia* in the Vulgate; based on Ezek. i. 5-10) as representing the Evangelists began in the second century with Irenaeus, who assigned the lion to Mark and the eagle to John; and by the fifth century Jerome and Augustine adopted and so fixed the identifications which were universally accepted in later times. The first important work of art in which they appear is the apse mosaic of S. Pudenziana, Rome (end of 4th or early 5th century)', G. McN. Rushforth, *Medieval Christian Imagery*, Oxford, 1936, 89-90.

robes of an abbot, carries a crozier. It seems to be a composite figure. The style of painting of the head does not agree with the robes and crozier; the doctor's hat does not agree with the clothing of the figure below; the folds of the garments do not run through the joining lead as they should: it is unlikely that the painting of the head would have weathered so much more than the rest if the whole had been painted and fired as one figure. The figure was probably made up to balance that of the king at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Between this date and 1879 the king was in the south-east window of the nave and the other figure in the now demolished south-west window of the nave.

In the tracery light is a roundel with a rayed border. It is painted with a representation of Michael the Archangel slaying the dragon. His shield is decorated with what would be heraldically described as a *cross moline*.¹ The whole composition is carried out in white glass and yellow stain and is of the same date as the set of apostles.

It is not possible to determine with certainty where this glass was painted. As has been seen, the glass must be assigned to at least six different dates between *c.* 1430 and *c.* 1520. There is in Somerset a remarkable absence of glass painted in the first three-quarters of the fifteenth century, so that comparison on any extensive scale is not possible. The figures of the apostles, however, find a remarkable parallel in a very incomplete and mutilated set at Mark, where the figures are smaller and perhaps somewhat later in date, but are undoubtedly of the same origin as those at Orchardleigh. They represent SS. Philip, Matthew, James the Great, Jude or James the Less. The figures of the male saint in the east window and of St. Edward and the abbot in the west window at Orchardleigh are

¹ It was a common practice of the medieval artist to appropriate to St. Michael's shield the cross of St. George, since they both slew a dragon. Sometimes, as here at Orchardleigh, an attempt seems to have been made to differentiate between the cross of St. George and the cross given to St. Michael. Yet twice in the fourteenth-century glass in the windows of the choir aisles of Wells Cathedral St. Michael is given a white shield with a red cross upon it. Less often St. Michael's shield is differently decorated. For instance, in fifteenth-century glass once to be seen in Blythburgh church, Suffolk, the shield is decorated with a rayed sun, a symbol which may have evolved from the representation of a boss in the middle of the shield.



A Male Saint
ORCHARDLEIGH CHURCH, SOMERSET

From a Photograph by Mr. S. Pitcher

of common origin. They are quite different in style and feeling from contemporary glass such as may be seen at Winscombe, East Brent, Trull and elsewhere. They bear no resemblance to glass of a like date in Gloucestershire. They call to mind some of the glass in Farleigh Hungerford church, especially the figures of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Child and of St. Leonard. It would be safe to say that these figures were painted by one firm. Considering the geographical position of Orchardleigh and Farleigh Hungerford it would be natural to suppose that the firm, perhaps not a very prosperous or skilled one, was situated in Bath. One of the angels in the east window wears a robe diapered with alternating crosses and circles carried out in yellow stain. The same distinctive pattern is used to decorate a robe in contemporary glass at Leigh-on-Mendip. Taking the glass as a whole, there is no reason to suppose that any of it was painted far outside the boundaries of the county, although the possibility that the earlier windows were painted in some such large city as Bristol must not be excluded.