

The Supposed Chantry House.

BY MR. J. J. HOOPER.

AT the north-east corner of the Brympton churchyard and between it and the present mansion, stands an old building commonly called the Chantry House, of which there is a brief notice by Parker. I am permitted by a gentleman of considerable experience in the study of early Domestic Architecture to send you the results of a more careful examination than has yet been bestowed upon it by our Somersetshire Archæological Society.

The communication with the upper floor is on the north side by an external staircase with an arrowhole in the higher part: the fireplace and cusped windows of the upper floor, west of the staircase, are of the same date with it: the roof is of the same character as that of the Fish-house at Meare, and a room in the Vicar's Close at Wells, a type not uncommon during and after the time of Edward III. At the east end of the upper floor is a smaller room partitioned off with two lancet windows to the east, (not cusped but probably of the same date as the others), a fireplace probably of the time of Henry VII, and a ceiling of the time of James I. On the south side of the larger room is a small doorway which was the entrance to a wardrobe. The wardrobe itself projecting from the south wall,

and furnished with a wooden shoot, was removed not many years ago. I am told that there were two such projections, but it is difficult to trace the position of the second.

On the ground floor we find a doorway at the north-west corner, of the same date as the earliest part of the building, with an arrowhole at its side, three parts of which have been blocked up by modern masonry. Two of the windows on the north side, one of which is cusped, may, judging by the form of the including arches, be co-æval with the doorway. The others are evidently insertions not earlier than the time of James I. This part of the building has evidently undergone many changes, but the close growth of the ivy renders a minute examination of the walls almost impossible. Some doorways have evidently been built up and others opened. An old print in the possession of Lady G. Fane shews more doorways than at present exist. It is well to remember that this ground floor was turned by a former Lord Westmoreland into stables.

Taken as a whole the building presents the common type of a mansion house of the fourteenth or beginning of the fifteenth century. The external staircase constructed for defence : the hall occupying the greater part of the upper floor ; in this instance, that to the west of the staircase ; with fireplace and garderobe : the solar, or perhaps in this case two chambers, to the east of the staircase, probably screened off from the hall : the ground floor, with few or no windows, serving as offices for domestics, or, if need were, for securing cattle.

There seems no ground for supposing that this building was ever a Chantry House, except its proximity to the church. It appears from the *Inquis. ad quod damnum*, as quoted by Collinson, that 34 Edward I, Peter D'Evercy gave a messuage and forty acres of land in this parish to a

chaplain to perform Divine Service in the Church of St. Andrew of Brimpton, for the soul of the said Peter, his ancestors and successors, and for the souls of all the faithful deceased. But the message so given was evidently the farm-house on the forty acres of land: no mass priest was ever favoured with such quarters as this mansion house afforded: the external staircase is on the side away from the church: and the architecture, though not the arrangement, of the building is of a later date than that of Peter D'Everey's foundation. At the same time it is of much earlier date than can be ascribed to any part of the present mansion house. Peter D'Everey, who founded the Chantry in 1306, was the last male representative of the family of that name, who held their lands at Brympton under the more important house of Furneaux of Ashington. On his death, in 1325, the manor passed by the female line to the family of Glamorgan, and it appears afterwards to have come for a time into the custody of the crown, for by an entry in the *Inquis. ad quod damnum*, 33 Edward III, it appears that John de Gildesbrough "qui tenet manerium de Brumpton juxta Ivole ex commissione domini regis pro certa firma" had been guilty of divers oppressions and extortions on the tenants of the said manor. Two years later, on the death of Nicholas Glamorgan, 1362, the manor passed to his numerous sisters. One of these married Peter Veer, and I am told by Mr. Batten that the arms of Veer appear with those of Stourton* and Beauchin on the rood loft beam in the church. We now approach the probable date of the building, viz. :—between the extinction of the name of D'Everey and the erection, by the Sydenhams, of their more stately mansion in the time

* I believe the manor belonged to the Stourton family before it was acquired by the Sydenhams.



NASH HOUSE : EAST COKER, SOMERSET.

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IPSWICH.

of Henry VII, and the conclusion seems almost irresistible that it is the old manor house of Brympton, built, to judge by the details of the architecture, in the early part of the fifteenth century. After the Sydenhams had built their mansion this older manor house seems to have fallen into neglect, but early in the seventeenth century it became necessary to make use of it again as a place of residence. This may have been on account of the alterations made at this time in the mansion house, when the greater part of the west front was built, and the hall was made or enlarged by bringing forward the outer wall. (To the architects of the same period may, perhaps, be ascribed the bell turret of the church, and the chancel screen over which the old rood loft beam was placed.) For the purpose of residence more windows were now inserted in the lower walls of the building, the solar was repaired and newly ceiled, and perhaps the fireplace was brought from the mansion house adjoining. There is a tradition that the upper floor was used at one time as a place of confinement for a mad woman, and certainly the wooden shoots of the garde-robe, but lately removed, indicate comparatively recent occupation.

From hence the party proceeded to

West Coker

where the Rev. Mr. Penny read an elaborate paper on the church, and pointed out some portions of the masonry which he considered to be Saxon work.

Through narrow lanes the excursionists proceeded to the few and interesting remains of

Nash Court

an illustration of which is given in this volume.

From here the party went on to Coker Court, the resi-

dence of W. H. Helyar, Esq. who kindly exhibited some very interesting early family deeds ; passports and papers of the period of the Great Civil War ; and curious ancient jewels. Here all the members were sumptuously entertained by Mr. and Mrs. Helyar. The courtesy and hospitality of the Squire and his Lady having been duly acknowledged, and a brief visit paid to the church, the members went on to Pendomer Church which has been recently restored. The tomb of Sir John de Dummer, of which an engraving is given in this volume, was carefully examined and fully explained by Mr. Bond.

Afterwards assembling in front of the Manor House, votes of thanks were duly presented to the Local Secretaries, Mr. Sparks, and Mr. John Perry : to the General Secretary, Mr. Jones : to those who had contributed to the Museum, and finally, on the motion of Colonel Pinny to E. A. Freeman, Esq. as President

These votes of thanks having been duly acknowledged, the President declared the Annual Meeting closed.
