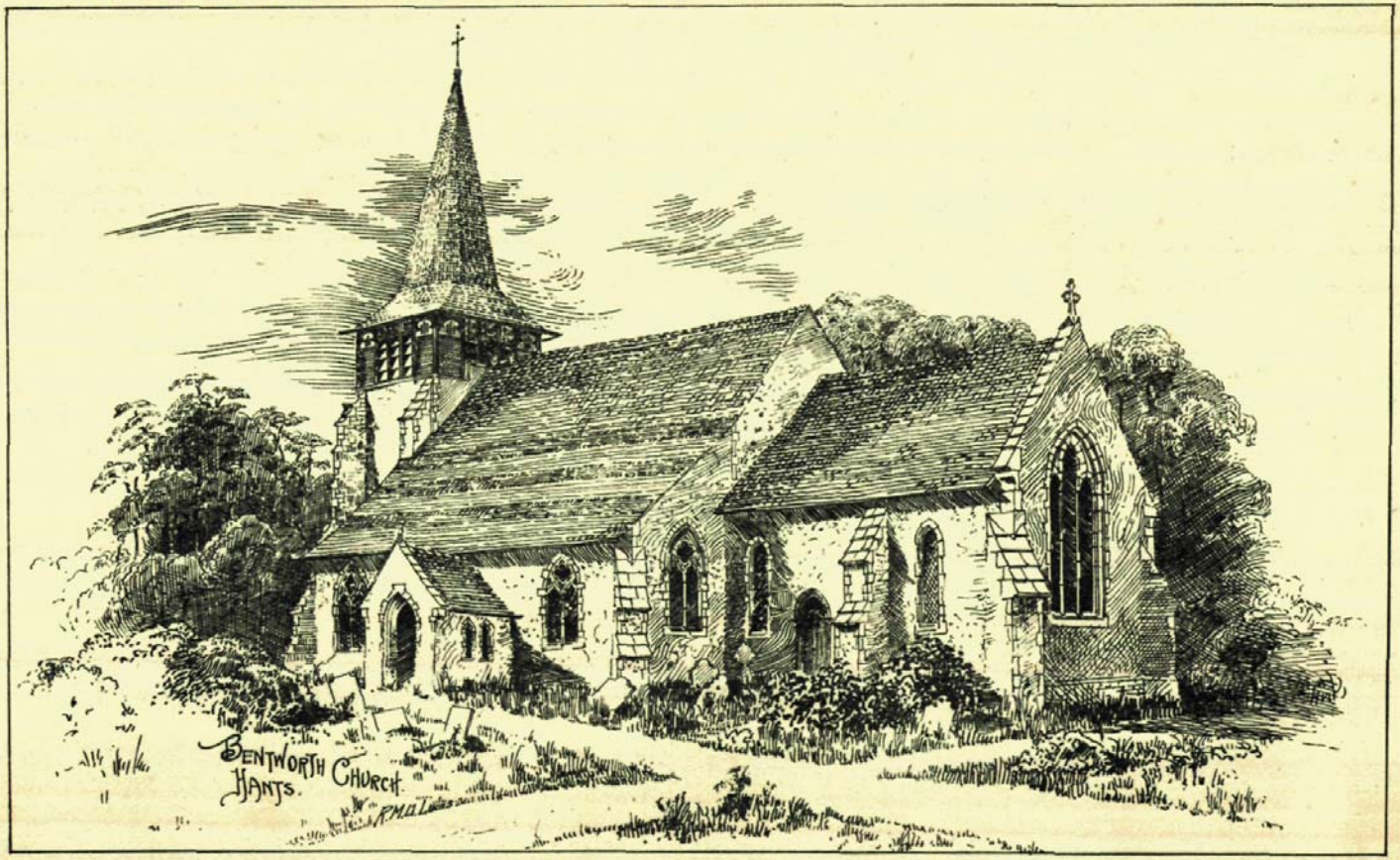


J. TOWNSEND & SON, PHOTO. LITHS. EXETER.

BENTWORTH CHURCH, HANTS, from S.E.

BENTWORTH AND ITS HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS.

A Paper read at Bentworth, June 15th, 1897.

By T. W. Shore, F.G.S.

The name Bentworth, is of Anglo-Saxon origin, and its earliest form occurs in the national records of the 12th and 13th centuries under the names Binterwordi, Byntwerde, Byntheord, Bentworda, and Byntworth. "Byn" is an Anglo-Saxon word for tilled or cultivated, and is derived from or closely connected with the word "bûan or bywan," to inhabit or dwell. "Worth" is Anglo-Saxon for land, or farm, or street, or publicway. From these two words we see that the original meaning of the name Bentworth must have been a place of cultivated land, or a way through such land.

That such a descriptive name should be necessary in a district where all the land has for many centuries been cultivated shows that very different conditions must have prevailed in this neighbourhood in Saxon time. Much of the surrounding land was then forest, and Bentworth appears to have been a cultivated area in it. Such remaining place names as Holt End, Thedden and Shalden, still surviving in the parish, are forest boundary names, which mark the limits of the forest in this immediate neighbourhood. In Roman time this formed the western part of the great forest of Anderida, and in the 13th century what remained was known as the forest of Odiham, or forest of Alton.

That Bentworth was a cultivated area from a very early period is shown by the evidence of the numerous old chalk

pits in the parish. The use of chalk for marling land in Britain is mentioned by a writer of Roman time. Anyone who will compare the large Ordnance map of this parish, on which the old chalk pits are marked, with similar maps of some neighbouring parishes that a few centuries ago formed parts of the forests of Woolmer or Alice Holt, will be struck with the indications of early cultivation existing in this parish of Bentworth. Bentworth is not mentioned in Domesday Book, but we know it was situated in an outlying part of the hundred of Odiham, which was held by the King as one great manor, the most important which the King held in Hampshire, and the entry concerning it occurs first in that part of Domesday Book which relates to this county. The details which are given of the royal manor of Odiham show that it must have included such outlying parts as Bentworth. There were at the time of the survey as many as 137 villeins (who correspond to the copy-holders of later centuries) on this manor. There were also 60 borderers or cottagers, and 50 slaves. The whole manor in the time of King Edward the Confessor was worth £50 by tale, *i.e.*, 12,000 silver pennies counted out. At the time of the Domesday survey it was worth 50 pounds of silver weighed out. Four churches are mentioned, two close to Odiham, and two others, of which the earliest church of Bentworth was probably one. All that remains of this old Saxon church is probably its orientation, the East North East, which is the orientation of the existing church.

The villages of Hampshire became developed into small centres of rural life under various circumstances, but this village grew to be what it is under conditions different from most of them—in some respects under conditions peculiar to itself. The history of our villages is a most important part of the history of England. Such a village as Broughton became a small rural centre because it was the home of the people who lived on the royal manor of that name, and the centre of local administration for that manor and hundred. Micheldever became a similar rural administrative centre, because it was the most important place in the great manor and hundred of Micheldever, which belonged to the Abbot of Hyde. Beaulieu, Titchfield and Southwick increased in im-

portance and population owing to the increase in prosperity of the abbeys close to them, with which they were so closely connected, but during the two hundred years, from the early part of the 12th century to nearly the middle of the 14th century, which was marked by a great development of English rural life, Bentworth was neither under royal nor monastic influence. It had ceased to be part of the royal demesne, and it had no monastery, although there is a local tradition that it had one, and that tradition will not be extinguished by the visit of this club. Local traditions have great vitality, and where inaccurate are stubborn circumstances to deal with. The tradition of a monastery at Bentworth had, however, a reason for its growth. It no doubt arose from the remains of the hall and chapel at Hall Place, the only remains now existing of what I may perhaps call the semi-monastic manorial establishment in this parish of the metropolitan prelates of Normandy. Bentworth during these two centuries was under direct Norman influence, the management of its manorial and ecclesiastical affairs being directed from Rouen.

The early history of Bentworth, which was associated with the history of the very extensive manor of Odiham, and which had formed part of the inheritance of the Saxon Kings, became closely connected for two hundred years with the metropolitan see of Normandy.

After the Saxon period it remained in the possession of the first two Norman Kings. Its subsequent history, however, during the two following centuries have left upon it some permanent traces of the Norman Conquest, which cannot be said to have been entirely to its disadvantage. The separation of Bentworth from the manor of Odiham, and its recognition as a distinct manor occurred in the reign of Henry I. That king, like many of his Norman nobles who had estates in England, looked on Normandy, its cities, abbeys, and institutions, with the same kind of affection as most English colonists in distant parts of the world now regard England, their mother country, and the home of their childhood. There was undoubtedly in the minds of these early Norman Kings and nobles that love for fatherland which is common to all ages and most races of men, and

which found expression in their case in their numerous journeys to and from Normandy and in their gifts of lands and revenue from their English estates to the religious houses of the land of their youth, or to their early benefactors and adherents. From sentiments of this kind, or from a sense of honourable obligation arising from other circumstances, Henry I. separated Bentworth from his royal estate of Odiham, and gave it as a manor to Geoffrey Archbishop of Rouen, as appears by a deed which is still preserved in the archives of the Department of Seine Inférieure at Rouen. That deed itself is dated in the beginning of the 14th century, and is one by Edward I., King of England, Lord of Ireland, and Duke of Aquitaine, but it contains a "vidimus," or inspeximus, of the deed by which Henry I. gave this manor of Bentworth to Archbishop Geoffrey, the name being entered in that document as "Byntewerda." The same charter of Edward I. contains a reference to, or vidimus of another charter, by Henry I. or Henry II., confirming the grant of this manor to the Archbishopric of Rouen. The occupant of the see during part of Henry 1st's reign was Hugh d'Amiens, to whom was granted the further privilege of administering justice on the manor, *i.e.*, as I understand it, he granted him the administrative power of the gallows and other punishments and the assize of bread and ale.

Archbishop Hugh was further confirmed in his possession of this manor by a bull of Pope Innocent II., which is still preserved in the archives of the Department of Seine Inférieure. This Archbishop came to England at the request of Bishop Henry de Blois to attend the Council he summoned in 1130 at Winchester. At this Council he endeavoured to induce the English bishops who had built castles to give them up, as being contrary to their order.[1]

The charter of Edward I., preserved in the same archives, contains another "vidimus" or reference to a further charter of Henry II., by which he gave to Rotrou, another Archbishop of Rouen, the church of Bentworth. Our English records, which are summarised in the "Abbreviatio Placitorum," show that in the 7th Edward I. the Archbishop of Rouen recovered the advowson of this church by producing

[1] Chronicle of William of Malmsbury. Ed. by Dr. Giles, p. 504.

the charter of King Henry relating to its gift.[1] The actual church referred to in this charter was probably an old Saxon building, and it is probable also that the archbishop soon afterwards built the fine parish church which now exists. The style of its architecture points to the Transition Norman period of the latter part of the 12th century, and I think there can be little doubt that Bentworth owes its church to the munificence of its lords, the Archbishops of Rouen, in the latter part of the 12th and the early part of the 13th centuries.

It is satisfactory to find that undoubted evidence of the connection of this church and parish with the Archbishopric of Rouen, confirmatory of the documentary evidence in England, still exists in the French archives. The Great Pipe Roll of England of the time of Henry I. states that the ancient royal manor of Binterwordi was then held of the Crown in chief by Hugh, Archbishop of Rouen, on an annual payment of £10 to the Exchequer. He and his successors were Lords of Bentworth to the time of Edward III.

This village still retains traces of this early connection. The old buildings at Hall Place date from this period, and were, no doubt, the residence of the archbishop's stewards or procurators. There they held the manor courts or hall days, from which the name Hall Place was, no doubt, derived. An old name for part of the former common land also survives, which bears the name of these early lords of Bentworth, viz., the name Bishop's Down, and I do not doubt that the old name Wivelrod, at the boundary of the parish and on one of its highest parts, marks the place where the bishop's cross or rood was set up, such as may be seen in parts of Europe at the present day. Its fine church, provided to supply the spiritual needs of the parish more than twenty generations ago, is, however, the most substantial survival of the period when Bentworth had for its lords the metropolitan bishops of Normandy. It must have been a comparatively new church when Archbishop Odon Rigaud came here in 1248. This prelate, who is described as one of the most illustrious of the archbishops of Rouen, and an ecclesiastic in special favour with St. Louis (Louis IX.),

[1] Plac. 7, Edw. I., Rot. 21, in dorso.

King of France, made a journey to England in that year. A register has lately been published in France recording the journeys of this prelate, and this includes the itinerary of his visit to England in 1248. From this itinerary we learn that immediately after his arrival at Dover he went to the shrine of Archbishop Becket, lately canonised as St. Thomas of Canterbury. The Archbishop of Rouen was there on April 20th, 1248. The next day he was at Rochester, and the day after he arrived in London. On April 24th, 1248, his register tells us ("ibidem ipsa die juravi meam fidelitatem . . . regi Angliae de terra nostra") he took the oath of allegiance to the King for his land in England. On April 26th he was at Guildford, and on April 27th he arrived at Bentworth. That must have been a notable day for this parish, almost 650 years ago, and one which must have been long talked about for several generations. The archbishop was, no doubt, lodged in his own house at Hall Place. His register tells us that at Bentworth ("recepimus homagia et juramenta hominum nostrorum") he received the homage and oaths of his men. This short account of his journey is confirmed by an entry in the English Patent Rolls, which states that in that year Odon, archbishop of Rouen, took the oath of fidelity to King Henry III.[1]

There is another consideration of interest to the people of Bentworth in connection with these circumstances. Rouen Cathedral is at the present day one of the grandest of the cathedrals of France. Its architecture shows that it was for the most part built during the 200 years when its prelates were lords of Bentworth, the revenues from which, though comparatively small, went into the coffers of the archbishops, and no doubt assisted them in contributing to the costs of its erection. The cathedral at Rouen was held in special honour by the early Plantagenet Kings of England. King John in his charter to it mentions the circumstance that Henry the King, his father, and Henry the King, junior, his brother, were buried therein.[2]

The archives of the Department of the Seine Inferieure contain other references to this manor, among which is a

[1] Cal. Rot. Pat. 29 Hen. 21 b.

[2] Dugdale, Monasticon Anglicanum, vi., 1118.

letter of the official of Rouen containing an inspeximus of several other charters, viz., the charter of Henry I., a charter of Richard Cœur de Lion confirming the previous charters, and a charter of Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, renouncing his claims over the manor of Bentworth. The deed of de Montfort is an interesting link in this chain of historical evidence, for it arose from his position as lord of the Hundred of Odiham, which had come to him through his wife, Princess Eleanor, sister to the King, Henry III.

The Hundred Court of Odiham had apparently retained some of its jurisdiction over the tenants of Bentworth until de Montfort's time. By such a release from suit and service of the Bentworth tenants at the hundred courts the archbishops obtained increased authority in their manor. They acquired thereby the full powers of a Court Leet, and could hold Law Days as well as the Hall Days of the Courts Baron, or manor courts, at Hall Place.

The wars between England and France, however, interrupted at times the peaceable possession of the manor and the Archbishop's presentations to this church. Thus in the 26th Edward I., as shown by the Patent Rolls,[1] the King presented Richard Wodelok to the chaplaincy of the church of Bentworth by reason of the lands of the Archbishop of Rouen being in the King's hands. Richard de Wodelok was a man of considerable note. He was presented here in 1298. In 1306 he was chaplain to William, Cardinal of St. Pudentiana as well as Rector of Bentworth and Milxelham. In that year he obtained a dispensation from the Pope to hold both these benefices, and on resigning them to accept two others.[2]

During the war with France in the troublous reign of Edward II., the King granted the custody of the Manor of Bentworth to Peter de Galician,[3] in whose keeping it remained until February 12th, 1327 (1st Edward III.), when the Close Rolls show the King ordered the Treasurer and Barons of the Exchequer to restore to the Archbishop of Rouen all his lands, tenements and advowsons, &c., of the power of the

[1] Cal. Rot. Pat., 26th Edward I.

[2] Cal. Entries in the Papal Registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland, vol. ii., p. 6.

[3] Abbrev. Rot. Orig. Cal. II., p. 284.

King of France "in our kingdom," which the Lord Edward, late King of England, had taken into his own hands by reason of the war between himself and Charles, the illustrious King of France. The Close Rolls state also that this restitution was made with the assent of the prelates, earls, barons, and other magnates "in this present Parliament assembled."[1]

In 1331 the parson of the Church of Bentworth was a foreigner, apparently an Italian, named John de Luco Bono, who is mentioned in the Patent Rolls, 5th Edward III. The same rolls show that three years later a new Rector held the benefice, named Nicholas de Ak, who is described as King's Clerk. He obtained from the King a ratification of his estate as parson of the church of Bentworth in the Diocese of Winchester, of the patronage of the Archbishop of Rouen, notwithstanding any rights of the King therein by reason of the voidance of the See, or the temporalities of the same being in the hands of him or any of his progenitors, sometimes Kings of England.

In the same year (1334) Nicholas de Ak (or Dak), parson of the Church of Bynteworth, is mentioned again in the Patent Rolls as one to whom the King granted letters of protection on his going beyond the seas on the King's service, in the retinue of John, Archbishop of Canterbury.

Among the records of taxation of churches and parishes in the 13th and 14th centuries we find several references to Bentworth.

In the taxation of Pope Nicholas in 1291 Bentworth Church was assessed at £17 6s. 8d., and paid a tax of £1 14s. 8d. At that time there was also a pension or other source of revenue, perhaps a chantry, of the annual value of £5 6s. 8d., which paid 10s. 8d. as tithe to Pope Nicholas's tax. Fifty years later, when an inquisition was held in this parish to assess the value of tax known as the ninth, granted by the clergy to the King, the ninth in 1341, being considered to be equal to the tenth in 1291, the ninth of sheaves, wool, and lambs in Bentworth was assessed by the jury then summoned at £6 5s. 8d., but they declared that it fell short of this amount because by their reference they had to declare the ninth in 1341 as equivalent to the value of the tithes in 1291,

[1] Close Rolls, 1st Edward III.

and the church in 1341 possessed a house, a carucate of land, four acres of meadow, and two acres of wood worth per annum 60s., and 18s. 4d. rent, and also 3s. 2d. from services due on account of certain tenements. The names of the parish jurors were Augustus de Berkham, Peter le Yonge, Roger de Nonnhampton, William Gervays, Henry de Merewell, and John atte Slade. Two of these names, Augustus and Gervays, are probably of French origin, due to connection with Rouen. The same jury declared that the tenth of hay, fruit, and other small tithes, with the oblations and mortuaries of this church, were worth £7 1s. per annum.

In the taxation of parishes in 1334, for the purposes of Edward III. and his wars, Bentworth was taxed at 59s. 6d., and this was the fixed amount it continued to pay for the tax known as the 10th and 15th for several centuries.

Towards the end of the period of the connection of Bentworth with the archbishopric of Rouen, a notable man was connected with this parish, named Master Richard de Bentworth. In the Obedientiary Rolls of the priory of St. Swithun, published by Dean Kitchin, he is described as Master Richard de Bynteworthe, Esq. He is also styled M.A., and hence his title of Master. He was employed on the business of the priory about this time, and went on a mission for it to the Archbishop of Canterbury. A few years later, viz., in the 2nd Edward III., he is described as King's clerk and prebendary of Lincoln. The Patent Rolls of that year contain an entry of his presentation to the prebend of Stone in the King's free chapel of Hastings, on an exchange of prebends. He was a man evidently in favour with the King. In 1335, he was granted letters of protection on going beyond the seas on the King's service,[1] and in the autumn of the same year he was presented by the King, who was then at Roxburgh, to the archdeaconry of Ely, by reason, as the record says, "of the voidance of the see of Ely"—a curious mistake,[2] caused by the report which had reached Edward III. that the Bishop of Ely had died. On November 25th, in the same year, this appointment was cancelled, and the Patent Rolls contain an entry of that date, revoking the grant

[1] Cal. Rot. Pat., 9th Edward III., 154.
[2] Cal. Rot. Pat., 9th Edward III., 176.

to Master Richard de Bynteworth of the archdeaconry, "which was made by the King in the belief that the temporalities of the see were in his hands by the death of John, Bishop of Ely, whereas the said John was then and is now alive."[1] Master Richard was promoted, however, to be prebendary of Salisbury and Professor of Civil Law, and in the next year he was again sent abroad on the king's service.

There are various other entries in the records relating to the archbishops of Rouen and this manor of Bentworth in the 13th and 14th centuries.

In the reign of Edward II., W., archbishop of Rouen, made fine with the king for the confirmation of his charter,[2] and in the 5 Edward III. it is recorded that the King received the oath of fidelity of the venerable father, Peter, archbishop of Rouen, on account of the temporalities which he held in England.[3]

The wars and rumours of wars between England and France were, however, too frequent for the peaceable possession of Bentworth by a foreign prelate, and the Archbishop had evidently resolved to transfer the manor early in the reign of Edward III. From an entry in the rolls of the 9th year of that king it appears that Edward III.[4] actually issued a licence to the Archbishop to transfer the manor to Master Richard de Byntworth, to be held by him and his heirs on paying into the Exchequer annually the small sum of six shillings and eightpence. This transfer, however, was never effected, for a similar entry follows it very closely, by which the same Archbishop of Rouen was allowed to transfer the manor to the Archbishop of York, on the same easy terms as regards the acknowledgment to be paid to the Exchequer.[5]

During the wars of the early part of the 14th century between England and Franee this manor must have been indeed a very uncertain possession for the Archbishops of Rouen. It could not be expected that the English kings would allow, under such circumstances, the revenues of an

[1] Cal. Rot Pat., 9 Edw. III., 191.
[2] Abbreviatio Rotulorum Originalium I., 274.
——— ibid ——— II., 57.
[4] Abbreviatio Rotulorum Originalium II. 94.
[5] Ibid—II. 96.

English manor to be sent to France, where such funds formed part of the temporalities of the archbishopric, and might be taxed or otherwise used by the French kings in their wars against this realm. Consequently we find, as I have mentioned, that early in the reign of Edward III. negotiations were in progress for its transfer, and terms were agreed to between the Archbishop of Rouen and the Archbishop of York. In 1335, the 9th Edward III., William, Archbishop of York, was enfeoffed by Peter, Archbishop of Rouen, of the manor of Bentworth, the advowson of this church, and with the other possessions in England of the Archbishop or of the Dean and Chapter of Rouen. The French Archbishop transferred to his brother prelate in England what the political circumstances of the time had rendered an uncertain source of revenue. We are not aware what terms were made between the two prelates, but a royal licence was necessary, and apparently the matter was somewhat hastened as far as the Archbishop of York was concerned, for in the Patent Rolls, 10th Edward III., there is a record of a "Pardon to William de Melton, Archbishop of York, for having acquired in fee from Peter, Archbishop of Rouen, the manor of Byntesworth, in the county of Southampton, and entered upon the same, before the 9th July, 9th Edward III., the date of the letters patent, whereby the King granted licence for the latter to enfeoff him of the same, and restoration of the manor to him."[1]

William de Melton, who thus became lord of the Manor of Bentworth, was elected Archbishop of York in 1316. He went abroad, and was detained for over 18 months at Avignon before he could procure papal confirmation owing to the death of Clement V. He was consecrated September, 1317, by Pope John XXII., at Avignon. On returning to England he had his archiepiscopal cross borne before him, in the southern province as he passed through Kent to London. This gave great offence to Archbishop Reynolds, of Canterbury, and a long dispute ensued. Archbishop de Melton died in 1340, and was buried near the font in York Minster. His tomb was opened during the last century, when his skeleton, about six feet long, was found.

[1] Cal. Rot. Pat. 10 Edward III.

He was one of the builders of York Minster. He gave £700 towards the completion of the nave. The west end of the Cathedral and the two western towers were erected in his time.

It is probable that it is his statue which is, or was, in the niche over the great doorway of York Minster.

Archbishop William de Melton held the Manor of Bentworth, not as the prelates of Rouen, but personally as a fee, directly from Edward III., to whom he had rendered many services, so that he had sufficient influence with the King to enable him to advance his own estate. His public work began early in the reign of Edward II. He had rendered important service to the State, of which a royal licence to hold this manor was perhaps an acknowledgment. He had officiated at the marriage between Edward III. and his queen Philippa. On his death in 1340[1] his estates passed to his nephew, Sir William de Melton, Knight, the founder of the Yorkshire family of that name, and these estates included the Hampshire manors of Kingsclere and Bentworth. Sir William was enfeoffed of his Hampshire manors on different terms to those on which they were held by his uncle, the Archbishop of York, Bentworth being now held by the defence of Winchester Castle,[2] by which tenure it continued to be held for at least two centuries. Sir William de Melton died in 1363, and his son, another Sir William Melton, died in 1399.

From the de Melton family the manor passed for a time to the Wyndsor family, apparently by the marriage of Alicia, wife of Milo de Wyndsor, in the reign of Richard II.[3] It was held by the Wyndsor family until the death of another Milo de Wyndsor in 30th Henry VI., when it again reverted to the Melton family. Sir John Melton, senior knight, died seised among other possessions of the Manor of Bentworth and the advowson of this church, in 33 Henry VI., and his son, Sir John Melton, Knight, died seised of the same manor in 14th Edward IV. That brings us to the year 1475. After

[1] Cal. Inquis. post mortem Edw. III., vol. ii., 62.
[2] Ibid, 22 Edw. III., vol ii., 147.
[3] Cal. Inq. p.m. 10 Ric. II., vol iii., 88.

his death Bentworth was held by his widow Cecilia, who died in 1485, the date of the battle of Bosworth.

Apparently the advowson of the church was retained by the de Meltons as long as their connection with the manor lasted, and was not held by any of Wyndsor family.[1] I have not traced further the descent of the manor.

The State papers of the time of Henry VIII. contain some reference to Bentworth which give us a vivid glimpse of ecclesiastical affairs in this parish during the year 1539. The rector at that time was named John Palmes, who was also rural dean of Alton, and who was afflicted with blindness. In the fierce religious controversies of that time he became prominent as a local leader of ultra Protestant opinions. The State papers contain four of his letters addressed to Cromwell, the Secretary of State.

The first is dated at Bentworth, 22nd January, 1539,[2] in which Mr. Palmes, writing to Cromwell, considers that the King's letters patent have delivered him from all bondage brought into Christ's Church by the usurped power of the Bishop of Rome concerning his benefice, the parsonage of Bentworth. As these letters do not forbid marriage specially to those who have neither taken the holy orders, nor avowed the contrary, he has married, for which he is called into the Bishop of Winchester's Court by a citation *ex officio*. He looks for little favour, and offers to resign his benefice. He says he has to answer on Candlemas Eve.

The second letter is dated from Bentworth, 2nd February, 1539,[3] and in it the rector of this parish "appeals to Cromwell as Paul appealed to Cæsar," or else, as he says, the usurped power and unequal laws of the Bishop of Rome openly preached against by him, almost alone in these parts of Hampshire, will be heavily laid upon his neck. The whole of the contents of the letter cannot be quoted, but he says he has to appear at St. Mary Overies the Saturday after Ash Wednesday. He says it is accounted a great triumph to suppress and tread under foot a poor blind man, neither

[1] Cal. Inquis. post mortem 14 Edw. IV., vol. iv., 367.
[2] Letters and Papers temp. Hen. VIII., vol. xiv., I. 120.
[3] Ibid, vol. xiv., I. 206.

offending God nor his prince. He asks Cromwell to take the benefice if it cannot stand with the Divine ordinance.

The third letter is dated from Wytheford, 1st March, 1539,[1] and in it the late rector of this parish, John Palmes, writing to Cromwell, says that he has this year and more showed him (Cromwell) the wrongs committed against himself by the Bishop of Winchester and his officers. Neither Cromwell's letter nor Palmes' labour was regarded. His cousin Coke, with gentlemen and farmers of Sir John Wallop's tenants, assembled on St. Matthias even last, and inducted as parson of Bentworth the quondam Abbot of Beauley. They entered the parsonage with violence, sealed the barn doors, and hired men to jangle and ring the bells, above all measure and custom of a charitable induction. Mr. Palmes says that his name and estimation are clean lost and destroyed. He says that his said cousin afterwards came to the Angel, of Basingstoke, and said he would make Palmes a notable example to all the shire. He invokes God's help.

The fourth of these letters written by John Palmes to Cromwell is dated from Bentworth 30th April, 1539.[2] In it he complains that he has been deprived of his deanery of Alton by John Coke, Registrar of the Bishop of Winchester, for being married. He begs to be admitted to a lecture of Scripture in the church of Bentworth. The letter is signed, "Your blynd man, JOHN PALMES."

It is difficult to understand all the ecclesiastical shades of politics of that time, or the various contentions and opinions which prevailed. Thomas Stephens, the last abbot of Beaulieu, who in February, 1539, was inducted into the rectory of Bentworth, when the blind man Palmes was discomfited, does not appear to have been an active supporter either of his order or his abbey. He had previously been abbot of Netley, and had been transferred to Beaulieu, in March, 1536, on the death of Abbot Browning, of Beaulieu. This transfer had no sooner been effected than Netley was suppressed, and the Netley monks removed to Beaulieu; but

[1] Ibid, vol, xiv., I. 412.
[2] Letters and Papers temp. Hen. VII., Vol. xiv., I., 890.

the end was in view for them all. In February, 1539, it had come, and Abbot Stephens, styled in the registers "Capellanus," was instituted to the rectory of this parish, with much jangling and ringing of the bells, as described by his blind discomfited predecessor.

In addition to these fragmentary notes on Bentworth, there is one other subject connected with its antiquities which I must not omit—viz., its inn signs. They are all of an astronomical character—the "Star," the "Sun," and the "Moon."

The Star is an ancient inn sign, and occurs appropriately in Bentworth. In medieval time the star was an emblem of the Holy Virgin, who was styled "Stella Maris," or star of the sea, a little play on the words. I think the Star must be the most ancient inn sign in Bentworth, and refers to the dedication of the church, and also to that of the Cathedral of Rouen, both of which are dedicated to St. Mary. The Sun, or Rising Sun, was a badge of Edward III., and it may have had its origin as an inn sign here as far back as that king's time, when the change in the tenure of this manor occurred. The Moon as a sign here is probably modern.

The chief industries of Bentworth must always have been, as now, those connected with agriculture, but the surviving place names tell us something of other occupations now fallen into disuse. Such names as Colliers Wood and Nancole Copse point to the early operations of the charcoal burners, the colliers of the middle ages, for whose commodity there was a considerable demand before the use of pit coal became general—*i.e.*, before the 14th or 15th centuries. The names Windmill Field, Mill Piece, and Millburys indicate the site of one or more ancient windmills, by which corn was certainly ground here, seeing that no water power was available.

The common land of the parish was formerly extensive, 923 acres having been inclosed in 1799.

In conclusion, I have to thank the Rev. R. G. Davis for the help rendered in reference to this paper, and also that on Kingsclere, published in the Papers and Proceedings of the Club.[1] After the papers read at Kingsclere Mr. Davis

[1] Vol. III., Part 2.

wrote to the Archbishop of Rouen in reference to the former connection of the Dean and Chapter of Rouen with that manor, and received several communications on the subject from the Abbé Tougard, the Archbishop's secretary, and from the Keeper of the Archives at Rouen. At my request, Mr. Davis again communicated with Monsieur de Beaurepaire, the Keeper of the Archives of the Department of Seine Inférieure, and it has been through his kind co-operation that the records relating to Bentworth in the French archives, confirmatory of our English records, have been made known to me.

For the accompanying illustrations I am indebted to Mr. R. M. D. Lucas, who has kindly furnished the following notes descriptive of his drawings:—

ARCHITECTURAL NOTES,

By R. M. D. Lucas.

The period of Bentworth Church, *circa* 1170, is mainly Transi-tional, the Norman work of the nave and aisles merging into the Early-English of the chancel, while only the porch, vestry and spire are entirely modern.

There is a strong resemblance in plan, construction, and detail, between this church and those of the neighbouring villages of Medstead and Bighton, which points to their having been designed about the same time, and probably by the same hand. The architect, if not actually one of those whose taste and inventiveness guided the rapid development of Gothic architecture, must at least have been constantly in touch with them, and ready and able to assimilate each fresh idea and adapt it to the humble requirements of his district.

Of the three churches, that of Medstead, on account of its semi-circular nave arches, might be positively declared to be of earlier date, than the other two, in which the Transitional pointed arch is used; but the probability is that the largest and most important church, St. Mary's of Bentworth, was the first to be built; and in arches as in everything else, the natural law of reversion has occasionally prevailed.

BENTWORTH CHURCH, HANTS.

PLATE I.

The sketch from the South-east is taken from a point almost opposite to a beautiful Priest's doorway of the Early-English period, which, if designed by a local man, is enough of itself to prove Bentworth to have possessed a highly gifted artist. The bases of the shafts are water-holding, and the mouldings of the head are very rich with the play of well-contrasted lights and shadows, the latter obtained by the deep under-cutting which the tireless masons of the time so lavishly employed. The walls throughout are built of rubble stone, with squared quoins, and are faced with snecked flints. The roof is covered with ordinary tiles, such as are still made in the neighbourhood.

The tower and porch are striking features which greatly aid in the grouping of the building; the former has recently been refaced and buttressed on the South and West sides, while at the same time the timber belfry, with its graceful and original tracery and the short oak-shingled spire, were added.

PLATE II.

The interior shows the pointed arch of the Transitional period, used in the nave arcade both here and at Bighton; at Medstead, the arches, as previously mentioned, are semi-circular. The piers, bases, and scalloped capitals are very similar in proportion and carving in all three churches; these at Bentworth have been dwarfed somewhat by the floor being raised, and their stunted bulk makes the church look lower than it really is, while at the same time there are no high-set windows to light up the heavy timbers of the open roof. The East window of the chancel is typical Early-English, of three lancets under a pointed arch, delicately moulded and decorated with the dog-tooth ornament, in perfect preservation; and over the arch is a hood-mould, one terminal of which is destroyed, while the other, almost defaced, was carved as a head. In the jambs of this window are slender shafts, with moulded capitals and bases; and in the same wall, on the South side, is a most elaborate piscina, with a circular trefoiled head, the mouldings of which were once exquisitely enriched with two rows of dog-tooth ornament.

The very large and massive font at the West end of the nave is of the twelfth century, and its quaint pyramidal cover of carved oak, bears the date 1605. The interior of the tower preserves its ancient condition, but the pointed archway over the font was inserted when the spire was built a few years ago. The porch covers a plainly recessed and chamfered doorway, with a pointed head.

PLATE III.

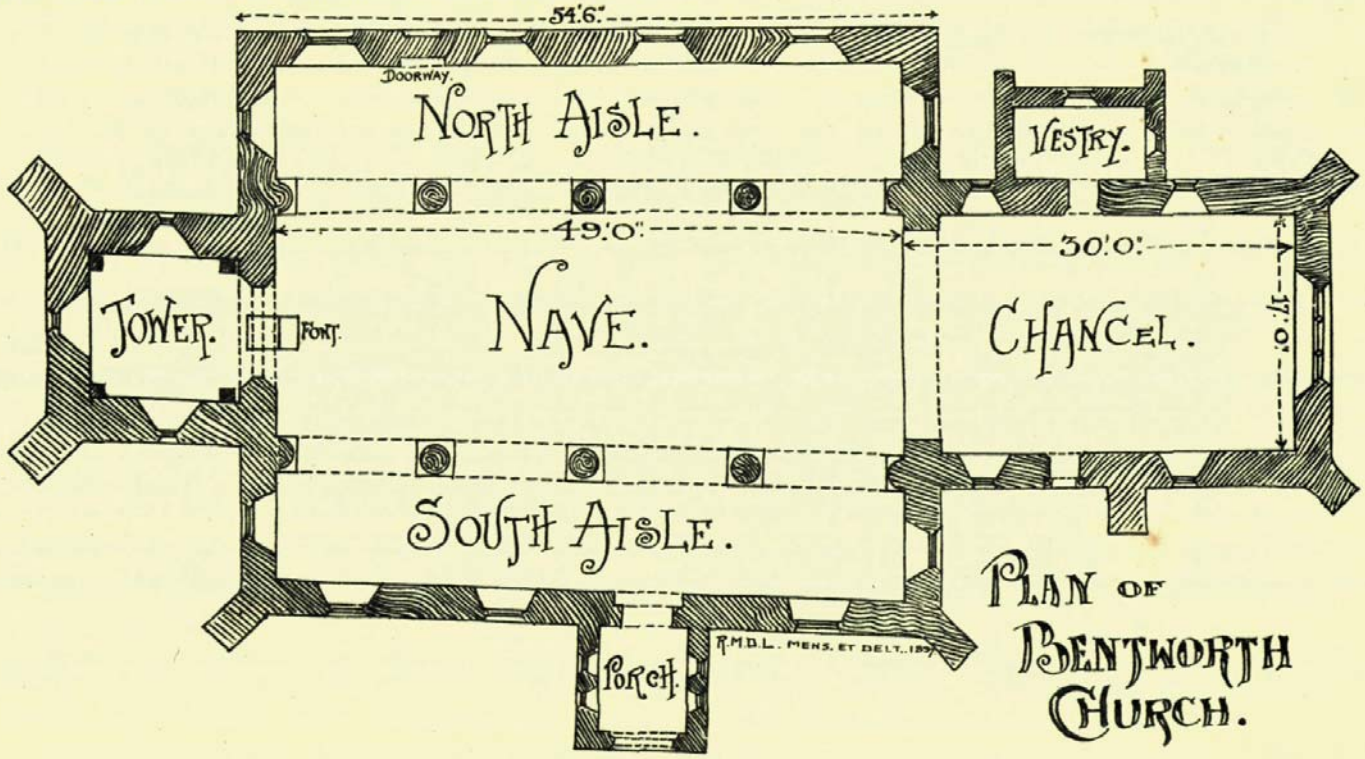
The above Plan shows the simple arrangement of the chancel; double-aisled nave; and tower. It is drawn to scale from measurements, but by hand, because of the irregularity of the building, of which no impression would be given were the lines ruled in straight and at right angles. Spaces, heights, and other dimensions vary, and the orientation of the chancel, nave and tower is not quite the same.

In view of the connection between Bentworth and Rouen, it is a matter of surprise that no trace of French influence should appear in any of the three churches with the doubtful exception of a small capital at Bighton, which has been built in with its shaft and base near the font. The base is of the ordinary early twelfth century type, with mouldings which will hold water; but the curious foliage of the capital has a rather French look, aided by the fact of the abacus being square, which in this country was a very rare form in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Two little shamrock leaves may be seen, apparently carved independently of the other foliage, as though by an afterthought. In all three churches the mouldings are of a distinctly English type, and the square East-ends are strong negative evidence against any French influence at the time of setting out the plans.

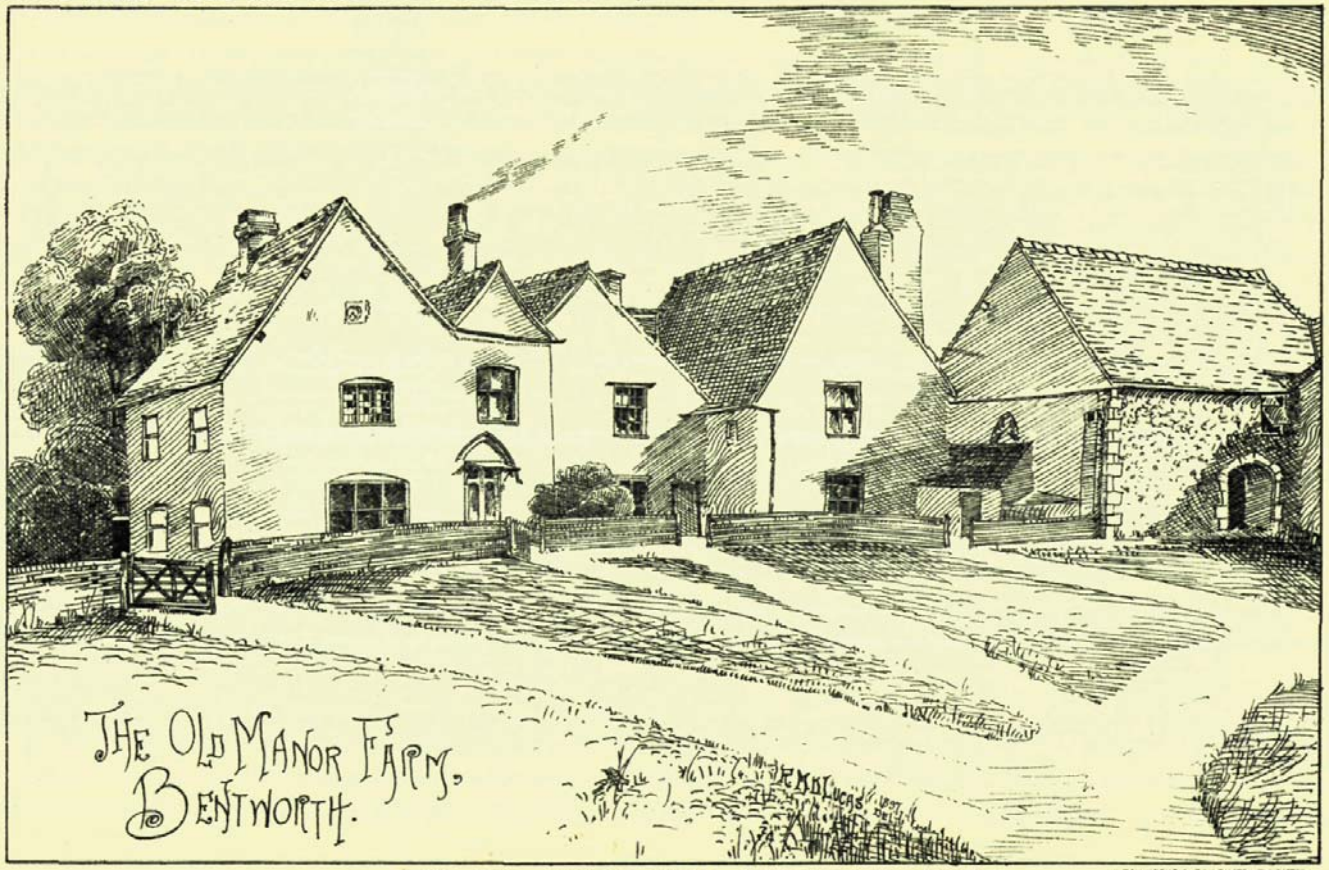
Bentworth Church, as a whole, well illustrates the rapid growth of architecture at a time when men were tiring of the ponderous Norman style; when each discovery tending to lightness was eagerly seized and applied with an unmatched combination of refinement, daring, and skill, which prevailed during the reigns of Henry II. and Richard I.

PLATE IV.

In the sketch of this ancient building may be seen fragments of a pointed arch over the porch, and, to the right, a



BENTWORTH CHURCH, HANTS, PLAN.



THE OLD MANOR FARM, BENTWORTH, HANTS.

J. TOWNSEND & SON PHOTO LITHO EXETER.

traceried window of what was originally the chapel, in the side wall of which a wide opening with a four-centred head still remains. Besides these features of the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries, there is another pointed archway a few feet within the front door, but hardly any other traces of the original building are now to be seen.

The construction of the house is very peculiar: it appears to have been at first mainly timber-built, the stone, rubble, and brick walls having been added at later periods. It is evident that the back and front gables of the highest roof (to the left in the sketch) formerly showed half-timbering externally, as the old beams are morticed for queen-posts and puncheons, which were afterwards removed, the walls carried up, and the roof lengthened about three feet at each end. On account of the plainness of the work, there is nothing to indicate the dates of these repairs or partial reconstructions, which probably were done at various times up to the beginning of the present century.