



S. HELEN'S CHURCH, WHEATHAMPSTEAD, S.E.

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**HANDBOOK FOR PARISHIONERS,  
VISITORS AND OTHERS**

(SECOND EDITION),

BY THE  
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TO PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL, &c.

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## PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION.

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So many visitors now honour us by their presence, and so few can appreciate what they see without some guide, that I have been asked to write a short handbook on our very interesting Church. I do this the more willingly because from the opportunities which I have had during the work of restoration in 1865-6, and since that time of becoming acquainted with its history, I am able to mention some facts, which might be lost if some record were not available. This Church has been the subject of papers in the transactions of the St. Albans Architectural Society, and others with the same object, as well as copious accounts in County histories, to which larger works I must refer those, who seek for fuller information as to monuments, pedigrees, and other matters. All I think it necessary to do now is to give a brief sketch of its history, explain what had to be done when we had the responsibility of restoring it, and take a walk round the structure. I am able to add a few helpful illustrations, for which I am indebted to the Secretary of the Harrow Archæological Society, Mr. Gardner, who has kindly lent me some blocks used in a description of this Church on a visit here of that society in 1901, which were taken from some larger drawings by my son, Mr. F. Trevor Davys, drawn to illustrate my paper on this Church published in the transactions of the St. Albans Architectural Society of 1898.

I can only hope that this little book may be useful to visitors, and may also help our parishioners more fully to understand, and value their noble inheritance of this beautiful sanctuary.

O. W. DAVYS.

*All Saints, 1908.*

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

I am glad to be able to provide the Second Edition of this Handbook, which has been called for, and also that so many friends and visitors have found the former one useful in their study of the Church, it is therefore reprinted much as before, with some footnotes added on points which seemed to require some further explanation, and a new frontispiece.

O. W. DAVYS.

*All Saints, 1912.*

CHAPTER I.

A Brief History.

The earliest date of this Church is remote, for from a record in "Doomsday Book," the survey ordered by the Norman Kings, the Ecclesiastical arrangements appear to have been long settled, so that a Church, with a Priest in charge of it, probably existed here from the days of the Mercian Sovereigns. Of this Church there are no present traces above ground, unless the rough arch preserved in the south wall of the south transept may be assigned to that period; but the north wall of the chancel stands on the old foundations and the foundations of the eastern apse have been discovered below the floor.\*

The reconstruction of the older chancel was not undertaken till early in the 13th century, when the apse was removed, and the chancel lengthened and widened, probably, from its *Early English* details, as soon as the century commenced.

We reach a certain date in 1290 when the present central tower, with its finely proportioned supporting arches, was built, for we learn from a record preserved in Lincoln Cathedral Registry, that the older tower being found to be dangerous, an "Indulgence" was granted by the then Diocesan, Bishop Oliver Sutton of Lincoln, to

\* See ground plan, Page 10.

enable the then Rector\* and Churchwardens to raise the money to rebuild it.

Before the rebuilding of the tower, the south aisle of the nave was added, apparently at the time of the enlargement of the chancel, and the proportions of its arches made to accord with those, which supported the older tower. The north aisle was added after the new tower, and the height of its arches was raised as much as they could be without destroying the symmetry of the structure. The north aisle is of early 14th century date, and porches north and south, and the sacristy would be added probably at this period, and the present ground plan would thus have been completed.

The Church, however, was greatly beautified afterwards by the insertion of rich window tracery. For this we are indebted largely to the Macry Family, of Macry End, who were great benefactors to this Church during the 14th century. Their work is usually marked with a leopard's head as the badge; this appears on the font, in the reredos of the north transept, and the stained glass above it, and may also be seen forming the boss of the vaulting in the canopy of the piscina at the high altar, and from the similarity of the work in the best period of *Decorated* style elsewhere in the Church, we may safely conclude that this important family had a hand in most of the additions undertaken at that time. The Macry family ended in Margaret, who married Hugh *Bostock*, and their son John became Abbot of St. Albans from 1420 to 1440, and was again re-elected from 1460 to 1470. Mr. and Mrs. *Bostock* were buried beneath the north transept in the Macry Chapel, and their brass is

\* The Rector at this date was John de Leycestre, or John of the Lee Castle, an important landowner, as well as Rector.

preserved there with an inscription by their distinguished son, of which more hereafter.\*

The changes in the Church after this period were not for the better. During the 15th century the roof of the nave appears to have been lowered, and a poor *Perpendicular* window to have taken the place of the original *Decorated* one at the west-end, while the aisle roofs as shown on the north side, were also flattened, though a good simple window in the *Perpendicular* style may still be seen in the wall of the south aisle.

A list of the Rectors given in "Cussan's History of Hertfordshire," and copied on a brass here, shows no break in the days of King Henry VIII., but amidst the convulsions of that period much injury appears to have been done to the Church, and it had suffered so much in later times, from decay and neglect, that its exterior was found practically ruinous, and its interior much defaced when its restoration was undertaken.

\* Many who read of Mackery End, associate the name with the visit of Charles Lamb, the Essayist, to that place, which occurred early in the 18th century. He went to visit his relatives the Gladmen's at Mackery End, and in his "Essays of Elia" he alludes to his first visit thus—"I can just remember having been there on a visit to my great aunt when I was a child." She was a Miss Bruton, Housekeeper at the Mansion, then tenanted by the Hawkins family. We may date this about 1780. When the Essayist made his second visit to his friends the Brutons, about 40 years later, say about 1820, he writes of it as to "The Farm House, delightfully situated within a gentle walk of Wheathampstead." At that time the Misses Sibley were tenants of the Mansion, their memorial tablet may be seen on the north wall of the Chancel, beneath the floor of which the worthy old ladies lie: the last of these three sisters died in 1850, at the age of 95, and their longevity is remarkable, their united ages numbering 277 years.

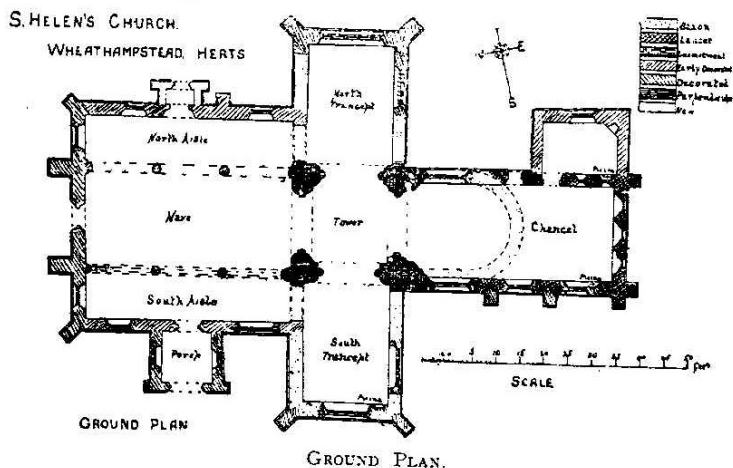
The Mansion occupies a site of great historical interest. We see a handsome Jacobean House, bearing the date on its north gable 1666; this is evidently an enlargement of a former one, which also was apparently a reconstruction of the residence of the Macrys. From this house the Abbot "John of Wheathampstead" wrote to the Prior of St. Albans, regarding the order of the Monastery, what was probably his last letter, dated from "My home at Macri End." He was then old and feeble and must have been some 90 years of age, for he died in January, 1465. He was the nephew of another important Ecclesiastic, John Macry, Prior of St. Albans Chief Priory, at Tynemouth, also called there "John of Wheathampstead," who lived to be a centenarian, and it has been thought that Abbot Heyworth, John Bostock's predecessor as Abbot of St. Albans, who afterwards became Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, was a relation of the Macry family. This Bishop appears to have lived to be 90, so that the longevity of these three distinguished members of the St. Albans Fraternity is remarkable.

Mackery End House and Manor are believed to have been purchased about 1558 by Sir William Garrard, Knight, of Sir Philip Boteler. Sir William had come into possession of Lamer in 1553, he was Lord Mayor of London in 1555. The present owner is Apsley Cherry-Garrard, Esq., of Lamer and Mackery End

Added  
in End  
edition

### The Restoration of 1865-6.

In the pursuance of this important labour we have been accused of making a new Church, but though some of the ruinous work had to be renewed, we were fortunate in finding traces of nearly all that was needed to guide us in reproducing the beautiful details of the various mediæval periods.



The Ground Plan could be left untouched, but the Elevation had to be restored by raising the roofs of nave and chancel to their original pitch, and the spire to its ancient proportions. For the first we had the marks on the tower; for the other, traces on the ancient timbers. New roofs internally and the reconstruction of the spire were a necessity. The transept roofs had retained their pitch, but were too rotten to leave, so that exact copies were substituted.

The windows were mostly walled up some feet from the sills, and the tracery much decayed externally, some so badly that it had to be taken out, laid on the grass and a new outside fitted to the inside, which, up to the glass line had fortunately escaped the ravages of centuries of rough weather. This enabled us to preserve much of the original work, which, being in the soft Totternhoe clunch-stone had suffered terribly, though wherever that old stone could be safely left we were careful to do so. The whole exterior of the Church, except the Tower, was covered with modern plaster, and the decayed buttresses were mended with brick, slate, or anything else that was "cheap and nasty"; happily their lines could be traced, and could be accurately reproduced. The South Porch had been filled up level with the ground outside, and was lengthened to receive a fire engine, but fortunately both its entrance arches were preserved. The North Porch was gone altogether, and the only entrance to the nave was by the west door, which was covered by a modern porch, with recesses at the side filled with coals, and the sexton's tools. This was removed and the fine western door renovated.\* Of new work fortunately not much had to be built; of this, the north porch was the chief, though the north wall and window of the north transept were found to be so terribly cracked that they had to be taken down and rebuilt; happily the rest of the walls of the Church were sound, and we had only the west window tracery entirely to renew, but while working from a good example, we happily found that the late window we were removing had been worked on the old stones, and that we had the good fortune to be carrying out the original design.

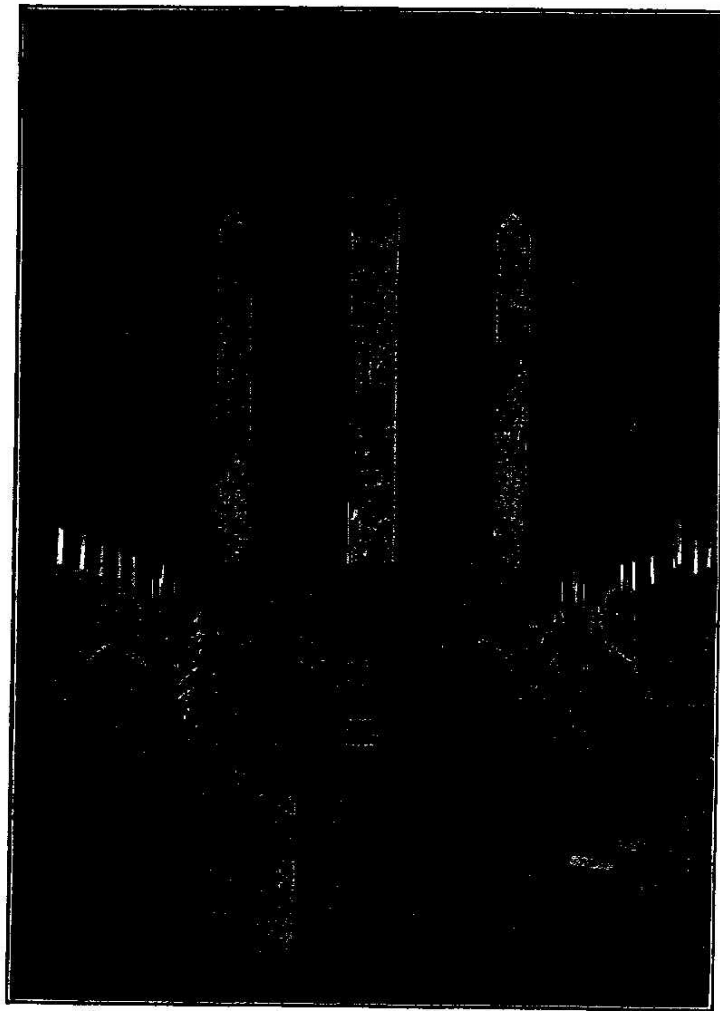
\* Some photographs, and colored pictures, now in the Vestry will give some idea of things as we found them.

*Added in 2nd edition  
- moved from p. 17*

CHAPTER III.

**The Restoration of 1865-6.  
Restoration of the Interior.**

We were more fortunate here, for the work being preserved from the weather, the stone when cleaned of whitewash, and renovated where injured by monumental tablets or otherwise, appeared as when it left the hands of the ancient builders. We had however much to do with the wood work. First the nave and chancel needed new roofs, which were admirably designed by our Architect, the late Mr. Edward Browning, the chancel's half octagonal ceiling being beautifully painted from his designs by the late Mr. Lee of Lutterworth & Manchester, for there were evidences of this kind of decoration having been used in the ancient chancel. Then as to the pews, they were of every size, shape, and colour, and the only trace of the ancient seats was fortunately found in a standard, cut in two and used to support the seat in one of the pews. This discovery enabled us accurately to reproduce the ancient sittings in the nave. Some old "Poppy Head" standards, found under the gallery, showed the character of the ancient choir stalls, which have been reproduced from these, and the stalls of the once Collegiate Church of Irthlingborough, Northamptonshire, a Church like this connected with Lincoln. The north transept was filled with seats dated 1631, brought from



INTERIOR OF CHANCEL LOOKING EAST.  
WITH EASTER DECORATIONS.

the Lamer Chapel when disused; they formed pews of enormous height and size, but were re-arranged in their present position, with much skill, by our contractors, Messrs. Thody & Clayton, of Cambridge, with the full approval of the late Charles Bennet Drake-Garrard, Esq., while a fine piece of renaissance work, which had been the front of the gallery was used as a low screen under the tower arch. The south transept was seated with all old remains of any value in the seats of the Church, with the old altar rails forming a front to them. We were most fortunate in obtaining for the nave and chancel seats, old oak brought from Addenbrooke's Hospital, at Cambridge, which our contractors were then rebuilding, so that our restored seats and stalls looked old at once. The floors were laid with Broseley tiles, those used in the octagon formed by the tower arches and stone seats, and in the sanctuary, the chancel, and altar steps, being most tastefully arranged by our Architect, while floors of plainer pattern elsewhere were designed.

The bells, six in number, have to be rung from the pavement of the tower, there not being sufficient height for a ringing floor above it. They were cast by Phelps of London, and were found in a very bad state. They were restored and carefully rehung in 1885, by the late Mr. Mallaby, two being quarter turned, while the tenor and three other bells were recast by Messrs. Warner & Co., and tuned to the older two, so that the original harmonious chimes were preserved.

It may be of interest to note here the inscriptions on the bells. The Latin one on the 5th bell, being evidently contracted and corrupt, has been conjecturally emended by Canon Papillon, of St. Albans, whose translation is appended.

Added in  
2nd  
edition

TREBLE BELL.—"Thomas Crouch Gent., Benefactor towards these six bells. R. Phelps, Fecit 1717."

2ND BELL.—"R. Phelps, Fecit 1717, recast by John Warner & Sons, London 1885."

3RD BELL.—"R. Phelps, Fecit 1717."

4TH BELL.—"R. Phelps, Fecit 1717. Recast by John Warner & Sons, London, 1885."

5TH BELL.—"Recast by John Warner & Sons, London, 1885."

HÆ CAMPANÆ QUINQUE CADDITO METALLO  
IN SEX DILATABANTUR MUNERIBUS DIVERSORUM  
COLLES STUDIO ET \* \* \* OPERA RICCARDI  
CROUCH GENEROSI. 1717 R.P. FECIT."\*

Translation.—["These five Bells were enlarged to six with additional metal by contributions gathered from different persons at the instance and with the help of Richard Crouch, Gentleman. 1717. R. Phelps, Founder."]

TENOR BELL.—"Recast by John Warner & Sons, London, 1885. Richard Wake, D.D., Rector. Richard Crouch, Gent., Thomas Street [Churchwardens.] Richard Phelps made me 1717. This Ring was partly recast and rehung A.D. 1885. Owen W. Davys, M.A., Rector. John Nash, John Ransome, } Churchwardens."

The organ was built and suspended on the north side of the chancel in 1866, by the late Mr. J. W. Walker, the structure then containing the "great organ." "The swell organ" on the opposite side was added subsequently, and in the year 1908, the whole was carefully renovated by Messrs. J. W. Walker & Sons, and a new pedal board of full compass added, with additional Bourdon pipes. A "Wald Flute" stop was added to the "great organ" a few years ago, and a "Clarionet" stop on the "great organ," has been the more recent gift of the late Mrs. Pretyman, in memory of her husband, Colonel Pretyman. We have been largely assisted in building what has been called by an expert "the most beautiful organ of its kind," by the late Earl of Cavan and others, while the work has been watched, and specifications suggested by Professor Villiers Stanford, and the Rev. Percenator Borissow.

\* CADDITO, perhaps C (i.e., CUM) ADDITO: COLLES, perhaps orig. COLLIS  
i.e., COLLECTIS.

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edition

## CHAPTER IV.

## ADVICE AS TO VIEWING THIS CHURCH.

## EXTERIOR.

The best view of this Church is from the south-east\*; there its fine proportions and balance of parts show to the best advantage. Observe the fine series of windows here brought into view, and the pitch of the roofs, that of the chancel, evidently an ancient choir, rising above the others. Observe the massive tower of 1290, with its original corbel table of the *Buckle* (Edward I.) ornament. Observe the spire, covered with old lead, now silvering, and notice its form—a broach pyramid supporting a slender octagon, or “Hertfordshire Spike,” the two brought together by spire lights. Good views are also obtainable from the north-west corner of the Churchyard and north-east gateway, where the proportions also show to advantage.

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\* See frontispiece.

## INTERIOR.

Stand at the west door and observe the ancient rose decorations in its head externally and internally. Observe the fine effect of the view looking east through the stately 1290 arches of the tower. Observe the fine 14th century font and the Macry leopard's head there with circular and square roses between half shafts, which are double-ellipse in form. Observe the south arcade with its low proportions and plain details to suit the old central tower, which was standing when it was erected, also the north arcade, slightly higher and built after the tower of 1290. Observe a recess in the north aisle wall for a tomb which must have once stood beneath it. Notice that the window tracery here is of the early *Decorated* type. Pass under central tower and observe that an octagon with stone seats is formed by its pillars. Notice on the eastern pillars the traces of ancient paint, showing the lines of a rood screen removed long ago. Also the door leading to its gallery from the tower staircase.

## Pass into the North Transept.

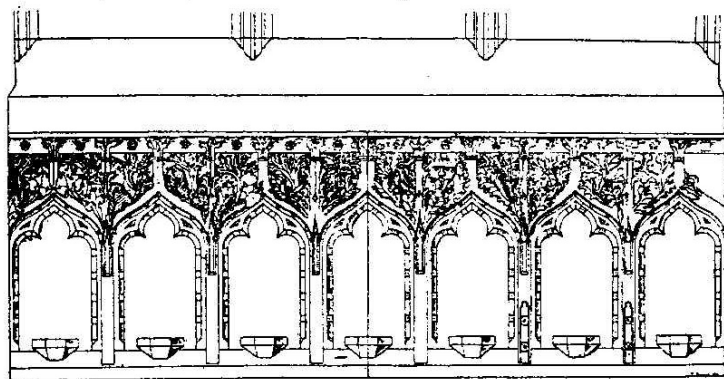
Observe its east window, found blocked up in 1865, with the beautiful reredos below,\* with the leopard's head showing here and in the glass found above it. This was the special Chapel of the Macry family (whose altar is said to have been dedicated to S. Nicholas), and the transept has always remained with the owners of the Macry End property. It will be noticed that this beautiful work was never completed, the artist having apparently been called

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\* See illustration on page 18.



away; we carefully left it as we found it when uncovered in 1865. Observe the brasses of Hugh Bostock and his wife Margaret Macry, the last of that family, described in monkish hexameters by their son, the Abbot of St. Albans, "John of Wheathampstead," as "the Father and Mother of the Shepherd of the Sheep of the Anglican Proto-Martyr;" also the quite perfect brass of the Heyworth's, to whom the Macry estates descended.



REREDOS IN NORTH TRANSEPT.

Notice also an interesting Heyworth monument on the east wall, illustrated in Cussan's "History of Hertfordshire," and a tablet by Thorwalsden, to the memory of a former owner of Lamer and Macry End. Also the large and fine monument with incumbent figures on the western wall; also those to two Lord Mayors of London. Notice also the seats formed out of woodwork brought from Lamer, when the Chapel there was pulled down, and dated 1631. The woodwork was

found arranged in huge square pews, and was re-arranged as now seen, by permission of the late Mr. C. B. Drake-Garrard.

### Pass to the South Transept.

We have here the original Lady Chapel; observe remains of chantry in the east wall, removed probably on the introduction of Sir John and Lady Brockett's fine tomb about A.D. 1558. Observe the remarkably beautiful arch and tracery of the east window, also the piscina beside the Lady Altar, where a fine reredos, ruthlessly destroyed, must have stood. This Chapel, having failed to be kept up by the Brockett's, whose property it had been, reverted, and became as it had been before, a part of the Parish Church. Observe the rough arch at the south end of the transept, presumably of early Saxon date.

### Pass to the Chancel.

Carefully study the beautiful *Early English* details here as seen in the mouldings of the eastern triplet; notice the avoidance of more than single shafts, and the knotting-up or foliating the side caps of the set, shafts being so difficult to make out of the short Totternhoe stone, and Purbeck not being available here. Notice the restored *Early English* windows on the north side; of these there was once a complete series of which traces were found when the walls were stripped of plaster, with the hood moulding from the eastern lancets carried over the whole, and ending in an angle over the westernmost stall. Notice

the sacristy door with the fluted "dog-tooth" ornament, repeated as a stop chamfer in the south nave arcade, showing that and the *Early English* chancel to be coeval. Notice the sacristy with priest's chamber over; this was built on to the older chancel north wall, for the external *Early English* windows were covered and preserved by it. Observe the great changes made here in the 14th century, the *Early English* windows on the side walls being replaced by *Decorated* work of singular beauty and unusual form. Specially notice the high altar piscina with its beautiful canopy, with credence and sedilia enclosed in the jamb and bays of the south sanctuary window. The Macry leopard's head is used in the vaulting of this exquisite canopy, and shows the *Decorated* work here to have been the offering of this munificent family. A "low-side window" is seen on the outside under the westernmost of the south windows, which was discovered and restored. The tracery of that on the north side is a replica of the eastern window of the Lady Chapel, though its arch is much plainer. Observe the difference of width in the splays of the tower arches, showing the enlargement of the *Early English* chancel to the south.\*

A remarkable tablet on the south wall of the chancel is interesting, it has the following inscription:—

In memory of Nicholas Bristow, Esq., who served the noble Princes King Henry VIII., King Edward, Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth. He died 1584 leaving issue by Emme his wife, the daughter of Sir John Barley, 8 sons and 4 daughters. Also Nicholas Bristow, Esq., his great grandson, Lord of the Manor of Lawrence Ayott, who died 19th April, 1626, he had by his wife Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Pindar, of Winchester, Esq., Deputy of Portsmouth, 6 sons and 7 daughters.

\* See ground plan, page 10.

Robert Bristow, died 8th March, 1670,  
Elizabeth his wife, died 9th Sept., 1690,  
William Bristow, died 2nd April, 1694,  
Elizabeth Bristow, died 16th April, 1722,  
Charles Bristow, died 9th Aug., 1727,  
and was buried in Ayott Church, where the Monuments are now in ruins, A.D. 1799.

Its last date, 1799, and the description of the *ruined state* of the ancient Church of Ayot St. Lawrence, would indicate that it was placed here as a record of those buried there, for safe keeping—Ayot Church being then left to decay, for we find that the new Church there was consecrated that same year. It is said that Nicholas Bristow named here, for his services at Court, for he was "Clerk of the Jewels" to Kings Henry VIII., Edward the VI., and to Queens Mary and Elizabeth, received a grant of the Monastic property at Ayot on the dissolution of St. Albans Abbey. A curious tablet on the west wall of the tower at Ayot, with figures of a husband and wife and their children, on which the inscription is lost, is believed to be a memorial of Nicholas Bristow and his family.

The larger monument, with recumbent figures there, is that of Sir Thomas Barr and his wife, who was the manorial tenant, and died at Christmas in the year 1421, he is believed to have been the builder of the Tower of Ayot Church.

Visitors may be interested in the stained glass here. The east triplet is the work of the late Mr. Hughes, of the well-known firm of "Ward and Hughes," London. The south sanctuary window is the work of Mr. Curtis, nephew and successor of Mr. Hughes. The triplets contain as their subject the Life of our Lord; the south window representations of the miracles of feeding the five thousand and the marriage in Cana. Mr. Hughes

Added in  
2nd  
edition.

was also the artist of the south transept window with the history of Joseph, and Mr. Curtis of the large north transept window with its subject of the Resurrection. The west and south windows of the nave are by Messrs. Heaton Butler & Baynes. The north nave aisle window is a beautiful work by the late Mr. Kemp, and the west window of the north aisle is by Mr. Douglas Strachan, and represents the Annunciation. The west window of the south aisle representing scenes from the Childhood of our Lord, is by Mr. Curtis. These windows which, with the exception of the eastern triplet, which was the gift of the late Mrs. Drake-Garrard, in 1866, are memorial windows, as shown by the inscriptions upon them. It will be observed that there is an addition to the ancient sacristy, which encloses the priest's door, restored in 1865 from fragments discovered. This was needed by the requirements of a choir vestry; it was added, from the designs of Mr. F. Trevor Davys, architect, as a memorial of the Diamond Jubilee of Her late Majesty Queen Victoria.

