

MANOR FARM, WESTON TURVILLE.

[BY MR. G. ELAND.]

The accompanying illustrations represent some interesting relics of the stately house which must have stood on the site at present occupied by a nineteenth century building. These, although unquestionably in situ, appear to have escaped the particular notice of the Victoria County History and even of the Historical Monuments Commission Report. This is probably due to the fact that nothing is visible externally; on the South side some of the vertical timbers can be seen, and the brick filling between them consists of rebuilt material of all dates, including many old, thin bricks. These timbers appear to form four bays of a hall lying to the east of the modern house.

The lower part of this hall forms the kitchen of the present house, an upper floor—reached by a narrow stair from the present kitchen—was introduced possibly in the eighteenth century, and was divided into three chambers, one of which was provided with a fire-place, the vent for which was found in the chimney built for the kitchen fireplace. This kitchen fireplace was made in the second bay, counting from the east: on the ground-floor a bread-oven remains to mark the position, but the present kitchen fire-place is on the west side of the room adjoining the modern house. Various windows were opened and possibly closed during the period of the window-tax, so that it is not possible to speculate as to the original fenestration.

The upper chambers were ceiled, and this unfortunately prevents the construction of the roof being seen, as there is no means of getting above the ceiling. Three pairs of curved and heavily-moulded struts spring from moulded wooden corbels, and presumably support the collars above the present ceiling; the easternmost brackets either no longer exist or are concealed by the modern end-wall. There are consequently four bays remaining of which the timbers referring to three are to be seen; they are 8ft. 8in., 9ft. 4in., and 8ft. 8in. apart, and the width of the span between the corbels



(1) MOULDED BRACKET OF ROOF-TRUSS AND WALL-PLATE ON NORTH SIDE



(2) DETAIL OF CARVING APPLIED TO WALL-PLATE; SOUTH WALL OF CHAMBER.

is 20ft. 10in., so that the original hall was about 35ft. by 21ft.

The most remarkable relic is, however, that furnished by the wall-plate, which is heavily moulded above and below, and bears applied carving of very bold design, as may be seen from Figure 2, which is sufficiently clear to make a detailed description unnecessary. It has been completely covered with plaster at some time, and it is only where this has become detached in places that the exquisite carving is seen to have been preserved in all its original beauty. The general design seems to be that which was in vogue in the early part of the sixteenth century; there seems to be no published evidence as to the probable date of the building, of which this beautiful fragment alone remains.

The manorial history of the parish of Weston Turville is somewhat involved, owing to various sub-manors having been created subject to the principal manor, which belonged to the Crown, or, rather, to the Duchy of Lancaster.

One of the sub-manors, known as Hide, belonged at various times to Robert Fitz Nigel, Sir Robert Whitingham, his brother John, and John's heiress—Margaret Verney. The Manor had, however, been sold to Sir Henry Colet, and the Verneys do not seem to have obtained it, although they petitioned Henry VII. for recovery of lands in this parish.

In 1485 the Manor was said to be held of the Verneys, but at the death of Sir Henry Colet in 1505 it was held of the King. It passed to John Colet, Dean of St. Paul's, son and heir of Sir Henry; by the Dean it was given (1576) to St. Paul's School, and the trustees of the School's lands, the Mercer's Company of London have held Hide since that time until recently (1919), when the Manor Farm was sold to the sitting tenant, Mr. S. Munger, together with the manorial rights.