

## BARN AT BLETCHLEY.

[BY THE REV. F. W. BENNITT.]

The building known as the Rectory Barn at Bletchley is of special interest. It has an early 15th century roof, and adjoining are two cottages built early in the 17th century. It is of two bays, and a third bay is incorporated in the cottages. The Historical Monuments Commissioners for Buckinghamshire say of it: "The barn has an elaborately designed hammer-beam roof of the 15th century; the main trusses are supported on large moulded uprights, the hammer-beams have carved heads, and are supported by curved struts, the upper collar-beams have curved struts forming an arch, and spandrels and space above the hammer-beams are filled by smaller arches. Between the main trusses are intermediate hammer-beams with carved heads, curved struts, and vertical supports to the lower purlins; at the level of the wall-plate is a moulded cornice."\*

The length of the bays (that is, the distance from one pair of principals to the next) is unusually short, being but 10 feet; on the other hand, the width, or span, is the usual  $19\frac{1}{2}$  feet. This, if it prove anything, is evidence in favour of the supposition that the timbers have been re-erected.

It is probable that the barn was originally the dining room of a house of some importance. At the beginning of the fifteenth century the chief room in the house was the Dining Hall, and was used for general social life. At the end of the Dining Hall were the other rooms of the house. Upstairs were bedrooms and ladies' bowers; downstairs were the pantry, buttery, still room, and wardrobe.

The Manor House of Lord Grey stood a mile away near the Ouzel river, and the residence was removed to Whaddon in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. The

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\* The Commissioners schedule this building as particularly worthy of preservation.

present barn shows signs of having been re-built; it is possible that it was the hall of the old manor house, and removed to its present position. The barn and cottages belonged to the Lord of the Manor till in 1861 they were exchanged for six acres of glebe.



*Photo by*

**BARN AT BLETCHLEY—FIFTEENTH CENTURY.**

*Walshams Ltd.*