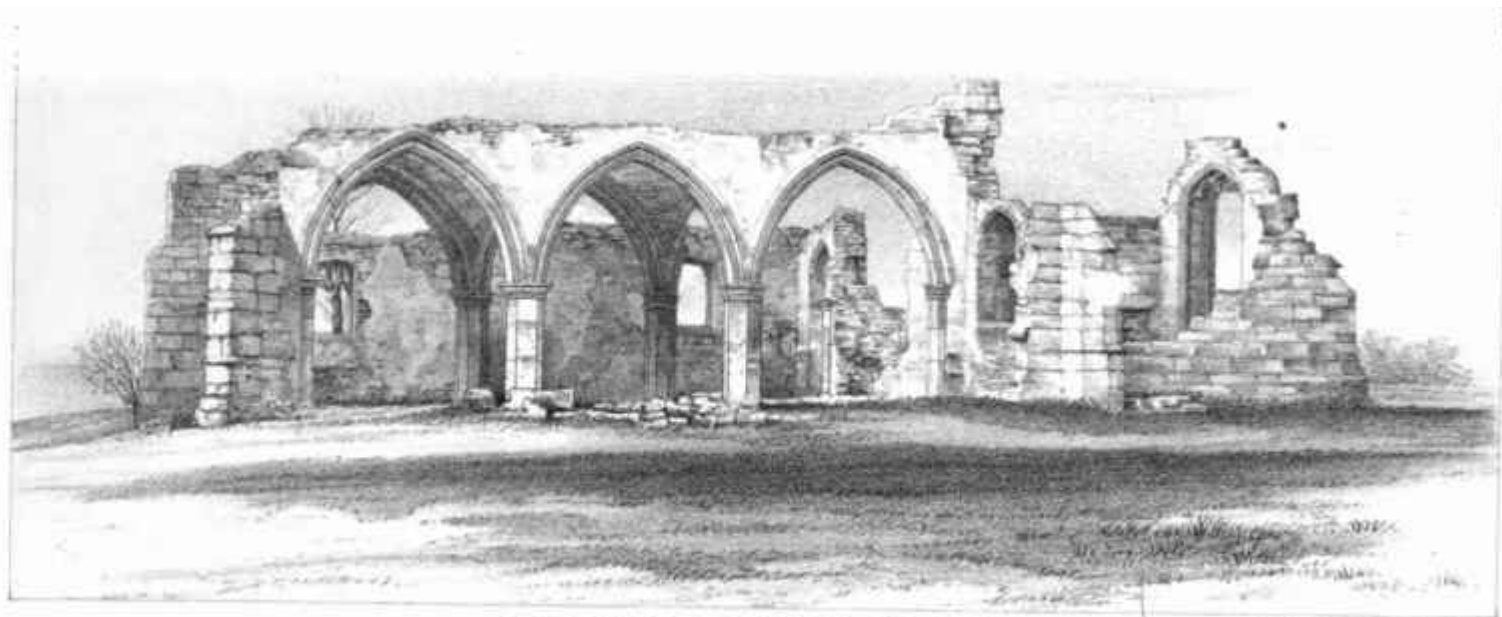


SUBSTANCE OF A LECTURE DELIVERED SEPT. 30,  
1858, BY ARCIDEACON BICKERSTETH UPON THE  
RUINS OF THE CHAPEL OF SAINT PETER, AT  
QUARENDON.

Before I enter upon the Ecclesiastical records of Quarendon, it may be useful to offer a few observations upon the history of the manor. The manor of Quarendon has never been sub-divided, but has always passed entire from one possessor to another. At the time of the Norman survey it was in the possession of Geoffrey de Mandeville; and from him it passed through various hands into the family of Lee. We find that family first mentioned in connection with this estate about A.D. 1450; and the property appears to have passed absolutely into their possession, in the time of Henry VIII. The family residence of the Lees was then at Burston, in the neighbouring parish of Aston Abbotts; though there was no doubt a residence before that time at Quarendon. Sir Robert Lee was then possessor, and from him the property descended to his son, Sir Anthony Lee, who was the father of the celebrated Sir Henry Lee, the Champion of Queen Elizabeth. Sir Henry Lee made Quarendon his principal seat, and built a large mansion here, on the site probably of former manorial residences. The spot may yet be traced by the irregularity of the surface, and by the remains of the moat by which it was surrounded. The house was no doubt of the usual style and character of mansions of that period, such as we distinguish by the name of Elizabethan. We learn from Sir Henry Lee's epitaph, a copy of which is preserved in Collins' Peerage, that he also founded a Hospital at Quarendon. Here he lived in great state and splendour; and on this very spot, on one occasion at least, he had the honour of entertaining Queen Elizabeth. A long account of the festivities is given in the third volume of "Queen Elizabeth's Progresses," where it is stated that "in the month of August, 1592, Sir Henry Lee was honoured by his Royal Mis-



**QUARENDON CHAPEL IN 1868.**

*Engraved by J. G. Green*

“ tress’s presence for two days at Quarendon, in the Vale “ of Aylesbury.” After Sir Henry Lee’s death in 1610, the estate of Quarendon passed to his cousin and next of kin, Henry Lee, who was created a Baronet. A later descendant of the family, Sir Edward Henry Lee, was (A.D. 1674) created Earl of Litchfield, with Viscount Quarendon as his second title. His grand daughter Charlotte became sole heiress, and by her marriage the property passed to Lord Dillon, whose son, the 12th Lord Dillon, sold it about 1802, to James Du Pre, Esq., of Wilton Park, near Beaconsfield, who is the present proprietor.

The Church or Chapel of Quarendon, which is dedicated to St. Peter, is stated both by Lysons and by Lipscomb, (the latter of whom gives Browne Willis as his authority) to have been founded in the 14th century, about 1392. This however, is a mistake; as there is evidence both from records, and from the fragmentary remains of the building itself, to show that its original foundation was much earlier than this. Amongst the published records of our Society, there is printed a copy of the instrument by which the Vicarage of Berton was ordained. The instrument was executed by the then Bishop of Lincoln, at Stowe; and it bears date 7th Kalends of December, (Nov. 25th) 1294. Previous to that time, Berton, Quarendon, Buckland, and Stoke Mandeville, were all of them Chapels of ease to the Parish Church at Aylesbury; and the ancient Churches of these places respectively were served by priests from the mother Church. In the document referred to, it is appointed that the Vicar of the newly constituted incumbency of Berton should have “ one “ Chaplain to minister in the Chapel of Quarendon, “ another in that of Bokeland, and a third in that of “ Stokes,” besides “ a priest dwelling with him” to assist him at Berton. It is therefore quite clear from hence that there was a Church at Quarendon at least as early as 1294; how much earlier we have no certain means of determining. The chancel arch, of which only a small portion now remains, is evidently very early, possibly of the 12th century, certainly not later than the beginning of the 13th. This is no doubt a portion of that building which was standing when the Vicarage of Berton was constituted. The greater part of the remaining portion

of the ruins is late Decorated; so that, if we had no other evidence to guide us, we should refer it to about the end of the 14th century. But if we come to enquire whether there are any memoranda about that period referring to the Chapel, we find that in the 1st year of Richard II., (A.D. 1377) license was given to "John Farnham, John Smith, and John Herbert, to assign a certain Chapellane "to celebrate dayly Service in the Chapel of Quarendon, "and that John Farnham might give the said Chapellane "and his successors a messuage and 2 yard land, and "John Smith give him a toft and messuage, and John "Herbert a toft and messuage."\* It is natural to conclude that John Farnham, by whose exertions a resident minister and a daily service were provided for Quarendon, was the same person by whose liberality the Chapel was at this time restored and enlarged. Nearly a hundred years had then passed since the ordaining of the vicarage of Bierton. The incumbents of that place had probably been unable to fulfil the conditions of the original foundation; the services at Quarendon had perhaps become irregular and infrequent—and the Church itself had suffered for want of repair; when John Farnham and his friends united to restore the building, and to provide a permanent endowment, so as to secure a daily service.

Browne Willis mentions a large monumental slab † which remained in his time in the body of the Church, upon which were an effigies and an inscription; and it is supposed with good reason, that this slab marked the place of interment of John Farnham, the great benefactor to this Church, in the 14th century.

There was another monumental slab at this time in the south aisle, the brasses of which had all disappeared, and which may probably have covered the remains of Richard Lee, who, A.D. 1499, "willed to be buried in St. Peter's "Church, at Quarendon, before St. George's image."

\* Extract by Browne Willis, from the "Patent Rolls."

† This slab was of marble, apparently Purbeck. A large fragment of it still exists, and forms part of the flooring of the cellar of the adjoining farm-house. The fragment is two feet nine inches wide, and the length of the perfect slab must have been about five feet. It contains the matrix of a brass in the centre, probably a figure—length, two feet, four inches; width at the elbows, seven inches. There were also four brass shields, one at each corner of the slab.



S.E. VIEW of QUARENDON CHAPEL,  
Buckinghamshire.



Interior VIEW of QUARENDON CHAPEL, Bucks.  
looking East.

We learn from Browne Willis, that in the 16th century, (about A.D. 1570) the whole of this district suffered from an overwhelming flood, which swept away about 3000 sheep and cattle, belonging to Sir Henry Lee, and did great damage to the Chapel. Sir Henry however renewed the building. In his epitaph already referred to, it is stated that "he revived the ruins of this Chappell." But judging from the present remains of the building, we should infer that the damage done by the flood was not so extensive as these words would seem to imply. The chancel windows were no doubt renewed, and perhaps the clerestory added at this time; but the greater part of the Chapel is evidently the work of John Farnham's time, and must therefore have survived this flood. The fabric, however, appears to have suffered greatly from neglect soon after the death of Sir H. Lee; and, like many other sacred edifices, it was probably injured during the civil wars; for Browne Willis informs us that it was returned in 1650, (Sir H. Lee having died in 1610) that "the minister of Bierton, to which this is a Chapelry, has £10 for serving it; but that it has had no service for many years, and is in ruins, and has no glass left, or bell in it." From a sketch of the Chapel, published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, in 1817, it would appear that the original flat roof of the nave had been removed, and a high pitched tile roof had been substituted. There was also at that time, at the western end of the building, and within the outer walls, a low square turret, or wooden stage, which is said to have contained three bells, two of which, (if reports be correct) were taken away during the civil wars, and the third removed subsequently to the mother Church of Bierton.\*

Even in the present ruined condition of the Church, we can clearly trace at least three distinct periods of architecture. The first—Early English, (perhaps transition Norman) in the remains of the chancel-arch, and in portions of the masonry, particularly the north-west corner of the north aisle. The second—late Decorated, which comprehends the piers and arches of the nave, the external walls,

\* External and internal views of the Chapel, as it appeared in 1817, are here given from the *Gentleman's Magazine*. The lithograph at the beginning of this paper is from a photographic view of its present state in 1858.—E.

and in fact, the greater portion of the building. And the third—the Tudor style, which appears principally in the fragments of the chancel windows. This latter portion was doubtless the work of Sir Henry Lee.

The east window of the north aisle was a very beautiful example of Decorated architecture; and enough of the tracery yet remains to enable us to reproduce the whole design. The four centered window at the east end of the chancel was well proportioned; and making due allowance for the defects of the architecture of that period, it must, with the stained glass with which it was enriched, have presented an imposing appearance. The hooks which carried the shutters to protect the glass may yet be seen in the external jambs of the window.

The dimensions of the building were as follows:—

Nave, 40 feet by 20 feet.

Chancel, 21 feet by 13 feet.

South aisle, 40 feet by 8 feet.

North aisle, 40 feet by 9 feet 9 inches.

Besides the two monumental slabs in the body of the Church, there were three monuments, or altar tombs, of the Elizabethan period, in the Chancel. One on the south side to the memory of Sir Anthony Lee, (the father of Sir Henry Lee) and Margaret his wife, daughter of Sir Thomas Wiat. Another magnificent tomb on the north side, to the memory of Sir Henry Lee; and another on the same side, with an alabaster figure of a lady kneeling. This monument is said to have been removed by order of the Bishop of the Diocese, within two years of Sir Henry's death; and regard for his memory induces us to draw a veil over the circumstances.\* The wife of Sir Henry Lee (daughter of William Lord Paget) and their three children, were buried at Aylesbury in 1594, and their monument is still to be seen in the north transept of the Parish Church.

These monuments, and many of the fittings of the Church were existing in the memory of several persons now living; and fragments of them, and of portions of the Church are yet to be seen in the neighbourhood.

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\* In the garden of the adjoining farm house, there are still to be seen the fragments of the carved figures composing these monuments. One of a female figure, probably that of Anna Vavasour, the other, that of a knight in armour, most likely Sir Henry Lee.



It is not known when this Church ceased to be used for public worship. In the *Magna Britannia*, published in 1720, it is described as a "disused Chapel." But it appears from the *Bierton Register Books*, that it was used for occasional services, long after this date. A marriage was solemnized here as late as Dec. 22, 1746, and burials have taken place occasionally till within the last fifty years, in the Church-yard adjoining, the boundaries of which have now disappeared!

A man named Robert Hinton, died last January at Quarendon, aged eighty-two years. His father filled the office of sexton of the Chapel, and he himself could remember having assisted at a burial at Quarendon, about fifty years ago; and he said that at that time service was performed there about once in two or three Sundays, as it suited the convenience of the then Vicar of Bierton. He could point out the line of the old road, which connected Bierton with Quarendon; and he kept possession of the keys of the building, until wanton persons broke in the door, and by degrees mutilated and carried off the monuments and fittings of the interior.

It is sad to see this ancient and beautifully proportioned little temple thus crumbling away before our eyes. Our first wish would naturally be to see it restored. But unless some future proprietor of the estate were to make Quarendon his residence, it seems useless to look for a renewal of the building. Such a work would now require a considerable outlay. Moreover, the scantiness of the population, (scarcely more than fifty persons) and the inaccessibility of the situation, at least in winter, form additional impediments to such a design. All that at present we can hope to accomplish, is to fence round these sacred remains, so as to rescue them, if possible, from further injury, and to arrest in some degree the progress of decay. About £50 would enable us to do this effectually. Will not the lovers of Christian archaeology assist us in preserving this interesting fragment, if not from inevitable consumption by time, at least from reckless mutilation by man?

E. B.

*Addendum to the Paper on BROWNE WILLIS.*—In the List of Willis' Publications at page 4, the writer can add, on the authority of the Rev. William Cole, "*The Genealogical History of the Family of Lord Percival*," 2 vols.; of which a few copies were privately printed. See Cole's MSS., vol. 32, folio 219.