

Wykeham Chancellor: Hempstead Church.

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Hempstead Church, which occupies a pleasant ascent looking to the south, consists of a nave, chancel, north and south aisles, and the Harvey chapel. The tower, unfortunately, collapsed about twenty years ago and hitherto has not been rebuilt. There is no noteworthy feature in relation to the exterior of the church, as the fabric has undergone very extensive restoration within recent years. In some instances the original stonework of the doors and windows has been replaced, but elsewhere it has been renewed. The east end of the chancel, including the east window, is of red brick - a remarkable feature about this part of the work being the extreme thinness of the bricks, they only average  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches, and rise six courses to the foot. At the moment, I know of no other example of work of this period where the bricks used are as thin as they are in this instance. The north door of the nave, which belongs to the Decorated period, is blocked up.

The destruction brought about by the collapse of the tower was very complete and only small fragments of the plinth on the north and south sides remain. Judging from the plinth mould and the existence of flint panel decoration it appears to have belonged to the fifteenth century or Perpendicular period. Large quantities of the stonework from the door, windows, plinth, string-courses and battlements have been



stored away in the vault under the Harvey chapel and it is to be sincerely hoped that, when sufficient funds are forthcoming for the re-erection of the tower, these pieces of stonework will, as far as possible, be re-instated.

The tenor bell still remains where it fell among the debris of the tower, but the other four have been hung in a cage at the east end of the churchyard.

Dividing the nave from the north and south aisles are two fine arcades of four bays each, the piers of which are quatrefoil on plan, with small hollow moulds running up at the point of contact between each shaft of the quatrefoil. These piers have boldly moulded caps and bases. Running round the arches are moulded labels, and in four instances these label moulds are terminated by well executed masks, the arches themselves have merely double chamfers running round. The date of these arcades is approximately 1320 to 1350. The roof is modern.

At the east end of the south aisle is a trefoil headed piscina of the Decorated period.

The east arch of the tower still remains but its effect is, of course, much marred by the brick walling immediately behind it.

The font consists of a plain bowl with chamfered angles, and supported upon a large central pier with moulded cap and base, and four small circular shafts at each angle, with correspondingly moulded caps and bases. It is a little difficult to assign an exact date to it, as the mouldings of the caps rather suggest later work, but in all probability it may be ascribed to the early part of the fourteenth century.



The roof of the chancel appears to have undergone restorations with the rest of the church, but care has evidently been taken to preserve the old stout timbers. In all probability the timbers date from the period when the east end of the chancel was rebuilt in red brick, and the three-light red brick window introduced into the east end. This would very probably be during the reign of Henry VIII. In the walling on the south side of the sanctuary is a piscina, and adjoining it what apparently is a second piscina, but probably the latter served the purpose of a credence, as there is neither drain nor basin.

On the north side of the chancel is the red brick building erected over the vault of the Harvey family, a portion of which, appropriated to the vault, is utilized for the monuments to the Harvey family, while the other apartment, in former days, was used as a schoolroom, but is now the vestry.

The large marble sarcophagus contains the remains of the famous Dr. William Harvey, the discoverer of the circulation of the blood; born in 1578, he died in 1657 and was buried in the vault beneath, but in 1883 the coffin was removed from the vault and placed in the sarcophagus, at the expense of the Royal College of Physicians. There are various other monuments to the Harvey family, but there is no occasion for me to recite their inscriptions. Amongst numerous members of this family who lie in the vault is Admiral Sir Eliab Harvey, Admiral of the Blue, Knight Grand Cross of the Bath, and Member of Parliament for the county of Essex, who died February 20th, 1830, aged 71. The vault is well worthy of inspection. It consists of two



chambers and contains some forty or fifty coffins of members of the Harvey family, the dates of burial ranging from about 1580 to 1650, when Admiral Harvey, the last of the family to be interred in the vault, was buried here. Most of the coffins are in a wonderful state of preservation, and in practically every instance there is an inner shell of lead containing the body. In some cases only the lead shell remains, the outer wood coffin having perished. At the further end of the second, or inner vault, there is a coffin of unusually large proportions, measuring nearly 8 feet long and 3 feet wide. Its occupant must indeed have been a son of Anak.

Amongst other objects of interest in the church is a Purbeck slab at the west end of the nave aisle, containing a handsome brass of a man in civilian garb, and dating from the early part of the sixteenth century. There is no inscription on this slab.

(9) On the floor of the chancel is another slab with an illegible inscription round the border. In Salmon's time (1740) it contained an inscription in Norman-French as follows:- "Dame Margerie de Ballingle giet ici, Dieu de sa aime git merci. Amen." Dame Majorie de Ballingle lyeth here. God of his love have mercy. Amen. I have been unable, so far, to discover the identity of this good lady.

In the chapel beneath Dr. Harvey's monument is a Purbeck slab (10) containing the brasses of a knight and his lady, and with shields of arms at each angle. The inscription has, unfortunately, been reeved, but I have been able to obtain a copy of it from Salmon's work. It is to the memory of Sir Thomas



Huntingdon and his wife, who was the daughter of Sir William Tyrrell of Beches in Rawreth, the which Sir Thomas died on November 5th, 1492. The brass of Sir Thomas is very fine, and depicts him panoplied in the armour of the period. As is usually the case at this time the head is bare, but does not rest on the helm. A collar, or gorget of mail, shows above the breast plate. The pauldrons, or shoulder pieces, are plain but massive; while the coudieres, or elbow guards, are very elaborate. The brassets and vambraces protecting the arms are plain. Over the cuissarts, or thigh pieces, the knight wears a skirt of mail, which became fashionable in the armour of this particular period, and above the mail skirt, and suspended to the taces, are escalloped tuilles. The genouilleres, or knee guards, which are laminated, are very elaborate, extending half way up the thighs and down the shin guards. The laminated sabatons have rounded toes, while gussets of mail protect the instep.

The details of the armour approximate very closely to those of the beautiful effigy of Lord Marney in Layer Marney church. The arms on the first escutcheon are those of Huntingdon, which are party per fess sable and argent, on a chief, 3 mullets, or.