



DORMITORY OR PRIEST'S CHAMBER



KITCHEN OR PARLOUR WITH BUTTERY

1888
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GODSFIELD CHAPEL HANTS

GODSFIELD AND ITS ANCIENT CHAPEL.

*The Substance of a Paper read before the Society at a Field Meeting,
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The Manor of Godsfeld was formerly extra-parochial, and is situated about two miles to the north of Old Alresford, in which parish it is now included. The manor slightly exceeds in extent 500 acres, with one house, formerly occupied by the farmer, but at present by a labourer and his family. Much interest attaches to an ancient chapel, the sole indication above ground of its former possessors, the Knights Hospitallers¹ of S. John of Jerusalem.

The name Godsfeld carries our thoughts back to a time when Christianity was first introduced into this country. We are reminded of an open clearing or field where persons assembled to hear the preaching of the Gospel, and dedicated the spot to Christian worship, in this instance it may have been to Christian burial, as places to lay their dead must have preceded buildings or churches. Between Gods-field and Gods-acre there seems to be an analogy, and similarity of name occurs at Godshill in the Isle of Wight, Godstone in Surrey, Godstow in Oxfordshire, and elsewhere. The chapel of which a notice will be found in Duthy's "Sketches of Hampshire,"² is 48-ft. by 18-ft. and in tolerable preservation. The builders of it were undoubtedly the Great Order of the Knights Hospitallers. In the middle of the 11th century the

¹Hospitaller (Hospitarius), a word only found in later Latin, in its literal acceptation means one residing in an hospital, in order to receive the poor or stranger.

²Sketches of Hampshire by the late John Duthy, page 127.

city of Jerusalem was in possession of the Sultan of Egypt, a follower of Mahomet; at which period great numbers of Pilgrims, both from the East and from the West were in the habit of visiting that city, and the sites or reputed sites of the Holy places. The Pilgrims from the East, many of them Greeks and often subjects of the Sultan, found comparatively few hindrances or obstacles in their path; arriving at Jerusalem they were permitted to build houses and provide accommodation in the way of rest and refreshment for their countrymen. The Pilgrims of the West however from England, France, or Germany, met with many disadvantages; as they had a much longer journey, tedious, expensive and often dangerous. Even if they overcame these difficulties and were permitted to reach Palestine, they would find the city of Jerusalem, the object of their hope, barred against them. If age, sickness or want of funds brought them into distress their condition was deplorable. The Mahometans would not admit them into their houses, their fellow Christians owing to internal disputes gave the scantiest sympathy. These insults and sufferings touched the hearts of some Italian merchants, who resolved to remedy so great an evil. Through influence at the Court of the Sultan they were permitted to erect a house of shelter in Jerusalem. They built a convent dedicated to S. John the Baptist and a church to S. Mary Magdalene, the one for men, the other for women. After this the number of pilgrims became larger, and the scheme of the Italian merchants grew and prospered.

In the year 1099 Jerusalem was captured by the first crusade; and wounded soldiers as well as pilgrims were added to the sympathy and care of the Hospitallers. Some of these objects of their care were men of noble birth, who, on their recovery, laid aside their weapons, and devoted themselves to the labours of the Hospital. Endowments in land and gifts of money came in rapidly. A necessity arose for some stricter bond of union for the better administration of the whole body; and the members were formed into a confraternity, or society of brothers and sisters, taking upon them the usual three monastic vows. A distinctive black dress was adopted with a white cross affixed to the left breast; the colour of the dress is said to have varied, being black in time of peace, red in war. The habit of the

brethren of S. Cross,¹ near Winchester, is derived from them, the Bishop of Winchester² soon after its foundation having placed that Hospital under the care of the Master of the Knights Hospitallers of Jerusalem. Pope Paschal II. (1113) and Baldwin, King of Jerusalem, granted many favours and exemptions to the Order, whose work increased and extended to other places beside Jerusalem. Hospitals were formed in nearly every seaport in Europe, and the hardships that used to beset the pilgrims were reduced or overcome. In 1120 a distinctly military character, which lasted throughout its history, was added to the Order. A new constitution was drawn up, and it was settled that there should be three classes of members, Knights, Priests or Chaplains, and Serving Brethren.³ At the commencement of the 14th century their enemies succeeded in driving them out of Palestine. They first went to Cyprus, then to Rhodes, and in 1523 made their last and final home in Malta. Soon after the commencement of the 14th century, through disputes and loss of discipline, the work of the Brethren was nearly wrecked. The Pope settled most of these matters by procuring the election of Elyanus de Villanova (Elyan de Villeneuve), the Prior of Venice, as Grandmaster, under whose

¹The form of cross worn by the brethren is called a cross *potent*, because its arms terminate in *potents*, the name anciently given to a crutch or walking staff. It is also called a *cross baton* and *Jerusalem Cross*, from its occurrence in the insignia of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, established by the Crusaders.

²Henry de Blois, in 1151, by an instrument solemnly delivers up the care of his Hospital, founded 1137, to the providence of God, and the administration of it to the Venerable in Christ the Lord Raymund Master, of the Hospital of Jerusalem, and his brethren in succession for ever. In 1197, in consequence of prolonged misunderstandings between Godfrey de Lucy, Bishop of Winchester, and the Hospitallers of St. John, a commission was appointed to investigate the case. The commission proposed that the Hospitallers should, for certain compensation (£30 annually for the support of the poor at Jerusalem or for home purposes) renounce the rights they claimed in connection with St. Cross. Henceforth the control of the Knights practically ceased, and in 1303 was formally relinquished by William de Tothdale, Prior of the Hospital at Jerusalem, Garcia de Lycia being Preceptor.—Humbert's "Memorials of St. Cross,"

³A manuscript rule of the Order, written towards the middle of the sixteenth century (M.S. Harl. 3,345) presents the following account of the arrangements, which it calls *consuetudo*:—"Fratrum nostrorum triplex est differentia alii enim sunt milites, alii sacerdotes, alii servientes: Sacerdotum in sacerdotes, conventuales et sacerdotes obedientia, Servientium in servientes armorum videlicet in conventu receptos—et servientes officii vel stagii."

administration the arrangement of the Order into the well-known eight languages or divisions was brought about, and each nation, or language, had henceforth its own duties and its own officers. The head-quarter of the English branch was fixed at Clerkenwell under a Lord Prior, who had precedence of all the lay Barons in the Parliament of England. The sieges of Rhodes and defence of Malta are events well known.

Before very long, the administration of Elyan de Villanova brought order into the affairs and unanimity among the brethren, the confusion which formerly prevailed so disastrously was allayed, and the Knights themselves were respected and honoured everywhere. The Companion Order of the Knights of the Temple was suppressed, and their estates forfeited; some fell to the Hospitallers, 1333, who, in turn, had to succumb. The time for this, however, had scarcely yet arrived, and Elyan de Villanova¹ had the wisdom and prudence to avoid open bankruptcy, and to delay, for a few years, the hand of the destroyer. With a view to estimating his resources, the Grand Master required a return to be made to him of all the property of the Order. This return, for England, was carried out under the instructions of the Lord Prior for the time being, Phillip de Thame, and bears the date 1338.² It contains many subjects of interest, especially as to prices in the 14th century, and from it we learn how widely spread were the possessions of the Order, whose estates were found in nearly every county. Under the head of Hants, three estates are mentioned—Godesfield, Baddeslee, probably North Baddesley, Runham, or Rownhams. Godsfield here takes the precedence. From this record we find, on the side of income, as follows:—At Godsfield there is a messuage, out of repair, with garden worth annually 3s. 4d. At the same place 300 acres of arable, 100 acres of which are worth 4d., 100 acres worth 2d., 100 acres uncultivated worth 1d. per acre per ann. Total 58s. 4d. Assessed rents which ought to be £20 3s. 4d., but at present, owing to the poverty of the land and the fire at Portsmouth³

¹ His death took place 1346.

² The Report forms No. LXV. of the Camden Society's publications, and is entitled "The Knights Hospitallers in England."

³ Of the fire referred to at Portsmouth and Southampton, Stowe relates that it arose under these circumstances. The 4th October, 1338, 50 galleys, well manned and furnished, came to Southampton about

and Southampton by the foreigners, only worth £14 10s. At Swarraton, one acre of meadow worth 2s. per ann. Value of labour of the serfs in harvest 10s. 6d. Fees and profits of the Manor Courts, 13s. 4d. There is pasture for nine oxen and six oxen or horses for ploughing, value of the pasture, per head 12d.=15s. There is also pasture for 900 sheep at 1d. per head=75s. Voluntary contributions from the neighbourhood usually estimated at sixty marks, but now owing to the poverty of the land, the pressure of taxation, the price of wool and other detriments worth no more than 40 marks. Omitting particulars referring to Baddesley and Runham, the total income of Godsfield reaches 100 marks and 7½d.

The total expenditure as computed for the three places, is thus given:—To expenses of the house, viz., the preceptor, the confrater, and other members, with hospitality to strangers as is provided by the founders, being 33 quarters of flour per annum, at 3s. a quarter, £4 19s. For brewing 20 quarters of barley malt, at 2s. a quarter, and 20 quarters of oat malt, at 16d. a quarter, 66s. 8d. Expenses of the kitchen, flesh, fish, and other victuals, 104s. Coats, cloaks, and other necessities for the preceptor and confrater, 69s. 4d. Radulph de Basing takes an annuity of 6½ quarters of flour, price 3s. a quarter, worth 19s. 6d. Coats for the steward or officer of the Manor Court, 20s. Coats for four servants, at 8s. a-head, 32s. Wages of the Woodman, 10s. Visitation of the Prior for four days, £4. Repairs of house, 20s. per annum. Stipend of the chaplain serving the chapel at Godsfield without commons, 4 marks. Certain charges to Bishop of Winchester, 12d.; to the church at Alresford,

nine of the clock and sacked the town, the townsmen running away for fear. By the break of the next day they which fled, by the help of the countrymen thereabout came against the pirates and fought with them, in the which skirmish were slain to the number of 300 pirates, together with the captain, a young soldier, the King of Sicily's son. To this young man the French King had given whatsoever he got in the Kingdom of England, but he being beaten down by a certain man of the country cried "Rançon." Notwithstanding the husbandman laid on him with his club till he had slain him, speaking these words, "Yea," quoth he, "I know well enough thou art a Francon, and therefore shalt thou die," for he understood not his speech, neither had he any skill to take gentlemen prisoners, and to keep them for their ransom. Wherefore the residue of those Genoese, after they had set the town on fire and burnt it by quite, fled to their galleys, and in their flying condition certain of them were drowned.

6d.; to Sir Richard Daundel,¹ 5s.; to Henry le Wayte,² 5s.; to the Abbess of S. Mary's, Winchester, 6s. 8d.; to the Prior of Clatsford, 6s. 8d.; to the Prior of S. Swithin, Winchester, 8s.; to Sir Thos. Querls, 1lb. of cummin, not valued. Total, 34s. 2d. There remains for the Treasury 54 marks, 10s. 3½d.

Signed by Brother William de Multon, Preceptor.

Brother John Couffen,³ Chaplain.

The result of this strict enquiry into the administration of the Order, coupled with the downfall of the Templars, and the transfer of much of their property to the Hospitaller was that ten years later, in 1338, the surplus of income beyond expenditure in England was £6,840.

As we have seen, Godsfield came into the possession of the Hospitallers by gift of the Henry de Blois, Bishop of Winchester, who died 1171.⁴ No document to this effect seems to be extant, but there can be but little question of the fact, since the MS. Cartulary refers to a grant (without date) by Walter de Andeley, which was made with the assent of Henry, Bishop of Winchester, and in his court and presence. There was no other Henry, Bishop of Winchester, but Henry de Blois, brother of King Stephen, until Henry Wodeloke or de Merewell, 1304-5. This fact, coupled with the confirmation made by King John, dated from Rouen, Aug. 30, 1199, in express words serves to show that the tradition as to the foundation of the house of Godsfield is correct. Walter de Andely in the grant above mentioned gives land between the two Buggenores, and 18 acres by Buggenore wood, held

¹ This name is variously given D'Audeli, D'Aundeli, Daundel, probably from Andelys near to Rouen.

² Henry le Wayte, 1324, made a grant of land to Wherwell Abbey. *Christiania Wayte*, 1364, was Abbess of St. Mary's, Winton. *John Wayte* was Chantry Priest at Alresford. *John Wayte*, 1400, was engaged in the building works, Winton Cathedral.

³ John Couffen had formerly been a Templar, and as such was in receipt of a pension from the Hospitallers.

⁴ Other benefactors were Radulphus de Domnere, about 1148, by deed without date, gave a garden at Dummer to Godsfield Priory.

In 10 Rich., 1198, Robert de Dummer, second son of Radulphus, was also a benefactor to Godsfield Priory—see Somerset Archaeological and Nat. Hist. Soc., vol. xvii.—1871, Taunton.

⁵ A preferable reading to Ruggenore, which the blurred MS. will allow, and Bugmore Hill and Bugmore copse adjoining bear witness at the present day.

of Chilton Candover. The same MS. contains a grant, 1207, made by Adam de Port, of land at Godsfield; also John de Ybesle, 1282, gives to the Hospitallers at Godsfield a rent of 12d. per annum. In 1372 Elizabeth, late wife of James de Wyndesore, held a messuage and five acres of land of the Warden of Godsfield.¹ In 31-32 of Henry VIII. S. Mary's Abbey, Winchester,² then dissolved, had an annual rent of 12s. out of lands and tenements at Godsfield. The lesser monastic houses, like S. Mary's Abbey, having been swallowed up, the King in 1540 appropriated the estates and property of the Knight Hospitallers. In the reign of Phillip and Mary an attempt was made to re-establish the Order, but this was forbidden in the first year of Elizabeth.

After the Dissolution the Manor of Godsfield got into the possession of Sir Thomas Seymour, but there seems some obscurity about his right to it, though the evidence shows it was certainly his for a time. This Sir Thomas was brother to Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset, Protector in the reign of Edward VI. The Duke returning from an expedition into Scotland found that his brother, created Baron Seymour, of Sudeley, the husband of the Queen Dowager, and High Admiral of England, had been concerting measures for the overthrow of the Government. He was therefore immediately arrested, and tried on the charge of high treason, and being found guilty, was executed 1549. The estate thus forfeited to the Crown was granted to Sir Wm. Paulet, Lord S. John of Basing and Earl of Wiltshire about the time that the last-named title was conferred upon him, 1550. He, or more probably his son, John, second Marquis, sold the property to Richard Knight, who held the Manor in fee. At his death (13th August, 1577), it descended to his son and heir, Robert Knight, who transferred the manor to Richard Beconsawe, who held it in fee till his death, 21st July, 1595, when it passed to his son William by inheritance, and was by him aliened to William Petre in 1598. After an interval, which we have been unable to fill up, Godsfield came into the possession of the Lucy family, and was sold in 1740 by

¹ Inquisitio post mortem.

² Exchequer Minister's Accounts.

Sir Berkeley Lucy, the last baronet.¹ Before 1781 Godsfield was purchased by the Rodney family, and in 1854 passed into the hands of T. A. Houghton, Esq., of Armsworth House, the present owner. There is a fixed charge upon the estate left by the Lucys, of £20 per annum, payable to Broxbourne School. The present owner has shown every desire to protect, and has taken active measures to prevent any damage to the interesting old chapel. Its associations are venerable, its aspect picturesque, and the inhabitants around, though provided with a convenient room for the public worship of the Church, would, we think, rejoice if the ancient chapel were further rescued from slow decay; and within its walls were heard once more the voice of praise and thanksgiving. The sketches from which the illustration have been produced were furnished by Mr. R. G. Pinder and the Editor, who have also added to the above remarks some details of interest.

¹ His monument is in the chancel of the old church at Faccombe, near Hungerford.

Godsfield Chapel.
Hants.



East Elevation.



Section A-B.

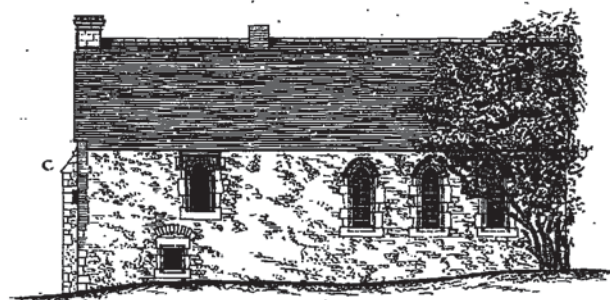


Weathering at C.
9 3 6 3 4 1/2 inches



Detail of Window.

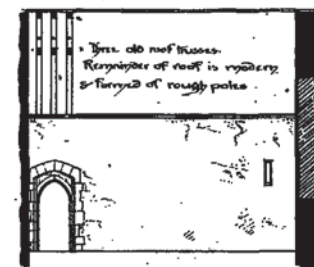
9 3 6 3 4 1/2 inches



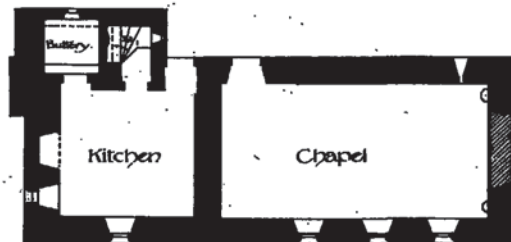
South Elevation.



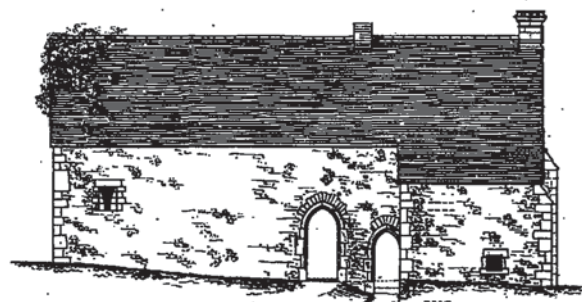
West Elevation.



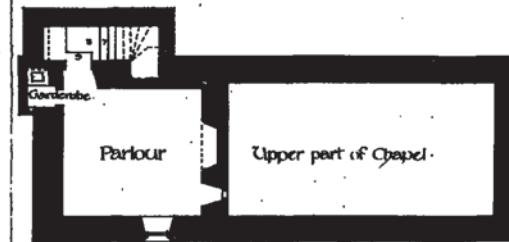
Longitudinal Section.



Ground Plan.



North Elevation.



Upper Floor Plan.

measured by
Rymond G. Pender, R.A.
17 June 1887.