



# SARRATT



**HISTORICAL ASPECTS  
OF A PARISH  
AND ITS CHURCH**



**ERRATUM**

The surname of Reverend Edward Ryley and his family appears incorrectly as Riley.

**ADDENDUM TO PAGE 35**

The original Mill dwelling still forms the centre of the present Sarratt Mill House.

## SARRATT

### HISTORICAL ASPECTS OF A PARISH AND ITS CHURCH

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SARRATT

HISTORICAL ASPECTS OF A PARISH AND ITS CHURCH

PREFACE

For at least eight centuries there has been a church on the present site of Holy Cross serving a village community.

Working from a date of 1190 AD as the foundation of Holy Cross, it was decided last year by the Parochial Church Council to celebrate 1990 as the 800th Anniversary of the church and the first article in the book is a discussion on how the attribution of the year 1190 had arisen.

The book is divided into a series of articles, a succession of scenes in the life of the parish although there are, of course, countless other aspects over eight hundred years that have been omitted.

Many of the articles originated from a church record about people who have lived in Sarratt, or from the church building and its furnishings. In most cases the subject is then developed and placed within a village context and I hope that everybody will find something of interest in the book.

Apart from an article on "Graffiti" and another on "Sydney Valentine", all the articles were written by myself and I shall be very glad to be told of any inaccuracies.

From the work on the book developed the idea of an Exhibition to illustrate the passage of time in Sarratt and, if you visit it over the weekend of 30 June, 1 July, you will find that the historical sequence runs through the reigns of 36 monarchs from Richard I, Coeur de Lion, to the present day.

I would like to thank Graham Peiser for the design and presentation of the Exhibition and the many hours he has spent in making models of the church. My thanks also to Sheila Metson for the display lettering and Anne Griffiths for her design for the book cover, to John Guy and all those who have met regularly to discuss the whole project - and to many others in the village who have provided information and documentary evidence.

Doris Rollinson BA

The Old Wheatsheaf,  
Sarratt, May 1990



**T**HE CHURCH OF THE  
HOLY CROSS  
SARRATT  
HERTFORDSHIRE

## HOLY CROSS CHURCH, SARRATT

### A SEARCH FOR ITS FOUNDATION AND DEDICATION

The year 1190 AD has been traditionally accepted in Sarratt as the year when the church was founded and the date can be traced to a leaflet written by Rev. Gilbert Riley when he mentions the lord of the manor "about 1190 erecting a house of prayer" and this approximate date was included in a church leaflet produced in 1988.

From the assumption that we were not likely to find a more accurate date for the foundation without a great deal of research, the PCC decided to celebrate the 800th Anniversary this year.

At the same time, a fascination about the origin of the church persisted which led to a brief but intensive programme of research.

- \* First, some notable historical accounts were consulted, Chauncy, Cussans, (1) Salmon and Clutterbuck but no record of a foundation was found. These books all list the sequence of owners of the various manors in Sarratt, the manor of Sarratt being the oldest. It was granted to the Abbey of St. Albans by King Offa in 796 AD and held by them until the Dissolution in 1539 and parcels of land, tithes and dues to the Abbey are variously described.

The Victoria History of County of Hertfordshire is more helpful, stating that the church:-

"altogether has an early look, but there is nothing in the architectural features to suggest a date earlier than the last decade of the twelfth century to which time ... the main part of the fabric seems to belong."

An accompanying plan suggests that the church was, in the late 12th century, in the form of a Greek cross and a redrawn plan is shown in the present church leaflet.

Second, in a church leaflet written by Rev. Gilbert Riley is a note:-

"Sarratt and Markyate were the two "cells" in Herts., (a cell being a chapel or place of worship, founded by and dependent upon the Abbey, where a monk lived, and his duty was to minister to that chapel on behalf of the Abbey)."

Unfortunately, he doesn't give his source of information or the dates for these cells. No record has been found for Sarratt but in Markyate is a house called "Markyate Cell", now a mansion, which was originally a nunnery founded in 1145 by Abbot Geoffrey of St. Albans. Perhaps Holy Cross was a near contemporary.

- \* Third, a brief note was found buried in the St. Albans Abbey Rolls, giving (2) firm evidence of a building in Sarratt belonging to the Abbey in the late 12th century. Part of an extensive Charter granted by Abbot Warin to the House of St. Mary des Prez in 1194, it reads:-

"Concedimus etiam eis totam decimam de novo essarto quod jacet inter novam nostram de Sareth et vetus assartum."

Continued ...

Translated by Rev. Michael Hewlett:-

"We grant also to them the whole tithing from the new assart which lies between our new curia at Sareth and the old assart".

An assart is a land cleared of trees and a curia was a Manor Court where the lord or one of his officials dealt with legal and other matters concerning the manor. That a curia was built at Sarratt seems to place some importance on this Manor. Other Manor Rolls stipulate a site out of doors and even at St. Albans the curia was held "under the ash tree in the middle court of the Abbey".

(3)

So, we have an attribution for the original church of about 1190 from the VCH, a possibility that a chapel was active in the 12th century and evidence of building activity in 1194 or a little before. These three points seem to argue persuasively that the year 1190 is a reasonably accurate date for the foundation of the church.

Assuming that the church was dedicated to Holy Cross in the 12th century, there are several choices as to the significance of the dedication.

Its cruciform shape is perhaps the most obvious reason for the name - or that the building symbolised and embodied the Passion and veneration of the Cross. Another suggestion was given by Rev. Bundock at Holy Cross, Borehamwood, where their dedication marked the first act of worship on Holy Cross Day, 14th September.

A relic of the "True Cross" may have been held here, although we have no evidence and surely such a possession would have been documented as well as the church recorded as a place of pilgrimage. However, the donor of the window in the South Transept, Mrs. Napier Higgins, seems to have chosen a "relic" significance since it features St. Helena, mother of Emperor Constantine, who discovered what she thought was the true Cross. A cult grew up around her with dedications to her or the Holy Cross. In the Middle Ages she was thought to be British but chroniclers confused her with Helen, wife of Magnus Clemens Maxmus of Britain by whom she had a son, Constantine.

Finally, the contemporary Crusades may have inspired the dedication. Over the years 1095-1464 a series of Crusades took place, designed to recover the Holy Land from Islam (the crusaders' name deriving from the cross on their clothing). In 1192 Richard I made a three year peace with Saladin and crusaders entered the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem.

\*\*\*\*\*

- \* (1) Chauncy, Historical Antiquities of Hertfordshire (1826)  
Cussans, History of Herts., Hundred of Cashoi (1881)  
Salmon, History of Herts., County & Ancient Monuments (1728)  
Clutterbuck, History of Hertfordshire Vol. 1. (1826)
- \* (2) Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani Vol. 1. (Rolls Series 1867)  
Riley H.T. Ed. Page 204.
- \* (3) Life on the English Manor, H.S. Bennett



## HISTORICAL TABLE OF HOLY CROSS CHURCH

### FABRIC, FIXED FURNISHINGS AND CHURCHYARD - 12TH TO 20TH CENTURY

The material for this article was collated from many sources - old church leaflets, records held in the parish and research for this book and I am very grateful to Graham Peiser and John Guy for their help in condensing and compiling the table.

You will find that many of the items are discussed in more detail in other sections of the book, or brought into relation with one another and this applies particularly to the 19th century and Rev. Edward Riley's account of the restoration of the church in 1864/6 on pages 41/43.

The table will be useful for those interested in the chronology of the building, although it lacks the colour of an account of other furnishings. The inventory of 1552 on pages 18/20 will catch the imagination of the church interior then. Today, the beauty of our village church is visible to all, the latest additions being the Resurrection window in the Chancel, the pews furnished with tapestry kneelers and the red velvet door curtain.

#### **12TH CENTURY**

1190 traditional date of foundation. Construction cruciform shape. N. Transept said to be smallest in England and unusually smaller than S. Transept. Entrance to Chancel on S. side likely. Present chancel arch probably original. Present tower arch the original entrance to Nave. Original stone font (now in N. Transept), inside church door.

#### **13TH CENTURY**

First extension to Chancel. Double piscina added to S. wall of new extension (one converted to a sedile in 16th century).

#### **14TH CENTURY**

Second extension to Chancel. Single piscina added to S. wall of new extension as well as Easter Sepulchre. E. window arch added (reset 19th century). Square window S. side of Chancel added (lighting altar). Circa 1370 wall paintings executed.

#### **15TH CENTURY**

Tower added at W. end. Unusual saddleback roof with transverse ridge line. The only other examples are at Holsworthy, Devon - Sysonby, Leics., and Alvediston, Wilts. N. window in N. Transept (cinquefoil) and S. window in S. Transept added. Chancel roof rebuilt.

#### **16TH CENTURY**

Top of tower rebuilt. One of the two 13th century piscinas converted to a sedile. 1539, Dissolution of St. Albans Abbey, mother house to Holy Cross. Three Bells in Tower.

#### **17TH CENTURY**

1606, or just after, pulpit added at centre of S. side of Nave. 1606, oldest extant Bell hung (4th Bell). 1638 two other bells in tower.

#### **18TH CENTURY**

1719, Bell hung (Tenor Bell).

Continued ...



### 19TH CENTURY

- 1815 Galleries built by private contributions on either side of tower arch.
- 1818 Large vestry added S. of Chancel (replaced with smaller Vestry at restoration 1864/6).
- 1856 Churchyard extended and cottage on site of present lych gate pulled down, the flint and bricks used to build wall now fronting churchyard.
- 1864-  
1866 Major restoration and remodelling under architect Sir Gilbert Scott
- Galleries and box pews removed.
- Ceilings removed from Nave, Chancel and Transepts.
- Pulpit moved to present position from S. side of Nave, pedestal cut down by 3/4 ft.
- N. & S. Aisles added (now housing Organ and Baptistry, respectively).
- Chancel floor raised, south entrance blocked.
- NEW** Font on original plinth. Porch. Vestry. Altar designed by Gilbert Scott. Reading Desk. Pews. Plain glass window S. side of Chancel (now Resurrection).
- Stained glass added to E. window of Chancel (Crucifixion & Ascension).
- N. Wall of Nave, or large portion of N. Transept, fell during work.
- 1865 Bell hung (3rd Bell).
- After  
1865 First Organ installed (Hill & Sons).
- 1886 Grundy's Patent Heating Apparatus installed.

### 20TH CENTURY

- 1900 Churchyard further enlarged.
- 1904 Stained glass added to S. window of S. Transept (St. Helena and St. Barnabas).
- 1913 Oak bell frame replaced with steel, Bells rehung
- 1913 Stained glass added to W. window in Tower (Bringing Children to Christ).
- 1914 Coal cellar installed.
- 1916 Stained glass added to E. window of S. Aisle (Holy Families).
- 1920 Lych gate built from oak of old bell frames.
- 1921 Stained glass added to S. window of S. Aisle (St. Cecilia).
- 1923 Stained glass added to E. window of N. Transept (Charity).
- 1926 Reredos panelling behind altar installed.
- 1931 New chimney built and churchyard further enlarged.
- 1935 Electric light installed and decayed sapwood removed from roof interior.
- 1937 Central heating installed (solid fuel).
- 1956 Organ installed (Leighton).
- 1959 Two new Bells hung (2nd Bell and Treble Bell).
- 1966- Restoration work
- 1973 E. wall of Chancel rebuilt, repairs and repointing.
- 1971 Churchyard further enlarged.
- 1973 Oil fired central heating installed.
- 1982- Further restoration work, stone repairs, treatment of rising damp and  
1983 dry rot.
- 1987 Reading Desk removed.
- 1989 Stained glass added to S. window in S. wall of Chancel (Resurrection).

### THE BELLS OF THE CHURCH

The five bells in the belltower are made of bellmetal, an alloy which is 77% copper and 23% tin.

Of the present band of bell-ringers, one member, Joe Goodman, has been ringing the church bells for most of his life, continuing the tradition from his uncle, Charlie, who was ringing in 1913 and I would like to thank Joe and Bob Penn for the following inventory:-

**TENOR BELL** - B Natural - cast 1719 by Richard Chandler at Drayton Parslow  
Weight 4 cwt. 3 st. 24 lb.

Inscription - "Chandler made me".

**4TH BELL** - C sharp - cast 1606 at the foundry of Henry Knight, Reading  
Weight 4 cwt. 2 st. 4 lb.

Inscription - "Henry Knight made mee".

**3RD BELL** - D sharp - cast 1865 by Mears & Stainbank at the Whitechapel Bell Foundry, which is still operating as a foundry.

Weight 3 cwt. 3 st. 2 lb.

Inscription - "Mears 1865".

The three bells above were rehung in 1913 on a steel frame by Messrs Warner & Sons, Crescent Foundry, Spitalfields.

**2ND BELL** - E - cast 1959 by Mears & Stainbank at the Whitechapel Bell Foundry.

Weight 3 cwt. 2 st. 26 lb.

**TREBLE BELL** - F sharp - cast 1959 by Mears & Stainbank at the Whitechapel Bell Foundry.

Weight 2 cwt. 3 st. 23 lb.

The last two bells were given by Mrs. Rupert Clutterbuck, dedicated by Rev. Thomas McArdle on 7th February 1960 and the first peal was rung on 24th February 1960.

Both bells are inscribed "A.M.D.G.\* and in memory of Thomas Clutterbuck 1884-1953 and his son Giles Bill Clutterbuck who made the supreme sacrifice 1940. Mears 1959, London".

From an inventory of the church dated 1552 it seems there were "3 belles in the steeple", now vanished. These were probably melted down (there used to be a foundry at Chenies). Another inventory dated 1638 mentions "3 bells", one of which must have been the 4th Bell cast by Henry Knight in 1606.

\* A.M.D.G., ad majorem Dei gloriam - to the greater glory of God

THE MANORS OF SARRATT

Land in Sarratt has always, as now, been divided into that held privately and that held in common. In the past the largest parcels of private land were three manors, Sarratt, Rosehall and Goldingtons. Ownership through gift, inheritance and sale of each manor throughout the centuries is a complex sequence but these lists set out ownership in a simplified form through to 1862 when the Clutterbuck family owned all the manors. The present owners of the houses of Goldingtons and Rosehall have no connection with the Clutterbuck family. For a more detailed examination please refer to The Victoria History of the County of Hertford Part 23b, Part of Cashio Hundred, 1920.

The family shields for the underlined names, Ibgrave, Bruce, Kingsley and Clutterbuck are illustrated in the Exhibition and the next section in this book features William Kingsley.

<b>SARRATT</b>	796	Granted to Abbey of St. Albans by King Offa
	1199	Confirmed to St. Albans by King John
	1077-93	Granted to Robert the Mason by Abbot Paul who later resigned it back to the monks
		Leased by Abbot to Peter, butler of William, count of Mortain
	Mid 12th C.	Given by Abbot Robert de Gorham to his brother, Ralph
	1539	After Dissolution to, amongst others, <u>William Ibgrave</u> (1544-1555) and sons, Thomas, Ellis and John
	1606	Granted to <u>Edward, Lord Bruce of Kinloss</u> Master of the Rolls, and his sons, Edward and Thomas
	1624	Sold to Thomas and John Childe
	1659	Sold to Robert Gilbert
	1681	Conveyed to John Duncombe
	1752	Sold to Sir David Williams
	1778	Sold to William Duncombe
	1814	Sold to Sophia Williams then willed to her daughter, Sophia Charlotte Tyringham Bernard
	1826	Sold to George Clarke
	1860	Sold to Herbert Ingram
	1862	Sold to <u>Thomas Clutterbuck</u>

Continued ...



<b>ROSEHALL</b>	1166	Held by Geoffrey de Siret
Roosehall,	1245	Held by Nicholas Belesmeins
Rusthall	1258	Held by Roger, son of Alured
	Early 14th C.	Held by Robert de Roos, Abbot of St. Albans
	1336	Settled upon Sir John de Roos
	1373	Held by Abbot of St. Albans
	1376	Passed to Sir Geoffrey de Brokeholes
	1420	Inherited by John Sumpter
	1426	Assigned to Ellen Bellers
	1437	$\frac{1}{2}$ manor sold to Thomas & William Peck, John Lane and John Frank
	1442	$\frac{1}{2}$ manor settled on Robert Armeburgh and others
	1543	Whole manor sold to Nicholas & John Luddington
	1556	Inherited by Nicholas Luddington
	1583	Sold to <u>William Kingsley</u>
	1611	Inherited by Katherine Kingsley, then Francis Kingsley, then William Kingsley
	1637	Inherited by Dorothy Kingsley
	1659	Passed to Robert Gilbert
		Inherited by Elizabeth Williams
	1737	Inherited by Sir Gilbert Williams (also Rector)
	1768	Inherited by Sir David Williams and son
	1798	Inherited by Sophia Charlotte Tyringham Bernard
	Early 19th C.	Sold, together with Sarratt manor, to <u>Thomas Clutterbuck</u>
<b>GOLDINGTONS</b>	1236-7	Held by Peter de Goldington
	1245	Held by Grace de Goldington
	Early 14th C.	Held by Bertram de Goldington
	1347-8	Held by John de Chilterne
	1402-3	Held by Roger Lynster
	1520	Conveyed to John Baldwin
	1545	Inherited by James Baldwin
	1595	Inherited by Margery Hobbes
	1595	Sold to <u>William Kingsley</u> who also owned Rosehall and descent, thereafter, identical.

RECTORS AND VICARS, 1349 - 1990

This list of Rectors and Vicars at Holy Cross is based upon that compiled for the Archdeacon in April 1917 when Gilbert Riley was Rector. Following research into transcripts of Wills where the Rectors were witnesses (see Pots, Platters & Ploughs by Philip Buller) we can now amend Riley's list by adding a new Rector, John Alynson (1502-1519) and also correct the dates for Rectors marked with \*.

The difference between a Rector and a Vicar depends on how the incumbent is paid, the tithe system and patronage but the titles at Holy Cross have varied too many times to be noted here.

The rather fragmentary dates before the early 17th century indicate the problem of researching ancient documents (where they still exist), but these dates are evidence of the Rector's presence in that year. We have not yet found a recorded Rector for the church from 1190 to 1349.

<u>RECTORS AND VICARS</u>		<u>THE MONARCHY</u>	
John Clerk de Langley	1349	Edward II	1327-1377
John de Langtoft	1392	Richard II	1377-1399
John de Caldecote	1436	Henry IV	1399-1413
James Roche and John Skeltone	1462	Henry V	1413-1422
Thomas Hemyngforthe	1472-1485	Henry VI	1422-1461
John Jubbe	1485	Edward IV	1461-1483
*John Alynson	1502-1519	Edward V	1483
John Plough	1544	Richard III	1483-1485
*Richard Preston	1551-1553	Henry VII	1485-1509
Sir William Hucheson	1557-1558	Henry VIII	1509-1547
*William Smyth	1559-1569	Edward VI	1547-1553
John Lane A.M.	1569	Mary	1553-1558
William Edwards	1571		
William Crowther	1572	Elizabeth I	1558-1603
*William Edwards	1574/5		
Ralph Turner	1575		
*John Butler	1579-1584		
Richard Betts	1592		
*John Butler	1604-1606	James I	1603-1625
George Clerk, S.T.P.	1606-1615		
Edward Topsell A.M.	1615		

Continued ...

RECTORS AND VICARS

John Cockshott A.M.	1615-1617
*Alexander Clerk A.M.	1617-1629
*Robert Clerk (brother to above)	1635-1644
John Chiswick	1661
William Joel	1661-1702
George Smith A.M.	1702-1724
Gilbert Williams A.M. (Bart.)	1724-1768
William Williams	1768-1807
Charles Jeffreys Cottrell A.M.	1807-1815
John Foster M.A.	1815-1838
William John Moore Brabazon	1838-1859
Edward Riley M.A.	1859-1912
Gilbert Noel Riley M.A.	1912-1950
Vincent Straun Robertson M.A.	1950-1953
Thomas Ernest McArdle	1953-1962
Arthur John Faulkner Tomlinson M.A.	1962-1986
Martin Phillip Culverwell	1987-1990

THE MONARCHY

Charles I	1625-1649
<u>CROMWELL</u> <u>(INTERREGNUM)</u>	1649-1660
Charles II	1660-1685
James II	1685-1688
William III	1689-1702
Anne	1702-1714
George I	1714-1727
George II	1727-1760
George III	1760-1820
George IV	1820-1830
William IV	1830-1837
Victoria	1837-1901
Edward VII	1901-1910
George V	1910-1935
Edward VIII	1936
George VI	1936-1952
Elizabeth II	1953 -

NOTES

A.M. Artium Magister (Master of Arts) S.T.P. Sacrae Theologiae Professor

1462 James Roche, Vicar, murdered a parishioner, Richard Glowcester, buried him in a field belonging to Roger Wittone esquire, and took flight.

1485 Thomas Hemyngforthe, Vicar (who also held Shephall), a brother of the Order of Eremite Brothers of St. Augustine, was deprived of office by reason of apostasy (revolt from ecclesiastical obedience).

1588 John Butler, Vicar, furnished with one muskett "against foreign invasion" - the year of the Spanish Armada!

1864-  
1866 Edward Riley, Rector, initiated an extensive restoration programme of the church under the direction of Sir Gilbert Scott. His account of the work and the dilapidated state of the church when he arrived in Sarratt is on pages 41/43.



### THE WALL PAINTINGS AT HOLY CROSS CHURCH

"Pictures and ornaments in churches are the lessons and the scriptures of the laity. For what writing supplieth to him which can read, that doth a picture supply to him which is unlearned, and can only look. Things are read, though letters be unknown".



High Priest in Act of Blessing (corner of south wall, south trans.) from a drawing by Professor Tristram

These words of William Durand (1220-1296) remind us that in the 14th century when the wall painting of the Life of Christ cycle in the south transept at Holy Cross was executed, almost all of the congregation were "unlearned and can only look". From evidence in other contemporary churches we can assume that all the walls were covered in narrative and instructive pictures illustrating the scriptures, as well as allegorical schemes. From Reverend Riley's History Paper (see footnote 1.), we know that the chancel walls were covered in red ochre frescoes of pineapples, roses and pomegranates, symbolizing the fruits of good works springing from the roots of virtue. The now vanished "picture of Kings and Queens" over the chancel arch might have been

a Rood (the Crucifixion), a Doom (a portrayal of the Last Judgement), or a Royal Coat of Arms. These three types can still be seen where chancel arch paintings survive.

If it was a Rood it was a potent symbol for the dedication of the church to the Holy Cross. If it was a Last Judgement, the symbolism was especially acute in the 14th century when the Black Death plague of 1348, followed by further outbreaks, decimated the population of England. From the list of Rectors of Sarratt (see footnote 2.), there is an apparent gap between John Clerk de Langley in 1349 and John de Langtoft in 1392. Perhaps the church was without a Rector for 43 years, since the plague visited the priests as well as the laity, but if Professor Tristram is correct in dating our wall painting at c.1370 (see the following page), it is likely there was a priest here at that time to care for the building and the souls of the parishioners.

While the priest said the Latin Mass at the altar, the congregation stood or knelt in the nave on the earth floor and their eyes must surely have travelled over the vivid, naturalistic scenes on the walls and found a focus for their devotion. When he came to the chancel steps to preach, the priest could draw the attention of his congregation to the paintings to illustrate his text and, in a wider sphere, the paintings are significant in placing this remote parish within the doctrine of the international church of the time, under Rome.

Footnote 1. See pages 41/43

Footnote 2. See page 10

Professor Tristram visited Sarratt in 1927 to inspect the Holy Cross wall paintings and his commentary is reproduced below. (See English Wall Paintings of the 14th Century). Tristram. He subsequently applied a film of wax for protection - which was accepted practice at the time. However, this has since been removed because it sealed in moisture to the detriment of the painting.

### THE SOUTH AISLE

#### THE HIGHER TIER

1. The Annunciation. Part only remains of the figure of the Angel Gabriel, who is shown entirely feathered (a very early example of this treatment) with bare feet, the right hand raised and in the left a scroll. The Virgin, with head slightly bent and both arms upraised, is a tall, graceful figure.

2. The Appearance of the Angel to the Shepherds. The Angel, whose head, wings and feet alone are decipherable, is on the left of the scene, with the first Shepherd, a much-defaced figure, standing before him and leaning on a staff. Of the second Shepherd the strongly-characterized head, and part of the shoulders, survive, the former in good condition; as far as can be made out he was depicted holding on its back a ram, which is clearly seen. In the foreground sheep are grazing and to the right the third Shepherd, the head again strongly characterized, wearing a hood and a gipon buttoned down the centre front, is playing the pipes.

3. The Nativity. Very little of this scene remains; a tall figure at the head of what must originally have been the couch, and the head and upraised right hand of St. Joseph are alone decipherable.

#### THE LOWER TIER

1. (?) The Last Supper. Two heads, apparently of Apostles, are visible.

2. The Resurrection. Almost entirely perished apart from the Vexillum.

3. The Ascension. Above, the feet of Christ, and below the Apostles, with upraised heads and hands, the lower parts of their figures destroyed.

The paintings, executed in the usual ochres, are in the main of circa 1370; but there are traces of a renovation of circa 1400 or later, notably on the scroll-work border.

#### Sources:

Cussans, History of Herts, 1879-81 III, pt. 2, 114.

Keyser, Mural Decorations, 1883

R.C. Historical Monuments R., Herts, 1910, 201.

#### NOTES (Ed.)

Gipon or Jupon - a close fitting jacket

Vexillum - standard (flag) symbolizing the Resurrection

Fresco secco - pigment applied to dry plaster where the paint tends to scale off in time, as at Holy Cross.

Buon fresco - true fresco, virtually permanent because pigment is applied to damp plaster, a section at a time. The colours become integrated with the wall by chemical reaction and scaling cannot occur.

### THE PEASANTS' REVOLT OF 1381

The Peasants' Revolt and its association with the Poll Tax is being variously discussed this year. Although no record has yet been found of a particular Sarratt peasant being involved in the uprising, all probably shared in the unrest current in England at the time, unless they were unusually docile!

The Revolt is now invariably seen as the first notable social or class war in English history with serfs on the one hand and lords of the manor on the other.

In Sarratt almost everybody was a serf or villein who, generally until the mid 14th century, was in a state of dependence upon his lord, who was the owner of his person and of his goods and he could also be bought or sold. He had certain recognisable rights, though these could not be enforced against his lord in any court. He was employed in any kind of service at his lord's option, could be moved to another estate at any time and money payment, where it existed, was meagre.

After the first wave of the Black Death in 1348 the population decreased considerably, perhaps by half, and the peasants who survived found their labour was more in demand, worth much more than before and they pressed for higher wages.

The lord of almost all the land in Sarratt in 1381 was probably Thomas de la Mare, Abbot of St. Albans, who was, from contemporary records severe in exacting dues from the peasants of the Liberty of St. Albans as well as his richer tenants. After a quarrel with a certain John Chiltern he seized fifteen beasts from his flock and let them die of hunger. Perhaps it is a coincidence of name, but John Chilterne was at Goldingtons manor in 1347/8, possibly as a tenant. In common with other lords the Abbot's reaction to demands from peasants working his land would have been to try and enforce the traditional labour services.

Against this background of social tension the government imposed in 1380 a poll-tax of one shilling for all men and women over fifteen years of age - the word "poll" being Old English for "head". This had been a new taxation in 1377 at a lower rate of one groat a head to defray the costs of the Hundred Years War with France. By 1381 the tax was widely resented throughout England, provoking evasions and animosity to the tax commissioners.

It seems that open defiance of tax commissioners in Kent and Essex led to a march on London under Wat Tyler on 13 June 1381. News of the London revolt spread to St. Albans and the surrounding district and over the next week people from a large number of villages streamed into the Abbey to join demonstrations against the Abbot by the citizens of the town whose acknowledged leader was William Grindecob. He, while Thomas de la Mare vacillated, roused the crowd to set fire to Abbey fences and buildings and take possession of the prison where they released all the prisoners.

Continued ..





Outline map of the Boundary of the Liberty of St. Albans and names of principal manors

Eventually the Abbot conceded all the demands of the rebels, each group wanting a different charter of liberty to release them from dues to the Abbey.

This map shows Sarratt on the western border of the Hundred of Cashiobury and it was along this border that the village rebels were strongest. We can speculate, therefore, that a band of Sarratt people joined the crowd at the Abbey to demand from the Abbot their own charter.

From Andre Reville's account in The Rising of the Workers in Hertfordshire in 1381, the following was granted to Watford and Cashiobury:-

"The Abbot acknowledged to the inhabitants an absolute right to hunt fowl on all the surrounding land, including the lord's land, he excused them from attending the monastery

court, exempted them from a special tax called ale-penny, from rights of passage and from toll, and for compulsory work for the maintenance of bridges and roads and allowed them to set up hand mills in their home."

One of the interesting implications here is that the Abbey owned Sarratt Mill, then a corn mill. The Abbot was the "suit at mill", which meant that villagers had to use his mill to grind their corn, paying him a proportion as a toll. Using their own hand mills or querns was not allowed

The insurrection at St. Albans was brought to an end by the concessions granted by the Abbot, but by 20th July all promises had been revoked. The rebellion was followed by severe measures, the leaders were executed and Parliament refused to abolish serfdom.

The main characteristic of the revolt in Hertfordshire was a rising of tenants against their feudal lord. The abolition of the poll-tax was not mentioned in their demands from the Abbot although Richard II abolished it was part of the demands in London. The cause of the revolt was social in character but the occasion was the imposition of the poll-tax.

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THE POACHER

Poaching was one of the most common of medieval offences. It would have been exceptional for the people of Sarratt not to poach game, fish, rabbits and deer from manor lands. This magnificent account of a night in the woods is translated from a 14th century poem "The Parlement of the Thre Ages".

"In May, when there are many things to enjoy, and in the summer season when airs are soft, I went to the wood to take my luck, and in among the shaws to get a shot at hart or hind, as it should happen. And as the Lord drove the day through the heavens, I stayed on a bank beside a brook where the grass was green and starred with flowers - primroses, periwinkles and the rich penny-royal. The dew dappled the daisies most beautifully, and also the buds, blossoms and branches, while around me the soft mists began to fall. Both the cuckoo and pigeon were singing loudly, and the throstles in the bank-sides eagerly poured out their songs, and every bird in the wood seemed more delighted than his neighbour that darkness was done and the daylight returned.

Harts and hinds betake themselves to the hills; the fox and pole-cat seek thir earths; the hare squats by the hedges, hurries and hastens thither to her forme and prepared to lurk there. As I stood in that place the idea of stalking came to me, so I covered both body and bow with leaves, turned in behind a tree and waited there awhile. And as I gazed in the glade near by me I saw a hart with tall antlers; the main stem was unburnished and in the middle very strong. And he was full grown and adorned with horns of six and five tines, and was large, broad and big of body; whoever might catch him, he was a dish for a king. But there followed him a fourth year buck that most eagerly attended him, and aroused and warned him when the wind failed, so that no one should be sly enough to harm him in his sleep by stealth. He went in front of him when any danger was to be feared.

I let the leash fall to the ground quietly and settled down my hound by the bole of a birch tree, and took careful note of the wind from the fluttering of the leaves. I stalked on very quietly so as to break no twigs, and crept to a crab apple tree and hid underneath it.

Then I wound up my bow and prepared to shoot, drew up the tiller and aimed at the hart but the buck who attended the hart lifted up his nose, looked cautiously around, and eagerly snuffed about. Then, perforce, I had to stand without moving, and to stir no foot, although gnats grievously troubled me, and bit my eyes, for if I had tried to move, or made any sign, all my sport, that I had so long awaited, would have been lost. The hart paused, went on cautiously, staring here and there, but at last he bent down and began on his feed. Than I hauled to the hook (i.e. the trigger of the cross-bow) and smote the hart. It so happened that I hit him behind the left shoulder and the blood streamed out on both sides. He stopped: brayed and then brushed through the thickets, as if everything in the wood had crashed down at the same moment. Soon the attending buck went off to his mates, but they were terrified by his manner and took to the fells. I went to my hound, and quickly grasped him and untied his leash, and let him cast about. The briars and the bracken were smeared with blood, and the hound picked up the scent and pursued the hart to where he was, for he had crept into a cave, and crouched to the earth, had fallen down - dead as a door-nail."

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THE DISSOLUTION OF THE MONASTERIES - ITS IMPACT ON HOLY CROSS

Henry VIII began the Dissolution of the Monasteries in April 1536 and by April 1540 all religious buildings and properties had been taken over by the crown and leased or sold to new lay occupiers.

St. Alban's Abbey, the mother church of Holy Cross, was one of the last to surrender in 1539. From the list of incumbents of Holy Cross there doesn't appear to have been a Rector during these turbulent years. John Plough was here in 1544 and William Ibgrave was the lord of Sarratt manor from 1544-1555 which suggests that he, as patron, appointed John Plough as the first Rector to the new and independent Church of England.

The crown insisted on taking possession of anything of intrinsic value, all precious metals and furnishings but, especially in remote parishes, a circumspect churchwarden frequently hid the assets of a church - either to preserve them or in anticipation of a return to traditional religious practice which did happen in some parishes during Queen Mary's reign of 1553-1558.

In researching material for this book this year, an inventory for Holy Cross was discovered, dated 1 November 1552. It is set out over the next three pages with a translation and glossary and I am very grateful to Dr. Eileen Roberts, MA, Ph.D., for her help, particularly with the medieval fabrics.

As you will see, either Holy Cross was overlooked by the King's Commissioners at the Dissolution or its furnishings were concealed from official visits. Clearly, the church had not been stripped of all ornament or objects of religious significance in 1552 although there is no implication of an earlier shrine to the Virgin in the chancel whose fingers had been ringed in silver.

This inventory stipulates that almost everything is confiscated into the possession of the crown but if this was not carried out in the winter of 1552 during the last months of Edward VI's reign, the furnishings would have been removed when John Lane, AM, was Rector here in 1569. He was active in the English Reformation and one of Henry VIII's Commissioners.

Lane was probably familiar with the works published by John Jewel, Bishop of Salisbury, a strong supporter of the Anglican community and these are listed in a contrasting inventory dated 1638 on the last page of this article.

By this time the whole emphasis has shifted from a richly coloured church interior to one of austerity. The pulpit and books, not mentioned in the earlier inventory, illustrate the importance attached to preaching and the Scriptures in the seventeenth century, as well as a rising literacy in the village.

Continued ...

INVENTORY OF HOLY CROSS - 1 NOVEMBER 1552

HUNDRED DE CAYSHO IN COM HERTF.

This Byll Indented Mayde the ffyrst Day of November in the sixt yeare of the Raigne of Our Soueraine Lorde Edwarde the Sixth by the grace of Gode of England ffraunce and Iarland King Defendor of the ffaythe and and in earthe of the Churche of England and Iarland the Supreame head Between John Butler John Brockett knights John Pen and Nicholas Bristowe Commissioners appointed to tayke and resave a due just and ffull view of all manner of Gooddes Playt Juelles and Ornaments of euery Churche and Chappell in the County of Hertf of thone party and John Brytte of Sarret wythine the said County Husbandman of thother partye - Wytnessethe that we the said Commissioners have appoyntede and Delived unto the said John, All suche parcells of Goodes Playt Juelles and Ornamente hereunder wryttyne Belonginge to the Parryshe Churche of Sarret aforesaid sayfly To keepe the same untill such tyme as the Kinge Maiesties pleasure be therein ffurder known.

Imprmis iij Belles in the steple  
Itm a challise of Siluer parcell guilte weinge viij oncs did  
Itm a Crosse and a Crosse Staff of Coppar and guilte  
Itm one Corporas and ij Caysses one gren vellat thother sattine of brudge  
Itm ij lyttle red vellat Cuysshins  
Itm ij Candellstickke of Lattine  
Itm ij handbelle one Sacringe Bell and a crismatory of lattine  
Itm a lyttyll crose of coppar and guilte  
Itm ij pixes one of theim of coppar and guilte thother of lattine  
Itm a vestment of blake sattyne of Brudge & the thinge thereto belonging  
Itm a vestment of Redd Chamlett ut sup  
Itm a vestment of whyt ffuschiane ut sup  
Itm a vestment of Craine Collored silke ut sup  
Itm a coppe of yallow sylke popingey  
Itm a Cope of Redd Say  
Itm a Cope of Blake sattyne of Brudge  
pro ecclia Itm a Herseclothe of Blake sattine of Brudge  
stolln Itm a Clothe for the Sepulcre of yallow silk popingey  
Itm a Canopye Clothe of yallow sylk popingey  
pro ecclia Itm a curteyne of lynnon clothe ij Towwels of diap and a towel  
of playne lynnon and a Bannor clothe of lynnon styned red  
Itm iij bannor Clothes of whyt lynnon paintedde  
Itm one Crose clothe of grene silke sarsanete  
Itm a nother Crose clothe of Craine collorede Sarsanete  
pro ecclia Itm iij alter clothes of lynnon clothe  
Itm ij alter Clothes of yallow and redd say  
Itm a payr of Sensorre of lattyne  
Itm a Coffar bound wt Iorne to lay the gear in  
Itm an alter clothe of yallow sylke popingay  
Itm another peace of sylke to cover the Desk

Continued ...



TRANSLATION

INVENTORY OF HOLY CROSS - 1 NOVEMBER 1552

THE HUNDRED OF CASHIO IN THE COMMUNITY OF HERTFORD

This Bill sealed made the first day of November in the sixth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord Edward the Sixth by the grace of God of England France and Ireland King Defender of the faith and in earth of the Church of England and Ireland the Supreme head Between John Butler John Brockett knights John Pen and Nicholas Bristowe Commissioners appointed to take and receive a due just and full view of all manner of Goods Plate Jewels and Ornaments of every Church and Chapel in the County of Hertford of the one party and John Brytte of Sarret within the said County husbandman of the other party - Witness that we the said Commissioners have appointed and delivered to the said John all such parcels of Goods Plate Jewels and Ornaments hereunder written belonging to the Parish Church of Sarratt aforesaid safely to keep the same until such time as the King's Majesty's pleasure be therein further known.

First 3 bells in the steeple

Item a chalice of silver partly gilt weighing 8 ounces

Item a cross and a cross-staff of copper and gilt

Item 1 corporas and 2 cases one green velvet the other satin of Bruges

Item 2 little red velvet cushions

Item 2 candlesticks of lattine

Item 2 handbells, 1 Sacringe Bell and a crismatory of lattine

Item a little cross of copper and gilt

Item 2 pyxes one of them of copper and gilt the other of lattine

Item a vestment of silk popingey colour and all that belongs thereto

Item a vestment of black satin of Bruges & the things thereto belonging

Item a vestment of red camlet as above

Item a vestment of white fustian as above

Item a vestment of crane coloured silk as above

Item a Cope (or cap?) of yellow silk popingey

Item a Cope of red say

Item a Cope of black satin of Bruges

for the church Item a hearsecloth of black satin of Bruges

stolen Item a cloth for the Sepulchre of yellow silk popingey

Item a Canopy Cloth of yellow silk popingey

for the church Item a curtain of linen cloth 2 towels of diaper and a towel

of plain linen and a banner cloth of linen painted red

Item 3 banner cloths of white linen painted

Item 1 Cross cloth of green silk sarcenet

Item another Cross cloth of crane coloured sarcenet

for the church Item 4 altar cloths of linen cloth

Item 2 altar cloths of yellow and red say

Item a pair of censers of lattine

Item a chest bound with iron to lay the gear in

Item an altar cloth of yellow silk popingey

Item another piece of silk to cover the desk

Continued ...

GLOSSARY

camlet	at first a kind of mohair; later of various mixed materials such as silk, wool and/or hair
censer	a vessel in which incense is burned
crismatory	vessel containing the chrism (mixture of oil and balm, consecrated, used during certain sacraments)
crane	grey coloured
corporas	corporal; ancient eucharistic vestment; linen cloth on which consecrated elements are placed during celebration and with which they are subsequently covered
cross-cloth	a cloth hanging before the Rood or Crucifix
cross-staff	crozier
diaper	a linen cloth patterned by opposite reflections from its surface
fustian	a coarse twilled textile with linen warp and cotton weft. The surface resembled velvet, hence "mock velvet". In C14 a woollen or worsted cloth made at Norwich
hearsecloth	cloth or pall draped over a coffin
lattine	mixed metal (brass, etc.) often hammered into thin sheets
popingey	possibly parrot-coloured (usually green but could also be blue or yellow) although the context of this inventory suggests it could mean gaudy or brilliant
pyx	a vessel or box to hold the Eucharist
sacringe bell	small bell rung at the elevation of the Host
sarcenet	a thin, soft silk textile having a slight shine on the surface; of taffeta weave variously coloured, sometimes 'shot'
say	thin woollen serge; soft, light twilled fabric of wool and silk
Sepulchre	recess in the north chancel wall to receive the reserved sacrament and the crucifix from Maundy Thursday or Good Friday until Easter

NOTES

1. The items marked for the church had little monetary value and were probably left behind by the Commissioners.
2. The Sepulchre cloth marked stolen is interesting because it is evidence that the recess at Holy Cross was an Easter Sepulchre. When and why the cloth was stolen is not known.
3. Similarly, the Cross-cloth seems to be proof that a Rood hung over the chancel arch at some time.

Continued ...

**"AN INVENTARIE OF THE GOODES AND ORNAMENTS BELONGINGE TO  
THE CHURCH OF SARRATT"**

Imprimus a Comunion Table rayled in with a Carpett belonging to it

A Comunion Cup and Cover of Silver

A Comunion Pot or Stoope of Pewter

A Surplisse

A great Chest to laye the ornaments in

A stone Font

A pulpit with a Cusion to it

A great Bible and two bookes of Comon prayer

The workes of the Bishop of Salisburie

Three Bells

Robert Clarke, Vicar  
Steven Wingefeild. Gard.  
Edward Browne, Gard."

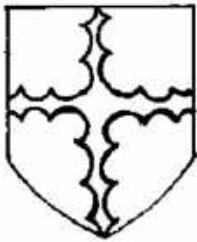
It would seem that Holy Cross in 1638 was very similar to the ideal portrayed by the poet George Herbert (1593-1633) who wrote:-

"The country parson hath a special care of his church, that all things there be decent and befitting his name, by which it is called. Therefore first he takes orders that all things be in good repair; as walls plastered, windows glazed, floor paved, seats whole, firm and uniform, especially that the pulpit and desk and communion table and font be as they ought for those great duties that are performed in them. Secondly, that the church be swept and kept clean without dust or cobwebs and at great festivals strewed and stuck with boughs and perfumed with incense. Thirdly, that there be fit and proper texts of scripture everywhere painted and that all the painting be grave and reverend, not with light colours or foolish antics. Fourthly, that all the books appointed by authority be there, and those not torn or fouled but whole and clean and well bound; and that there be a fitting and sightly communion cloth of fine linen, with a handsome and seemly carpet of good and costly stuff, or cloth, and all kept sweet and clean, in a strong and decent chest, with a chalice and cover and a stoup or flagon, and a basin for alms and offerings; besides which, he hath a poor man's box conveniently seated, to receive the charity of well minded people and to lay up treasure for the sick and needy. And all this he doth, not as out of necessity, or as putting a holiness in the things but as desiring to keep the middle way between superstition and slovenliness."

(See The Works of George Herbert in Prose & Verse Ed. R. Wilmott (1885))

WILLIAM KINGSLEY. GENT..

High on the wall, south of the altar at Holy Cross, is an alabaster memorial, restored this year by the City & Guilds Restoration Department, to William Kingsley. The effigies depict him kneeling at a desk and behind are his five sons, Thomas, Francis, George, Edward and William. Facing him is his wife, Katherine and behind her their daughter, also Katherine.



vert a cross  
engrailed  
argent

He was buried at Holy Cross on 31 March 1611, clearly regarding Sarratt as his home and owning a large part of it - the manors of Rosehall, Goldingtons and the farms of Bragmans and Woodmans. He also owned important properties and land in Kent, Essex and Yorkshire and had a house in Fleet Street.

The key to his wealth lay in his profession at the Court of Chancery as a Cursitor. Cursitors wrote writs, the documents allowing a legal action to proceed. Initially a man had to be quite wealthy to become a Cursitor, it might cost up to £1,000, but having secured the post, Kingsley proceeded to build up an influential circle of relatives and friends within the legal profession and through his marriage to Richard Tothill's sister, Katherine. Tothill had a monopoly of legal printing and Kingsley became associated with a powerful group of lawyers. Throughout the Tudor and Stuart Age, lawyers became the new gentry - like Kingsley, buying land and manor houses. The times were rapacious and fortunes were made in the Courts of Law.

\* Of his children, William became Archdeacon of Canterbury Cathedral in 1619 and Katherine married James Pennyman of Ormesby Manor, Yorkshire.

Below the memorial in the church is written:- (translation)

"In tender memory of her husband, the knight Sir William Kyngesley, a man of great attainments and of wide distinction, Katherine his wife, greatly beloved, of her devotion gives and bequeaths this memorial.

Learn thus, Poor Mortal, as you vainly dream,  
How life speeds downwards like a rushing stream.  
Kyngesley the knight, has died as all men must,  
His rank is nought, his dust will lie on dust."

It is a verse which reflects the Elizabethan sentiment of the vanity of ambition and the fragility and impermanence of earthly life.

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\* Further background material on the family can be found in the pamphlet Kingsley of Sarratt by Mark Whyman, who is presently attached to Ormesby Manor. While researching the Pennyman family last year he visited Sarratt to give a lecture on the Kingsley connection.



### GRAFFITI

Before Holy Cross was redecorated in Spring 1989, some of the original stonework was exposed which revealed carved initials, dates, pilgrim marks and crosses. These are mainly on the belltower arch which was the original church entrance and on arches around the sedilia in the sanctuary. Dr. Doris Jones-Baker, who has written a number of authoritative works on graffiti, visited the church to explain their historical and religious significance. The marks are also, of course, a very human legacy from people who have visited the church over the past centuries.

The graffiti have not been painted over and Dr. Jones-Baker has researched and written the following article especially for our celebrations this year. We gratefully acknowledge the time she has devoted to the Holy Cross graffiti within a very crowded schedule.

#### MEDIEVAL AND POST-MEDIEVAL GRAFFITI AT SARRATT CHURCH

by Dr. Doris Jones-Baker, MA, Ph.D., FSA

Holy Cross Church at Sarratt has a number of important medieval and post-medieval graffiti of historic interest. These graffiti may be described as writing or drawings cut upon stone, wood, glass or other easily worked surfaces. At Sarratt the surviving graffiti, however, are almost entirely confined to the stonework, owing largely to the destruction of so much of the medieval plaster and to the drastic scope of restoration and rebuilding of the church in the mid-nineteenth century (1865-6) under the direction of Sir Gilbert Scott. At that time, excavation caused much of the north side of the nave to collapse, while additions to the original medieval church plan of a Greek cross - the transepts and vestry - masked or destroyed yet more of the medieval structure.

Of the ancient graffiti, probably the greatest loss was those that would have been inscribed in the medieval plaster as under-drawings for the medieval wall paintings known to have covered much of the walls.

Customarily, if not always, these were first sketched out in graffito - sometimes before the plaster was dry - with the usual mason's drawing tool, a sharpened stick of charcoal, making coloured, indented outlines easy to follow by the painter. Among the wall paintings at Sarratt was a series illustrating the life of Christ, showing the Nativity, the Message, Shepherds watching their flocks and the Resurrection. Tracings of these made by the Rector, Edward Riley (1859-1912) were seen by the historian John Cussans when he visited Sarratt gathering material for Volume three of his History of Hertfordshire (1879-81), where they are described in his sketch of the church.

#### VOTIVE CHRISTIAN SYMBOLS

Votive designs representing elements associated with the Passion of Christ, the ministry of the Apostles and other traditional and most often ancient Christian symbols are one of the largest groups of graffiti now surviving in English churches. Among these at Sarratt is a notable collection of medieval crosses of varying types and at least one drawing of the Host.

Continued ...



Fig. 1

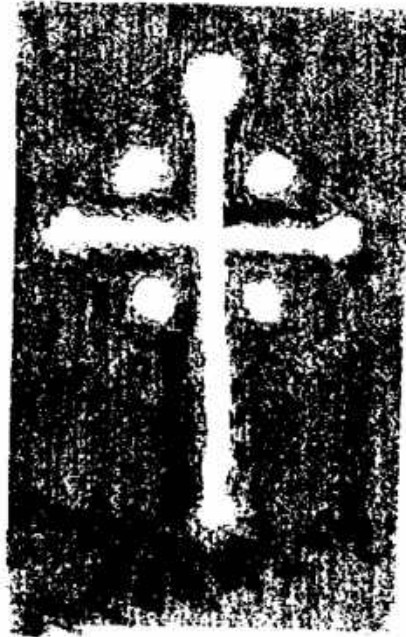


Fig. 2

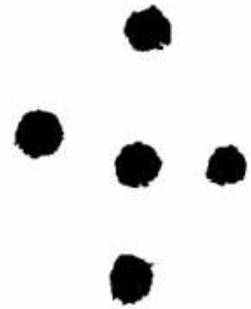


Fig. 3

Still deeply cut on the sedilia in the chancel is Fig. 1, a type of "Moline" cross with near-triangular arms of equal length.

Larger and more unusual in its design is Fig. 2, on the pillar of the nave and south transept. A sort of "cross patee", it is a Latin cross with "circles" at the ends of the arms, and four circles in the angles.

The simplest cross among these graffiti is that made of five indented circles, Fig. 3, in the chancel.

These crosses all represent early forms that would have been known when the earliest stonework at Sarratt church was put in place.

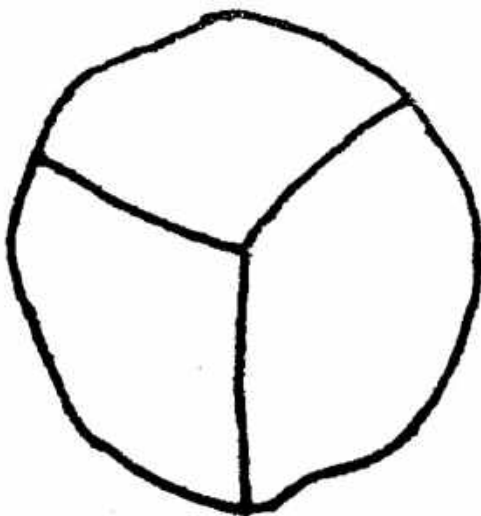


Fig. 4

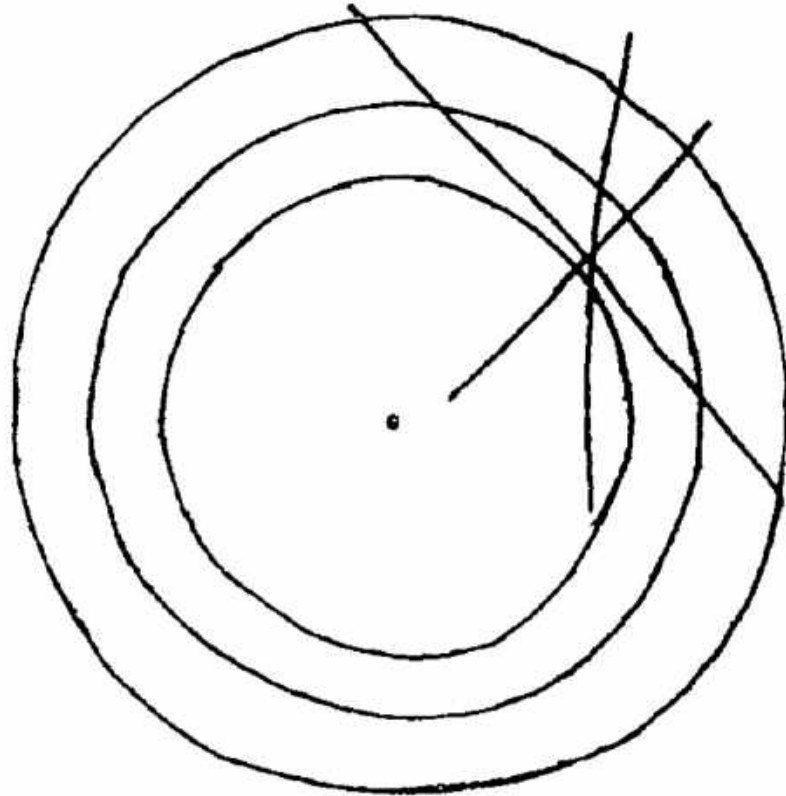
The drawing of the Host, Fig. 4, on the north respond of the tower arch, may have been a simple, and not uncommon, act of piety. Or, like the clusters of graffiti crosses and other votive designs so often found in English medieval churches, it may indicate the position of one of the pre-Reformation shrines in Sarratt church.

Continued ...

The graffito Fig.5 ( $\frac{1}{4}$  size) appears to be the remains of a medieval Mass dial, showing the characteristic hole in the centre where the gnomon was fixed casting a shadow for telling the time of services.

A MASS DIAL

Fig.5



VERBAL INSCRIPTIONS: NAMES

Medieval and post-medieval verbal inscriptions are often found as graffiti. Of these, names are among the most interesting and historically important.

A number of well-written names survive at Sarratt, including the bold signature "R Day" (Fig.6,  $\frac{1}{2}$  size), which may refer to a member of the Day family that for centuries has held lands in the parish, and whose descendants still live in Sarratt.

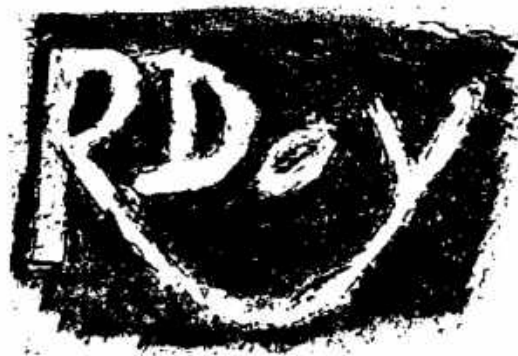


Fig.6

Continued ...

The most widely known graffiti inscription at Sarratt church, however, is the words "RICHARDVS : WARDVS" cut on the pier of the nave and south transept above the cross with four circles described above (Fig.2) and illustrated here as Fig.7:

RICHARDVS : WARDVS

Noticed at the beginning of this century by Reginald Hine FSA (the well-known historian of Hitchin whose graffiti rubbings are now in the Society of Antiquaries' Library, London), this inscription was published by Mrs. V. Pritchard in English Medieval Graffiti (1967).

There is good evidence, however, to support the opinion of the anonymous reviewer of English Medieval Graffiti (Times Literary Supplement, 1967) that Mrs. Pritchard was mistaken in her rejection of the word "WARDVS" as a surname. I would suggest that this graffiti should not only be read "RICHARD WARD", as the reviewer maintained, but that it is the Latinized signature of a prominent seventeenth-century cleric of national as well as Hertfordshire reputation.

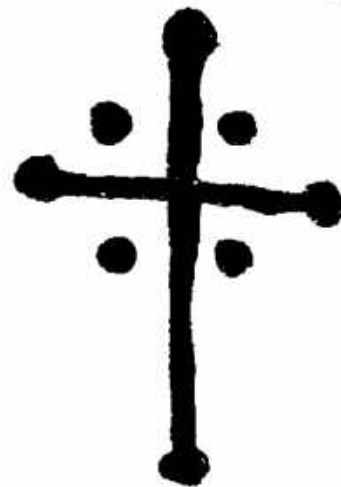


Fig.7

The form of lettering here in careful block capitals, the triple dots made to separate words and Latinization of the name "RICHARD WARD" all point to a seventeenth century date - the very period, moreover, when many of the surviving graffiti inscriptions at Sarratt church appear to have been made.

As the remaining graffiti evidence in English parish churches, including those in Hertfordshire shows, it was customary for incumbents of church livings, whether rectors or vicars, and for curates in charge, to record their names in graffiti in the church - often with the date of induction - as a permanent record. Most of such graffiti names that survive were made on the responds of the south, or "Priest's" door in the chancel, or on stonework by the west door, significant as the place of entry for a cleric at his induction.

The list of Sarratt incumbents compiled by the Rev. Gilbert Riley in 1917 does not show the name "RICHARD WARD" as beneficed here, and it

Continued ...



is known to be incomplete (Note 1). But there is a notable example of an incumbent's signature - probably contemporary with that of "RICHARD WARD" - engraved in St. Mary's church, Puttenham, where Richard Brooke served the cure of souls from 1647 during the Interregnum (Note 2). This dated Puttenham graffito shares with the Sarratt signature "RICHARD WARD" a similar style of lettering as well as separation of the first and last names by a vertical row of dots.

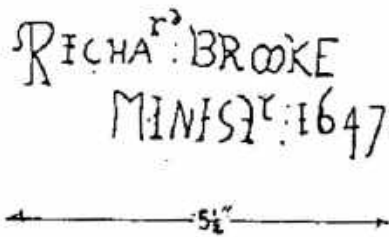


Fig.8

While graffiti of incumbents' signatures are by far the most numerous to survive, those of visiting clergy, particularly the eminent, often dated and sometimes, also recording the kind of service they had performed, are also found. In the case of Sarratt church, we have not far to look for a seventeenth century clergyman named Richard Ward. Removed by only two parishes and but a short ride away, is Bushey, where a most famous scholar-author cleric of that name was appointed rector in 1647 - the same date as the Rev. Richard Brooke's graffito signature in Puttenham church (Fig.8).

There would have been years of opportunity for the Rev. Richard Ward to have made visits to Sarratt. Although one of Cromwell's church appointments, Ward was a prudent man and a pragmatist: he conformed at the Restoration, on the advice of his patron Col. Silas Titus, a gentleman of Bushey who was himself a Parliamentarian turned Royalist (Note 3), and remained rector at Bushey until his death in 1684. Ward made a great reputation in his time as a "reformist" theologian and in 1655, while rector of Bushey, he published A Treatise on the Three Theological Graces, Faith, Hope and Charity. This was followed in 1673 by two more: the first, On the Nature of Wit, Wisdom and Folly; the second, On the Use and Abuse of the Tongue. The dedication of the latter ran:

"By Richard Ward, preacher of the Gospel at Bushey, in the county of Hertford, 1673 ... To the truly Hon. Colonel Titus, one of His Majesty's Bedchamber. Much honoured and worthy Sir, - Books may be distinguished by these four notions: some are to be spit out, some to be swallowed, some to be eaten, and some to be chewed ... I have the honour and happiness to know you, to be thoroughly known unto you and intimately acquainted with you for many years. You have been a constant friend, yea, as a patron to me and mine."

- 
- NOTES: 1. The Rev. Gilbert Ryley's 1917 list of Rectors and Vicars of Sarratt church does not include clergy of the Interregnum; no names appear between Robert Clarke (1635-6) and John Chiswick in 1661. Doris Rollinson, ed., "History Papers on Sarratt and Holy Cross Church," p.3.
2. See "The Graffiti" by Doris Jones-Baker, Appendix XIII, M.C. Vincent, The Church and Manor of Puttenham, Hertfordshire 1987, p.p. 118-124.
3. For a list of Bushey clergy from 1560-1647, see William Urwick, Nonconformity in Hertfordshire, 1884, p.397; for Sarratt clergy from c. 1462-1661, see Ibid., p.334.

By the mid-seventeenth century Sarratt had long been known for the quality of its preaching - as its pulpit, one of the earliest remaining in Hertfordshire attests. Could this Sarratt pulpit belong to the sixteenth century? Among others, rector John Lane MA (1569-71) was a noted preacher. Indeed, Sarratt appears to have shared the tradition of religious "radicalism" with other parishes such as Puttenham along the Hertfordshire-Buckinghamshire borders. In the later middle ages, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, this radicalism took the form of Lollardy, the name given to followers of the reformer John Wycliffe and one Sarratt incumbent, at least, Thomas Hemmingforth, has been described by Hertfordshire historian John Cussans as "probably a Lollard". Appointed Rector of Sarratt in 1479, he left that same year for Shephall, another remote rural Hertfordshire parish, where he was soon after "ejected for apostacy," as the official charge then was. A number of graffiti associated with Lollardy have survived in English churches but none has yet been found at Sarratt.

GRAFFITI INITIALS, INITIALS WITH DATES, AND DATES

Like most ancient English parish churches, Holy Cross at Sarratt has more graffiti cut as initials than any other type. Initials, as might be expected, are generally far more obscure and difficult to identify with any reasonable certainty than names. The graffito "P W", for example (Fig.9) may be suspected as referring to the Sarratt family of Williams, who succeeded the Gilberts at Goldingtons in the late seventeenth century, or the Wingfields, several of whom appear in the burial register from 1591. (See Fig.10).



Fig.10

Sarratt has a number of graffiti of dates inscribed in Arabic numerals (forms of computation used in England at least by the twelfth century), some of these accompanied by initials.

IR  
1657  
IR1696

Fig.11 ( $\frac{1}{2}$  size)

The two initials-and-date graffiti, "I R 1657" and "I R 1696", cut on the north respond of the tower arch, might represent an anniversary of some kind, such as the span of a single life. (Fig.11).



Fig.12

If this can be established then the graffiti of the date "1570" cut nearby would appear to be further evidence that the north respond of the tower arch was used, at least sometimes, for a permanent record of parish burials, among other events (Fig.12).

The ancient customs of recording parish happenings, particularly relating to people of note, in

Continued ...

graffiti inscriptions by clergy on stonework by the font, or places in the porch or church where betrothals and marriages took place, or burials were made - as the surviving graffiti evidence in English medieval churches shows - did not cease when parish baptisms, marriages and burials were ordered to be set down in Register Books by Thomas Cromwell in Henry VIII's reign (1538). At Sarratt the graffito date "1570" may well refer to burial of the man who appears in the Register as

"Ralphe Mourton captain servant to Queen Eliz. bur 30 Augst. 1570"

Ralph Mourton, or his family, may have paid the fee for burial inside the church, usual for gentry and the well-to-do at that time, but his stone, if there was one, is now lost.

BOARD, OR "CLOISTER" GAMES

Medieval graffiti in English churches were not exclusively concerned with the serious matters of life and death, however, for all their venue in consecrated places. Medieval people were evidently as much in need of diversion as those in any age, and deliverance from the tedium of the routine. So great was the vogue among medieval clergy for playing so-called "board games" with counters on plans marked out for convenience upon flat surfaces in churches such as stone seats, window ledges and even tombs, in the form of graffiti engravings, that these games have also been called "Cloister Games" from the large number of survivals found in cloisters, particularly those at Norwich Cathedral and Westminster Abbey. The Synod of Worcester's ban upon chess playing by clergy and the religious of 1250, for example, was largely ignored on the ground that it was not a game of dice, and therefore not a game of chance.

Most frequent among graffiti diagrams for board games are chess and its variants, forms of checquers, and Nine Men's Morris. One graffito for a game is still to be found at Sarratt church, in the chancel. (Fig.13). Here we find three rows of three holes each in the rough form of a rectangle - a simple design for a naughts-and-crosses type of game.

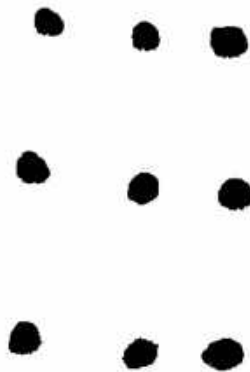


Fig.13

A good Hertfordshire example of a graffito plan for Nine Men's Morris is cut on a window ledge in the north wall of St. Margaret's church, Ridge (Fig.14, 1/2 size).

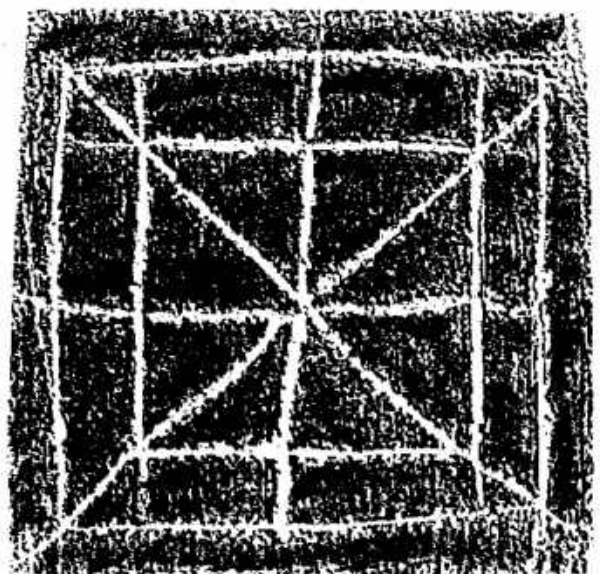


Fig. 14

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### SARRATT - A SEVENTEENTH CENTURY VILLAGE

The English Civil War resulted in the execution of a King, Charles I, and a political revolution. A handful of people in Sarratt may have been affected by the political climate - the wealthy families of Kingsley, Gilbert, Childe and Duncombe who owned the three manors of Sarratt, Goldingtons and Rosehall - while the Rector, Robert Clerk, left Sarratt at the beginning of the War and there was no replacement until John Chiswick at the Restoration of Charles II.

But for the rest of the villagers, life probably went on much as it had done in the past and to reconstruct the fabric of their lives it needs a leap of the imagination to reflect on the physical and social differences between their world and ours.

It was a village where class distinctions would be immediately visible by the houses in which people lived and the way they dressed. Of the manors, only a part of Rosehall still exists but we can assume that all three would have been substantial buildings, well-built in timber and part brick or stone with several rooms and glazed windows. Members of families who enjoyed an average income of £1000 a year, they would have lived in style. Educated, with clothes of fine stuffs, furnishings of quality and ample food for the table from their farms, together with costly spices, tea and coffee.

The yeoman farmers had a much lower income, averaging £50 a year to feed a family and living in one of the houses which still stand, like Red Lion Farm. Their houses had chambers upstairs and Aron Lovett, who might have lived here, left in his will featherbeds, linen and pewter. (See Pots, Platters & Ploughs by P. & B. Buller p.145.)

The vast majority of Sarratt people though, around 97% by some estimates of villagers at the time, lived in poverty. A few were artisans and many worked in the fields or as outservants. Their family income was about £10 a year and there was a substantial number of paupers, vagrants and "cottagers" who lived in huts in outlying woods. Almost all left no will because there was nothing to leave. Their clothes were homespun from the wool of their own sheep or local spinners and weavers.

The cottages in which they lived have all now virtually vanished from Sarratt although the Old Cottage on the Green, now much rebuilt, shows traces of how the cottages may have looked. A cottage was built by the inhabitant - the roof thatched or turfed, the timber frame from the woods and the walls mud or clay with windows of latticed wicker. A typical house would have had two rooms, one for the family and the other a bier, sheltered the cow, pig and sheep. There were no bedrooms and most of these cottages had no chimneys - smoke from the fire had to filter through the roof.

Time was measured by the sun and seasons. These villagers went to bed when night fell since candles or rushlights were expensive. All were exhausted from labour, none could read and they were likely to be very aware of the stars and moon, the long nights helping to preserve traditional beliefs in witches, ghosts and the supernatural. For anything the village could not produce people relied on travelling pedlars, who also brought news from outside, or walked to Rickmansworth, Watford or Kings Langley.

Continued ...

Whole families rose at dawn to work in the fields where agriculture was entirely unmechanized. Dependence on the weather, to an extent difficult for us to grasp, meant that when harvests failed people starved or were malnourished. Bread was home-made from rye or barley, potatoes were almost unknown and turnips formed a large part of the diet. In winter a little salt meat and fish provided some calories together with large quantities of home-brewed beer since pure water was scarce. The average expectation of life was less than half that today and three quarters of babies died before their second birthday. The villagers were vulnerable to epidemics like unfluenza and outbreaks of the plague, together with smallpox and syphilis, which ruined many faces.

Life was short and precarious for almost everybody but Sarratt was likely to have been much more closely knit than now. With no state benefit, no paid holidays or retirement, the family provided the main support. The resident lords of the manor were the principal employers of labour who were seen regularly and were expected to distribute charity to the poor.

Everybody was legally obliged to go to church and the parish was a real social unit with Holy Cross, the largest public building, the centre of public life, amusement and local administration. The article on "Graffiti" in this book points out the traces of the game '9 men's morris' on the stonework and an Inventory of 1638 specified that the altar is railed off - because people often put their coats on it and also to prevent dogs from getting into the sanctuary. The influence of Sarratt's Rectors formed the moral, economic and political views of their parishioners and they were instructed by the King to make Government announcements. Charles I, especially, attempted to dictate the contents of sermons and in 1626 commanded the clergy to preach that refusal of financial support for the King was a sin. Alexander Clerk, our Rector at the time, may or may not have appreciated these directions but they illustrate the authoritarian attitude of the King to the clergy and the tensions which developed into Civil War.

The Jacobean pulpit at Holy Cross, erected about 1606 and with a pedestal four feet higher than today, was used by the Puritan, Richard Baxter, in 1675 when he preached "at Sarratt, Chalfont, Kings Langley, Chessham, (sic) and Amersham and that often twice a day". (See Reliquae Baxteriana Part III p.174). Sarratt villagers, as part of the thousands that came to hear him, clearly shared in a contemporary enthusiasm for a challenging preacher.

All this brief article can do is suggest some of the conditions of life of the people who lived in Sarratt in the seventeenth century. From this we can consider their style of living and how it might have affected their ways of thinking. Perhaps the central, and unanswerable, riddle is the quality of life for the mass of villagers who left no record.

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THE SARRATT MILL - CORN AND PAPER-MAKING

One of the traditional stories in Sarratt to explain the move of the village from around the church to the Green is that rags from London, material to make paper at Sarratt Mill, were infested with the Black Death Plague. This story must be discounted because during the plague of the 14th century Sarratt Mill was a corn mill and had been for centuries, converted to a paper mill in the late 18th century.

Although we don't know the details of the Sarratt Corn Mill, it was probably similar to the innumerable watermills throughout the land. Standing by the Chess, wider and deeper than now, it was fed by water through a watercourse and into a mill-pond. Banked with turves, water was regulated by flood gates and sluices so that the miller could control his head of water. The following is an account of such a mill from South Wales and the March, by W. Rees.

"The outer wheel consisted of a central oak beam into which was secured a double set of spokes or "arms" joined by "curves", strengthened by iron bands and stays to form a large double wheel. Between the outer rims, trough-like "ladeles" were arranged to catch the current of the water. The axle extended into the mill, and on its other extremity was built an inner single wheel, also made of wood and banded. The inner wheel was cogged, the "cogges" secured by "keys", setting in motion a third small cogged wheel. This was fitted onto an elevated and vertical spindle, itself revolving and with its lower extremity resting on a cup of brass. The opposite and squared end of the spindle passed into the upper storey of the mill, through the middle of a stationary millstone lying on its bed on the upper floor. Upon the squared end of the spindle an iron "trendel" or driver was fixed which clutched the iron stay or "rind" secured across the perforated centre of the upper and moving millstone. The corn was then passed from the container, held on a framework, through the hole in the centre of the upper stone. The flow was regulated by a small mechanical contrivance, the "hopper", vibrated by means of a "jack" worked from below by the "rind" and spindle. The revolution of the stone forced out the meal, which was directed by the close fitting framework to the spout where it was ejected into the holder."

\* Evidently, from a will dated 13 October 1690 of William Birch "Flourman", (1) who lived on Sarratt Green, corn was still being ground here in the late 17th century.

The village's reliance for flour on the corn mill, stretching back to Roman times, had vanished by February 1740 when Sarratt Mill, in a deed, was described as lately converted into a paper mill. In 1758 the Sarratt Militia List shows that three men between 18 and 50 years old, Francis Dell, John Milbourn and John Clark, were "papermakers". The number of people working at the Mill was probably swelled by those outside this age range, servants and labourers on the Militia List, as well as women. It would seem that, next to agriculture, the Mill was an important source of employment for the village.

Continued ...

Sir David Williams who owned large parcels of land in Sarratt, including the manors, bought the Mill in 1750. At that time the road from Chorleywood to Sarratt came straight down North Hill to the Mill then straight up, past the main entrance to Goldingtons, through Church End and joined Church Lane - the Cock Inn refers to the Cock horse who led the team pulling a load up the hill. Traffic from the Mill past the mansion's front door seems to have disturbed William Parry, who lived at Goldingtons in 1778, because we find a record in the Easter Sessions of that year of an order to divert 133 poles of the highway, then 9 ft. wide, the diversion forming the present road up the hill. Charles Stevens owned the Mill then but sold the lease in 1779. In January the following advertisement appeared in the London Evening Post:-

"PAPER MILL, consisting of a messuage (dwelling house with land), with suitable attached and detached offices, 25 feet by 37 in front; the mill which is very compleat is 200 feet in front, with vatts, presses and engines compleat, a soll, a cutting-house, a drying loft over, containing ten rooms, has a constant supply of both river and exceeding fine spring waters, was never known to be flooded and at this time is the compleatest mill on the stream; also two fine rich meadows, about three acres, whereon is a cowhouse, stable, rag house with lofts over and a wood or drying house behind the said mill; together with the several fixtures, &c. the whole being new built within these 3 years."

\* Until the end of the 18th century, paper was hand-made and I am grateful  
(2) to Mr. A.J. Ward for this account of the laborious process:-

"The chief tool of the paper-maker was the paper mould. This was a rectangular frame covered by wires laid larallel for "laid" papers or by woven wire for "wove" papers. A device called a deckle fitted over the mould, as a picture frame to a picture, thus forming a rim to the mould. The vatman dipped the mould and deckle into the vat containing water and cellulose fibres, which had been processed from rags. He removed it horizontally holding water and fibres within the deckle. The vatman shook the mould as the water drained away, settling the fibres together to form a wet sheet on the mould. The deckle was then removed and the mould passed to the "coucher" who let it drain. He then tipped the wet sheet of paper onto a felt. A "post" of alternate wet sheets and felts was built up which was put into a press to remove more water. The paper underwent further finishing processes. It was hung up on lines to dry."

The early 19th century brought the invention of paper-making machinery and with it the fear by hand-paper-makers that their jobs were at risk. Several men from the Chess Valley mills tried to destroy Two Waters Mill at Hemel Hempstead with carboys of vitriol.

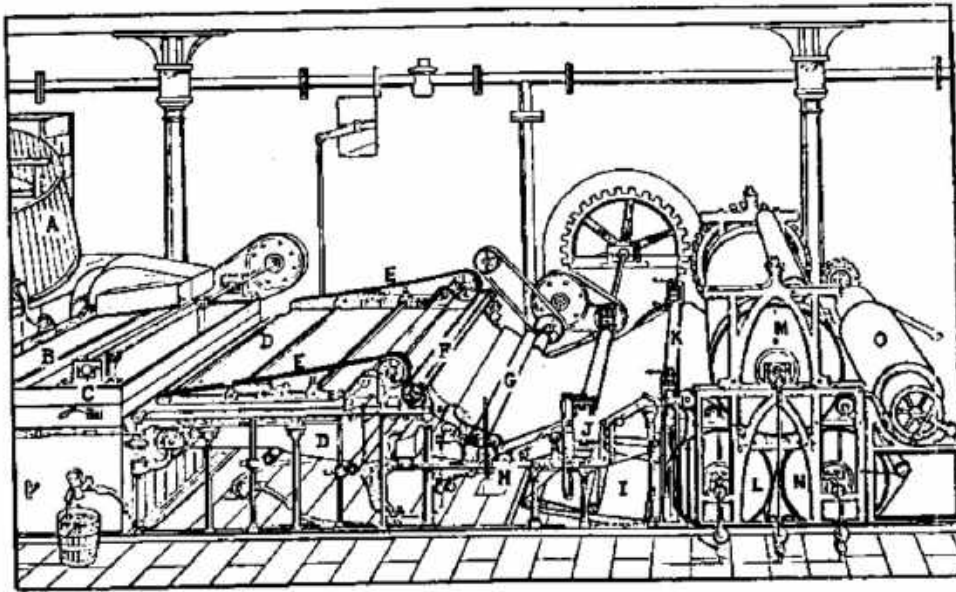
In 1833 Alfred Curtis bought the Mill for £2375 and the deed describes its equipment:-

"Mill with overshot water wheel; Bleaching house (4 bleaching chests), boiler house (cast iron boiler, 2 coppers), heated drying room (14 old beech standards, 30 papered and canvas frames), machine house (62 in. & 60 in. wire paper machines), stuff chest room (2 agitators); pack house (double pack press), work house (presses), store room, cutting shop, engine house (2 oak washing machines, 2 oak beating engines, 4 half stuff bins, 1 allum box), rag house (18 rag baskets, 19 rag lattices, 20 knives), rag loft (rag sifter)."

Continued ...



\* By 1835 two Fourdrinier machines were in use , illustrated below:-  
(3)



- A. Chest    B. Vat    C. Sifter    D. Endless wire 5 feet wide    E. Deckle straps  
F. Dandy roll    G. Couch rolls    H. First roller to endless felt  
I. Endless felt    J. First pair press rolls    K. Second pair press rolls  
L. M. & N. Hot cylinders    O. Reel of paper

In 1851 7 beating engines were working, in 1870 a 70 h.p. steam engine and other machinery were installed, producing printing, news and cartridge paper.

The steam engine, however, seems to have contributed to the downfall of the Mill as a thriving business. The substitution of steam power, costly for fuel, for the river's water power which cost nothing, proved uneconomic. Another factor was the Mill's relative isolation from the nearest station at Rickmansworth resulting in high transport costs for both raw materials and the finished paper.

By 1871 the Mill was not working and in 1882 the Duke of Bedford added it to his extensive estate around Chenies. Soon afterwards the Mill House, and the chimney which could be seen from Chenies, was dismantled, brick by brick. They were sold for 12/6 per thousand and used to build three neighbouring cottages as well as an extension to the old Rectory.

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- \*(1) Doc. 177 - Pots Platters & Ploughs, Buller  
\*(2) The Early History of Machine Paper-Making, A.J. Ward, Hemel Hempstead  
\*(3) Ibid.

THE SARRATT TITHE MAP

The Sarratt Tithe Map of 1842, lodged at the Hertford Record Office, has been borrowed for this Exhibition and is displayed in a specially made case which will be installed in the belltower of the church afterwards. We will then be able to have some of the items and information from the Exhibition on show after it has been dismantled, with the display changed at intervals.

The Hertford Record Office has another copy of the Map, belonging to the Diocese and a further copy is at the Public Records Office at Kew. Both these copies are in perfect condition but the parish copy has been in Sarratt for 146 years and you will see that its condition is certainly not pristine. Daylight and continuous reference over the years has dulled the surface but proves its part in the village.

For a brief explanation of tithes, they were the payment of a tenth part of the produce of the land, allotted to the maintenance of the clergy and other ecclesiastical purposes. They might be the one tenth of a crop which were stored in Tithe Barns, or work carried out on glebe land, or a mixture of the two. The system was further complicated by divisions of tithes into 'great' or 'small'. The 'great' were tithes of major crops like wheat and oats or 'small' - the minor produce of pigs, lambs and chickens.

In 970 AD, King Edgar enacted penalties for the non-payment of tithes when they, therefore, became a civil as well as a religious sanction and over the centuries they frequently caused resentment and friction between the priest and his parishioners. This may have been the reason for the following entry, dated 11 July 1575, in the Hertford Assize Records:-

"FYRON, RICHARD, gent., PHILLIPS, RICHARD, yeoman, and KYNDLEMARSHE, RICHARD, yeoman of Sarratt, indicted for forcible seizure. On 8 May 1575 they, with others unknown to the number of eight, forcibly seized Sarratt vicarage, 3 acres of meadow, 40 acres of arable and 4 acres of wood, all belonging to William Edwards, vicar of Sarratt, whom they desseised from 8 May until the date of this indictment."

The verdict is unknown but William Edwards was succeeded as Vicar in 1575 by Ralph Turner.

The Tithe Commutation Act of 1836 helped to ameliorate these ancient grievances by stopping payment in kind and tithes were commuted for an annual money payment in lieu of tithes which depended on the varying price of corn.

Continued ....

The Tithe Map identifies each house and plot of land with a number and its accompanying Index gives the names of the occupier, the landowner, and the type of property and the value of the tithe payment to the vicar. In 1842 it was William John Moore who later added "Brabazon" to his name.

The last page of the Index details the corn crop for the year:-

Wheat - 2990 bushels @ 7s 0½d per bushel  
Barley - 5300 bushels @ 3s 11½d per bushel  
Oats - 7630 bushels @ 2s 9d per bushel

The tithe of one-tenth amounted to an income of £315 to the vicar, out of which he had responsibility for part of the church fabric, especially the chancel, and other expenses for the parish.

The tithe system has been gradually phased out and now, in England, there is no such thing as tithes. Their abolition has been replaced by a stipend to the vicar, paid by the Diocese. The offerings of the parishioners now go in part to the Diocese to contribute to the stipend while the remainder maintain the practice of religion in the parish and uphold the fabric of the church.

The Tithe Map and Index gives us an unique insight into how Sarratt looked in 1842, its inhabitants and the landowners. The following article, slightly adapted, was clearly written by somebody who had analysed the buildings as shown in the Tithe Map. Unfortunately, the article is unsigned but I am indebted to the author for this imaginative piece of writing.

#### GLIMPSES OF SARRATT'S PAST - THE VILLAGE IN 1842

Any inhabitant of twentieth century Sarratt who was able to take a journey back in time to 1842 would doubtless be most conscious of the emptiness of the village. Only in the North-west (where Newhouse, Whitedell, Bragmans and Rosehall were all flourishing farms) can the landscape have been substantially the same as today. In the South-east the main course of the River Chess still took its way to the right of the drive to Sarratt Mill House and flowed under the old mill buildings themselves; and at the corner of the churchyard nearest to the almshouses was a cottage, soon to disappear.

Walking up from the church we shall not pass any sign of habitation (apart from the lane leading to the Rectory - or Vicarage, as it was then known), until we come to the Green; and if we carry on round the corner we should find nothing in Dimmocks Lane after the two pairs of cottages (now the Garage Cottage and Rose Cottage), and nothing in Deadmans Ash Lane apart from the four cottages just before one drops down the hill. Green End Farm was there, although we might not recognise it at first because of the barns that hid it from the road. On the spot where now stands the Cricketers, there was a block of four cottages and a Meeting House. There was nothing else around the Dell.

Moving on to the main part of the Green, we should be struck first by the fact that there was only one "main" road over the Green; the present

Continued ....

road in front of the shops did not appear until later in the century. Along the road one would pass a series of farms - Great Wheelers Farm, Pear Tree Cottage (then worded as a cottage farm), the Boot, a farm on the site of Sarratt House and then Red Lion Corner, much as it is today but with Pub and Farm functioning as such. There was no Wheatsheaf, only pairs of cottages, one of which housed a shop - then nothing else until one reached Sarratt Hall and two cottages (one of which included a shop) and an Infant School.

On the other side of the Green, walking from the Dell, one would pass a block of eight cottages, of which Ivy Cottage is possibly a solitary survivor; then nothing again until one reached what is now the entrance to Alexandra Road, after which one would pass seven cottages, mainly in pairs. Finally a block of five, including a workshop just before Dawes Lane, itself containing only a pair of cottages on the left, and a now disappeared block of five at the "Fold". Passing Dawes Lane and a single cottage we come to a Beer House, a house on the site of "The Laurels" and a block of three cottages where there is now the Woodyard. Holly Tree Farm and Holly Tree Cottage were there as the only pair of semi-detached houses (to use a modern term) in the village - pairs of cottages were common enough, but never pairs of houses, except this one. Still travelling northward, we should come to three cottages and the Wheelwright's shop (the origin of "The Nook" and "Oakbeam" and probably "The Old Cottage" as well), and then on to more familiar ground with Little Sarratt Hall and Sarratt Hall Farm (but no Great Sarratt Hall), with the pair of cottages beyond this (now Great Sarratt Hall Cottage), and the three cottages at Rosehall Green.

Poleshill was without a single house, as was the Sarratt side of Belsize where the road from Sarratt kept to the left towards Flaunden, and the road from Chipperfield kept to its left into "Under the Heavens". Woodmans was certainly there to the left of the Chipperfield Road and the beginning of Ollieberrie Farm was there in a pair of cottages, rejoicing in the name of "Bacon Sops" - but of the buildings which at present flank Holly Hedges Lane, there was no sign.

Not surprisingly, of the twenty houses (as opposed to cottages) the majority were farm houses, in fact if not in name. Only Sarratt Mill, Goldingtons, Sarratt Hall and one of the pair of semi-detached houses on the Green were residences pure and simple. Major farms were Green End Farm (although it did not at that time bear this name), Sarratt Hall Farm and Rosehall, each of these covering more than two hundred acres. These, together with Bragmans and New House Farm (each nearly one hundred acres) between them farmed the bulk of the arable fields in the Parish. But there were ten smaller farms varying from thirty-five to ten acres and four cottages worked one or two small fields apiece.

Of the present "pubs" two were active - "The Cock" and "The Boot" together with the "Red Lion" and a Beer House on the Green near the corner of Dawes Lane. There were two shops - both at the north end of the Green. Finally to round off the statistics, there were eighty-seven cottages, eleven of which had either fields or an orchard attached.

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NOTE

The Tithe Map was printed in 1842 but the original survey was carried out in 1840.



### STRAW-PLAITING IN THE 1880's

One of the "cottage" industries in Sarratt was straw-plaiting. (See The Victoria County History of the County of Hertford 1920, part 23b, Part of Cashio Hundred). In the late 19th century when farm labourers earned from twelve to fifteen shillings a week, a skilful plaiter could earn four or five shillings - a welcome addition to the meagre wage. The plaited straw was sold at Luton market for re-sale to hat manufacturers at a time when the town supplied a huge demand for straw hats and bonnets at home and abroad. At the Plait Hall were many small shops, each stacked from floor to ceiling with bundles of straw or skeins of straw plait in various colours. Straw was almost as valuable as wheat and varieties were grown which gave straw up to 5 feet in length. Much of the land in Hertfordshire produced this long, high-quality straw specially for the straw-plaiting industry.

The straw came from the farms in bales. It was hand cut by scythe or sickle and the ears of the corn were also cut off by hand. Bruised straw from the harvester or threshing machine was unsuitable. To avoid crushing all the bales stood on end in the straw barn until needed.

Cutting was done in the house where two or three men sat and cut each straw into lengths, removing all the joints (knots). These straight straws were dropped into boxes or baskets. At the end of the day the waste straw lay ankle deep on the floor. The straws were next sorted into sizes and a wooden stand with removable wire frames was used to "sieve" the straws. Each thickness was tied into a bundle of about 5" diameter. Next the ends were cut on a scythe blade to get uniform length. This tool had a small cross handle, held against the body, while its point was pressed against a post; the bundles were moved backwards and forwards along the blade, "sawing" the ends evenly. The bundles were then stacked around the inside of a large box or "steam chest", then an iron pan with lighted sulphur ("brimstone") was lowered into the box and the lid closed. By the next morning the plait would be bleached white.

The bundles of straws had first to be split into four or eight "splints" using brass "machines" with three to seven blades and a central point to enter the straw. The splints were dipped in water, wrapped round with paper and held under the left arm. To produce a glazed plait two splints were placed with the rough inside surfaces together. If they became too dry they were drawn between the lips to moisten them. As plaiting proceeded new splints were set in leaving a short projecting end and a longer end where the former one ended. These were cut away with scissors and children shared in this work. The plaits, now clean and free from all stray ends, were measured into "scores" - twenty yards, measured by two notches in the wooden mantelpiece and were ready for the market. Fine plaits of seven splints and coarser plaits of five splints, often in two or more colours were produced by cottagers.

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#### NOTE

Much of the information above was taken from the recollections of Mr. J. Thorne which is lodged at the Local Studies Collection at Hertford. His grandfather was a strawcutter at Redbourne in the 19th century and his mother was an experienced straw-plaiter having been taught at a local plaiting school.

REVEREND EDWARD RILEY MA

These pages are a tribute to Edward Riley, Rector here from 1859-1912. Under his care the church was restored from a state of dilapidation to the building we know today and without him Holy Cross might well have fallen into ruin.

He was a diligent and imaginative historian and his History Paper is his evocative account of Sarratt's origin and how he tackled the Restoration Programme under Sir Gilbert Scott. It was this Paper which prompted a small group of people in Sarratt in 1988 to carry out further research, in particular the whereabouts of the "Roman" items that he found.

They were rediscovered in the safe custody of a previous churchwarden, Mr. Edwin Newman, and Rev. Martin Culverwell and I set out to have them identified by Verulamium and the British Museum. The results were surprising and, in themselves, do not prove that the church was built on a Roman site as Rev. Riley rather hoped. However, the research has been significant for Sarratt and has led to the production of this book.

The shards, referred to as "cinerary urns" are, in fact, 12/14th century pieces of cooking pots, possibly made at a medieval kiln near Potten Farm, Chandlers Cross. The iron key, "true Roman" is also medieval, tentatively dated to the 14th century. The pretty "Roman brooch" is a bronze stud, originally gilded, for a leather belt and dated about 1520. We have called this stud "The Riley Brooch" and its design is the motif for our celebrations this year and the garland of friendship for the newly formed Friends of Holy Cross. I'm sure Riley would have approved the Friend's provision for Holy Cross to continue to serve the parish into the next century.

He was right, though, about the Charles I coins, called Rose Farthings, to which he added a few other pennies and tokens found in the church.

In the rediscovered little collection are three small pieces of Roman brick and a piece of Roman chimney flue. Where these were found we do not know but they may have been a memento from a Roman villa excavated in Sarratt by Peter Clutterbuck in 1907. The site was filled in later but we have a record of the excavation, a description of the dimensions of the villa and a suggestion that further Roman buildings were probably clustered in the field.

The significance for the village of the newly dated items is that what Riley thought was a "deep grave" was actually a medieval midden or refuse heap which confirms a domestic settlement close to the church in medieval times, which was previously only a conjecture.

Edward Riley's care of Holy Cross seems to have been matched by his pastoral care for the people of Sarratt. His obituary in the West Herts. and Watford Observer of 2nd March 1912 covers a whole page and outlines a remarkable life in which, for 53 years, he was "in every sense the father of the village". Farming his own glebe land, his coffin was carried on a simple farm wagon followed by the little poney and chaise that he had used around the village. His son, Gilbert, followed him as Rector of Sarratt and all his family gave devoted service to the community. His wife, Emily, is commemorated by the St. Cecilia window and his own life is marked by the richly coloured window in the west wall of the Tower.

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Reverend Riley's History Paper, which follows, was read by him before the St. Albans & Herts. Architectural & Archeological Society from the lectern at Holy Cross Church on 7th September 1902 and has been slightly condensed for this book. Walking to the church from Chorleywood, a member of the Society wrote of his impressions - "You cross lush meadows, where cattle sometimes stand bathed in grass to the dewlap, to the River Chess - the happy, literary, trout-haunted, sparkling Chess, the banks of which are still yellow here and there with mimulus."

#### HISTORY PAPER

The ancient church is dedicated to the Holy Cross and its structure well fulfils its name as, till the restoration in 1865, it was in the form of a true Greek Cross. On the site of the church there was said to be a monastery, probably a chantry, and we are now in the archdeaconry of St. Albans as well as under its Bishop. The Archdeacon may be safely put down as a representative of the old Abbott of St. Albans and we in Sarratt were good enough in the eleventh or twelfth century to support that venerable institution by the pleasant and no doubt acceptable gift of lands to Abbot Hall, by one old fellow of the name of Syret.

The name of the village was then spelt Sarrett or Syret, from a Swedish family of three brothers who came over in the 8th century, as tradition had it. Chauncy says "Offa, King of the Mercians, granted this vill of Syret now called Sarratt to the Monastery of St. Albans, anno 796 33 Regni sui, so called from Syret, a Saxon, who I suppose was an ancient possessor of it. King Ethelred confirmed the gift by that name and though no mention of it is made in Domesdi Book (Salmon say, for what reason I know not), King Henry I and John confirmed it again by the same name to that church." Some explain the name as meaning the road by the water as, in treading the parish boundaries a man called the water-dog used to wade through the middle of the stream, the river Chess, which separates Sarratt from the county of Bucks. Others derive the word from the Saxon Shiregate, or Shire Gate meaning the parish approach to the county of Bucks. The exact date of this church, which is considered to be the most interesting in the Rural Deanery of Watford, is uncertain. As soon as I was instituted here in 1859, I tried to find out the approximate date and for that purpose went to the reading room of the British Museum. I consulted and took extracts from the Histories of Clutterbuck, Salmon, Chauncy and from other histories, e.g. from a printed portion of Cox's Magna Britannica, date 1725. In one history reference is made to an old MSS in the British Museum, folio 178 of Mr. Cox's MSS., and in the Cotton MSS. folio 263 but there I had to stop short.

However, this church has a reputation of being 800 years old, according to archeologists, who style it transition Norman: but you see there is nothing decidedly Norman about it, though that lae prince of modern architects, Sir Gilbert Scott, who restored it during my incumbency in 1865-6, traced by the abaci mouldings in the chancel the remains of Norman architecture; and the west window in the tower, he distinctly told me, was of older date than Westminster Abbey. The walls are of flint throughout and three feet thick with the exception of the mouldings of arches and windows which are of Totternhoe stone.

Continued ...



The church in 1859 was in a most dilapidated and deplorable state but Sir Gilbert Scott, who worshipped in this church as a boy and who, in consequence, naturally took a great interest in it, kept to the original details as much as possible, keeping to the old massive structure and introducing nothing tawdry or florid. It was formerly in the shape of a true Greek Cross but two side aisles were added to accommodate 75 people to compensate for the loss of seats which had been provided by two hideous modern galleries which were taken down. A large vestry which had been used for Sunday schools was also removed. The pulpit and reading-desk were in the centre or entrance to the south transept, the clerk's and reading desk being on a level and next to one another. The pulpit was removed to where it is now but the pedestal of cherry-wood which supported it was lowered three or four feet, while the sounding-board was retained. I have an opinion that this old pulpit is unique both as to structure and size and that it is older than the well-known one at St. Michael's, St. Albans. It is Jacobean and the carving on the body on it is designated as the linen pattern; this, together with the sounding-board is worth examination. It is, I believe, a specimen of one of the oldest pulpits in England - an order in Council for the erection of pulpits in every parish being made, I believe, in the earlier part of the reign of James I - and I should not be surprised if it were erected in 1606 or soon afterwards as, apparently at that time some extra loving care was bestowed upon the old church; cf. the date of the oldest bells, viz. 1606. In 1864 I determined to have a thorough restoration as the roof and ceiling, of barrel shape, which I had had temporarily repaired to keep out the rain and daylight, were in bad condition. The walls were green and dangerous and the floors all in holes and uneven and an extended or opened-out cheese box was used to keep out the draughts through the front door. All the oak beams and rafters were brought to light and repaired and new ones inserted where necessary both in the body of the church and chancel. The entrance to the north transept which was blocked partly by a large board of the parish charities and by lath and plaster between the abaci of a former arch was opened; several new arches were erected and the supporting pillars were built on a gravel foundation nine feet deep. Two old windows of the 15th century were restored and several new ones inserted in the walls for necessary light. The original arch of the east window was discovered and a two-light window was designed in place of a small so-called churchwarden one. The old Norman font bowl, which had been supported by mere bricks and let into the chancel arch, was too decayed to be kept and a new one of Purbeck marble was erected following the pattern of the old one. The plinth of the old one was perfect and is retained for on it were found the bases of five Norman pillars which gave the pattern to the present font.

In the chancel you will see the interesting effigies in alabaster of Sir William Kingsley and his wife and five children, four boys behind the man and one girl behind the woman, in the act of prayer; underneath which are four laudatory Latin lines about the husband and wife. The date of the erection of the effigies is painted 1502 but Cussans, the modern Hertfordshire historian, says it is a mistake for 1602 on account of the dress of the period. Below this are two sedilia of very early English date, judging by the columns between; and rear them, two piscinas. On the other side of the chancel is a niche and a supposed Easter Sepulchre.

The north side was covered with yellow frescoes of fruits and flowers, pomegranates and pineapples but too friable for repair. On the chancel arch in the body of the church an old bricklayer told me he had

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whitewashed numbers of Kings and Queens, as he called them; these I have not attempted to uncover, the wall is too decayed; but on the east wall of the south transept I did attempt some work with my pen-knife and brought to view what may be called the life of our Lord from His birth to his ascension. There are the horns of cattle in the manger, an old shepherd with his sheep and bearing a staff; a boy blowing a double horn, one or two good heads, several figures - one carrying the flag emblem of the Resurrection while underneath are the heads of the eleven Apostles watching with their raised hands the feet of our Saviour ascending into the clouds and in the corner behind a monument may be seen, by the aid of a ladder, the fine, beautiful head of a high priest in the act of blessing.

During the restoration and enlargement, when any foundations were dug, I had the gravel carefully sifted and there were found one little bit of a painted window and two small coins of Charles I's time. This leads me to the fact that this church was built on the site of a Roman cemetery. The Romans often loved a spot with a fair view on the brow of a hill and I have constantly unearthed pieces of cinerary urns or vases while in one deep grave I found a true Roman key and a small Roman brooch. Under the new porch were found portions of a stone coffin of Purbeck marble and a coffin lid of free stone is placed on the ground near the vestry window which has a floriated cross on it and is considered as belonging to the 13th century. I may mention that there are three bells: the oldest 1606, with the inscription "Knight made mee in 1606", the second "Chandlers made me in 1719", and the third by Mears and Stainbank, 1865; this last took the place of an old one that, unfortunately, before my incumbency, was taken down and sold for old brass at Chenies where there was a foundry.

And now let me allude to the principal peculiarity of Holy Cross Church - I mean the almost unique tower with its so-called saddle-back roof; there are, I believe, only three other churches which have the roof of the tower facing north and south. The foundation stone of the tower is a fine specimen of conglomerate so-called Hertfordshire pudding stone or breeding-stone and there are others like it hard by. Though the tower is a brick one at the top, it is considered to be the original.

In 1859 there were no foundations, the church rested on the ground; so at the restoration the whole church was under-pinned and water pipes placed three feet under as drainage; spouts or gutters also were added. The entire restoration cost £1400 and the architect expressed himself afterwards as well satisfied with the substantial work. The church was re-seated throughout with well-seasoned oak seats, copied from two or three original ones in the north transept which are supposed to be coeval with the church. I omitted to mention that there are large Roman tiles in one of the walls near the vestry door.

Originally the old church must have presented internally a stately appearance with its beautifully frescoed walls and well-tiled flooring. You will see I have preserved a few of the best of the ancient tiles and placed twelve of these relics of departed glory in the chancel in front of the communion table. The old register dates from 1560 or the second year of Queen Elizabeth's reign.

FINIS

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VICTORIAN SCHOOLS IN SARRATT AND REASONS FOR TRUANCY

In 1862 a "National School", aided by the Church of England, was founded in Sarratt, now the Old School House in Church Lane. The headmistress was Hannah Amery and the building was used until 1978 when all the schoolchildren moved into the present school by the pond.

Until 1862 village children had no formal education except for a few who attended a small infants school north of the Green, administered by Mary Ann Day. There were a number of these schools in England, called "Dame Schools" which were set up by ladies conscious of illiteracy and they taught the rudiments of writing and calculation. It must have been popular because it was still open in 1874 with children being admitted from it to continue their education at the National School which had, in that year, 100 names on the register.

In 1862 children were not compelled to attend the National School and education was not free. Excuses for non-payment of fees and absenteeism were recorded and from these daily entries emerges a picture of the varied and active life a child led outside the classroom.

The school was frequently shut because rain and snow made roads impassable for local children. There were also outbreaks of smallpox. In 1877 children from Deadmans Ash were not allowed to attend, a child there having the disease.

If the weather was good, children took time off simply to have fun. Entries include a steeple chase in the neighbourhood, treats, weddings, fetes, the Meat Show at Watford and other shows at Rickmansworth and Denham, cricket matches, fairs and a Bazaar and Waxworks held at Great Sarratt House.

From the old log-books, though, the most numerous reasons for non-attendance reveal a childhood involved in contributing to the family income, helping parents in the fields and garden and gathering fruit for the larder.

Markets at Watford, Rickmansworth, Hemel Hempstead, Luton and London demanded supplies of produce and we find entries where children were absent due to cherry picking, hop picking, blackberry gathering, \* straw plaiting and acorn gathering for pig food.

They gathered wood from the fields, cut weeds and in the summer helped with haymaking and gleaning. The acceptance by the community of a child's place in the hay fields is stressed by the name "Harvest Holiday" given to the break from school in the summer.

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NOTE - information about the old log books was taken from articles in the Sarratt Parish Magazines written by Rev. Gilbert Riley and these are now at Hertford Record Office.

SYDNEY VALENTINE - ACTOR

by Eddie Rollinson

On the wall of the south transept of Holy Cross Church is an oak plaque. It has a carved surround of laurel leaves and inset are the words:-

SYDNEY VALENTINE

ACTOR

BORN 1864

DIED 23rd DEC 1919

Although he lived at Pear Tree Cottage on Sarratt Green for at least six years prior to his death, nothing seems to be known locally of his social conscience, his work for his fellow actors, his numerous stage appearances in London and New York and his contribution to the village in which he lived.

Research at the Hertford Record Office revealed some information and this was followed by visits to the Theatre Museum and Colindale Newspaper Libraries. Reference books, Who's Who in the Theatre (1st 3 editions) and a recently published book From Irving to Olivier by Dr. M. Anderson were invaluable in detailing the social history of the acting profession from 1880 - 1983.

The first appearance of Sydney Valentine, aged 20, in London was on 21st March 1884. He was then seldom away from the London stage for the rest of his acting life. He played in companies with Martin Harvey and Sir Henry Irving with whom he acted in America. In 1905 he appeared at Sandringham and Windsor Castle before King Edward VII and in 1911 a command performance at Drury Lane. In the autumn of 1911 he returned to America, playing in Atlantic City and New York.

The date of his residence in Sarratt is not yet known precisely but in 1913 he wrote a letter to the Watford Observer complaining about the state of the roads in Sarratt and the damage caused to horses.

In 1916 news came through that his son, Guy, went missing in Flanders. It is now known that he is buried in a military cemetery in Flers, France.

Sydney fought a long campaign for his fellow actors to improve conditions back-stage in London and the Provinces and he was a principal negotiator in the first contract between the Actors' Association and the Theatre Managements which was known as "The Valentine Contract".

While addressing a meeting of the Association at the Duke of York Theatre on 19th December 1919 he had a stroke from which he never recovered. He died on 23rd December, aged 54 years, and his cremation was at Golders Green on 29th December. On 31st December a memorial service was held at St. Margaret's Westminster, attended by many members of the theatrical profession - Andre Charlot, Sir Squire Bancroft, Mr. & Mrs. Owen Nares, Mr. Charles Hawtry and Miss Constance Collier, as well as representatives of many associations and committees on which he sat including the Director of the French Drama, Science & Fine Arts Society.

It is hoped to produce a book later this year on the work of this fine actor who was held in such high esteem by members of his profession.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

I would like to thank Mrs. Helen Poole, the first Curator of the Watford Museum, who gave me practical advice and encouragement when this book and the Exhibition were just an idea. The Museum staff of St. Albans City, Verulamium, Watford and Hitchin and the Dacorum Museum Advisory Committee were unfailingly courteous. I am also grateful for advice given by the staff at County Hall Hertford, the Records Office and the Local Studies Collection. My greatest debt is to my husband, Eddie, chauffeur and proof reader, for his patience during the writing and production of the book.

Books referred to in the articles are not repeated here although I have included Phil Buller's book which is a remarkable fund of information on people who lived in Sarratt and left wills. Background reading comes from such a multitude of sources that it's impossible to list these books here, even if I could remember! So this is a bibliography which has been invaluable for checking specific details in the articles.

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THE FRIENDS OF HOLY CROSS, SARRATT



All who wish to see the Church of The Holy Cross preserved as a place of peace and beauty are friends of Holy Cross, whether they live or worship in Sarratt or are welcome visitors to this quiet corner of Hertfordshire.

1990, the year of the eight hundredth anniversary celebrations, has been chosen as the time to create a charitable trust for funds to ensure that Holy Cross remains in a good state of repair for the benefit of generations to come. This trust has been given the name The Friends of Holy Cross, Sarratt.

The inspiration for the trust's logo is the Tudor button brooch found in the churchyard by Edward Riley, Rector of Sarratt, who was responsible for the major restoration work to the church in the 1860's. The logo - the garland of friendship around the cross - symbolises the way in which all friends of this lovely church can help preserve it by supporting the special charity, The Friends of Holy Cross, Sarratt.

John Guy



