

ST. MARY'S Parish Church has a long history, and was here at the time of the Norman Conquest. How long before that eventful period it was in existence is not at present known, nor does there appear to be any great probability that the date of its original foundation will ever be revealed. Merleswain the Saxon, who was Lord of Bridgwater in 1066, no doubt worshipped within its walls. Walter de Douai the Norman,* who succeeded him, afterwards held the manor, which passed in due course to his son, and thence by marriage to Fulk Paganel, also of distinguished Norman descent. From the Paganel it was transferred again, in 1180, to the great baron, Lord William Briwere.

The church itself tells its own story well, by reason of its varied architecture, but that story cannot be traced — in the stones of the building now standing — much further back than the end of the eleventh century. Of the church which stood here in Walter de Douai's time scarcely any traces are left. The interior south-east corner of the tower certainly has some very early work, which some archaeologists have pronounced to be Norman, and the crypt — were it accessible — would probably reveal more work of that period. But there is abundant evidence of much building having taken place herein soon after the year 1209 and it is most likely that the lines and dimensions of St. Mary's to-day do not vary greatly from what they were at that time. Quite early in the thirteenth century the church was, one may confidently say, very largely rebuilt, of course in the Early English style. Moreover, the documents exactly confirm what the church walls declare. It was early in the thirteenth century that William Briwere began to build the castle, and to bestir himself for the advancement of the town. There is little doubt that he largely modified the church which he found here, and rebuilt it, with infinite taste and skill, in the architectural style which was just then dawning in England. The story of the church walls, corroborated by the legal documents of that time, finds further confirmation in the unalterable tradition that William Briwere greatly beautified St. Mary's.

When Walter de Douai, who seems to have done but little for Bridgwater, took possession of the manor, St. Mary's was a purely parish church, a rectory, supported after the usual manner by tithes. In this way the rector was paid, and the parochial system

maintained. But the monastic houses were then coming to be much in vogue, and it was getting to be the custom to subsidize these great houses with grants paid out of the parish rectories. St. Mary's quickly experienced this. The wife of Walter de Douai (probably it was the first Walter) after her husband's death granted the revenues of the church to the monks of Bath.** It was the first alienation of the St. Mary's possessions, and that alienation, in some direction or other, has strangely enough never ceased unto the present day. It still exists; Walter's wife's gift of the advowson to Bath Priory was the precursor of many subsequent grants of the same property to other folk. Thus Pope Adrian,** in a document addressed to Robert Bishop of Bath (1136-66), speaks of Bridgwater Church as belonging to the Priory of Bath. When, however, the Paganel family came to be lords of Bridgwater, there were further developments in the history of the parish church. Ralph Paganel in 1086 had held five lordships in Somerset, and many elsewhere. The family came from Moutiers, and they gave large grants of churches and lands in England to the abbey of Marmoutier. This was a Benedictine abbey not far from Tours, and being the largest of the abbeys founded by St. Martin was known as Majus Monasterium. Lickford in Buckinghamshire, Corsham in Wilts, Trinity Priory at York, and Allerton Mauleverer Priory were the English cells to this abbey. Henry II granted the manor of Torvertone to the same house. William Paganel, in a deed, confirmed his father Fulk's grant of the manor of Bridgwater to William Briwere,*** and his son Fulk Paganel, in a document **** which has given rise to no little difficulty, granted Bridgwater Church to this same abbey of Marmoutier which his relatives had so richly endowed. But the church of Bridgwater had already been granted by the Douai family to Bath Priory, The advowson, of course, may have become separated from the manor, but this was unusual. It may be that the Paganels — some of whom were a bold and unruly set of men — set the Bath monks at defiance, and transferred St. Mary's to the great foreign abbey hard by their own old home at Moutiers. It may have been possible that Marmoutier held the advowson of St. Mary's for a few years, perhaps from 1187 up to the end of the century; or it may have been that the grant made on parchment was ineffectual in fact. Grants of property in those days, by deed, were ineffectual unless the grantee was given physical possession with proper

formalities (livery of seizin). Many grants in old times were made by livery without any deed at all.

However these things may have been, William Briwere presently got possession of the church as well as of the manor, and there is every reason to believe that he restored and rebuilt the fabric in a magnificent way. After a few years he set to work upon his favourite foundation of the Augustinian Hospital of Saint John in Eastover, to which the tithes of several parishes afterwards became allocated, and one of the parishes thus allotted to St. John's was the parish church of Bridgwater. Briwere, no doubt, meant that the resources of St. Mary's should help the development of St. John's Hospital, and that the Augustinians there would provide in some measure for the spiritual work of the town and of the church. The ultimate arrangement was that the advowson should belong to the hospital,* saving the payment to Bath Priory of one hundred shillings a year.** This was afterwards regularly paid to Bath, or to those whom the Bath authorities appointed to be the recipients of the charge.*** St. Mary's remained in the possession of the Augustinian canons until the suppression of their house in the sixteenth century. They were required to appoint a vicar who would govern the church, and be responsible for its proper ministrations, and they had to see that he received an adequate proportion of the revenue for his sustenance. The position and duties of the vicar of Bridgwater have not greatly changed, save in scope, since William Briwere's day until now. Only once, at the time of the Commonwealth, has the proper *status* of the benefice been disturbed, and that was not for long. St. Mary's was the centre of worship for the town in the eleventh century, even as to-day.

The fabric is interesting as illustrating well the three periods of architecture : Early English, Decorated, and Perpendicular. Beginning westwards with the tower, it is evident that this has seen many vicissitudes, and has been greatly altered from its original form. Of Norman origin, almost every Norman feature has disappeared. The arch leading from the tower to the nave is Early English, of quite early thirteenth century. Its apex indicates the height of the Early English nave, and the height of the aisles can be seen from a carved stone corbel at the west corner of the north aisle. No windows with mullions of that date have been preserved, but later windows have been inserted in Early English

casings, notably at the west and north sides of the nave. A beautiful Decorated window remains at the west end of the south aisle, and a fine five-light window of the same period is at the north-west part of the north transept. The three windows in the south aisle, between the porch and the west end, are of the reticulated pattern of Decorated work, very usual in the fourteenth century. All the remaining windows in the church are Perpendicular in style, save one or two obviously modern ones. It will be seen, therefore, that the Decorated builders, when they came in, did not take away every trace of the Early English work. They left the western arch, some fine stonework within the north wall of the north transept, and some buttresses of quite early date, on the outer part of the church on its north side. The diagonal buttresses at the west corners of the tower are of fourteenth-century date ; doubtless they replace earlier ones. Portions of the tower date from quite early times.

It was the fifteenth-century architects, who brought in the Perpendicular style characteristic of Somerset, who left the great building almost as it now is. The pillars in the nave, chancel and south transept are all of this date, so are most of the windows that have not been mentioned already. The north transept contains two modern pillars, which take the place of an old wall running north and south, and which stopped somewhere in line with the north wall of the nave. There is a fine parvise, or priest's chamber, over the north porch, with the original winding stair-case leading to it, and out on to the roof, quite unaltered. Here lived the priest whose duty it was to watch the lights burning before the various altars in the church in mediaeval times. The transepts are very spacious, and any one standing at the mayor's place in the corporation seats, looking northward, has a splendid view of them, six arches in length, from north to south. It was in the north transept that the hagioscope, or squint, formerly was (referred to in Parker's *Glossary of Architecture*, and in other works), which passed through three walls in order to give a view of the high altar to those standing at the north porch.

At the base of the tower, at its south-east corner, is the doorway through which the Duke of Monmouth and Lord Grey passed on their hurried rush to the top of the tower, on Sunday, July 5th, 1685, when they went to look out for the Royalist troops on Sedgemoor. It was the last tower he ever climbed ;

it was the last church he ever entered ; within eleven days he perished on the executioner's block. The tower might well be higher, but the exquisite spire surmounting it is a most wonderful specimen of fourteenth-century work, delicate and shapely, and exceeding in height anything in the county or in all the country round. There are few more beautiful spires in England than that which rises, in lines of intense simplicity and purity, over the old town of Bridgwater. From the top of it to the base of the tower is 174 feet. Half-way up the tower is the bell-chamber, containing its famous peal of eight bells.

Still keeping to the exterior of the church, it is evident that all the oldest work is on the north side. The buttresses, the walls, the stonework tell of very early date, mostly of the Early English style. Beneath the north transept is the chancel-house, approached by a door cut in between the two recumbent stone effigies which lie beneath the great north window of this transept. The history of these effigies is entirely lost. Neglect by past generations has permitted them to be utterly defaced, and they are now unrecognizable. They date most likely from the thirteenth or fourteenth century. It is by no means improbable that they were erected to the memory of William Briwere and his wife, or possibly to his son and his son's wife. From their position they point clearly to being placed where they are in order to commemorate some great benefactors to the church. The north porch has been sadly and rudely dealt with by various ages, yet some beautiful thirteenth and fourteenth-century work remains. The two carved heads, one at each side of the doorway, are very quaint. The eastward one is excellent. It suggests a prior of St. John's, or a bishop, but the head-covering — a mitre — is of an unusual pattern. Within the porch is an old font, broken in two, built into the wall. The iron grille on the north side is very old, and at the little wooden door on its right may still be seen, every Sunday afternoon at four o'clock, the giving away of thirty-one loaves of bread to as many poor and infirm folk, under the terms of the charity of Gilbert Bloyse. The bread is placed on a stone shelf in the north transept on Saturday; on Sunday afternoon the recipients appear, each one coming forward as his name is read out, to receive the loaf which is passed through the little charity door. In spite of the vicissitudes which the porch has undergone, and its many alterations, its exterior is beautiful, and some of its carved work is extremely good. The west door of the church is an insertion of the

fifteenth century, very characteristic. The space beneath the pointed arch and the hood moulding above it is filled in with some bold foliage work, very deeply cut. On the south side of the church there has been much restoration in the nave, although the chancel exterior, and the south end of the transept, have been less altered. The window at the east end of the chancel, of Perpendicular pattern, was put up in the last century. During that period much restoration was done : the old galleries were taken down, the roof was thoroughly restored, the clerestory windows were put in, the western arch (which had previously been blocked up) was opened out, the tower was renovated, and much of the stonework within and without was thoroughly repaired. It is, indeed, a church which needs constant and continual restoration. It needs nothing new, but the careful preservation of the old.

The interior of the church needs some notice. On the north side of the nave, towards the west, are two quite old recesses covering the tombs of some great ones whose very names are now utterly lost. The lines of the canopies and the cusps suggest very early work indeed. Lying loosely within these recesses are two beautiful Early English stone grave-slabs, quaintly carved in great simplicity, with two outlines forming together the figure of a cross. Within the nave on the south side opposite are two modern recesses cut in the wall, which need no notice. The south porch has been restored almost out of recognition. Many Bridgwater worthies lie beneath it. It was a very favourite place indeed to choose for burial in mediaeval times.

In the transepts and the chancel we come to the interesting part of the church which contained the chantries and the altars. The three endowed chantries — St. Mary's, St. George's, and that of the Holy Trinity — are, it would appear, not difficult to locate. The two latter most probably occupied the north and south chapels of the transepts (one of which now forms the organ chamber, and the other is known as the Sealey Chapel). Two such important chantries as these were bound to have prominent places. St. Mary's chantry (founded by Isolda Parewastel) was in all probability placed at the extreme east end of the chancel, close beside the very interesting and curious piscina and aumbry now to be seen on the south side, just eastward of the priest's door on the south. Thus the altar of St. Mary would be the easternmost within the

church. The high altar stood in the chancel just opposite the aumbry at the south side, at the top of the third step leading eastwards. From the north porch the hagioscope which has been already spoken of gave a full view of this altar to those who from their position could otherwise not have seen it. This gives the position of the four chief altars in the church.

But there were other altars too. A will issued in 1533 directs that sundry small gifts should be made to *the hye awter of Bridgewater — our lady auter — trinite auter — St. George auter — holy roode auter — St. Katherine auter*. This accounts for six. There was also an altar to St. Erasmus, to St. James, one for the Guild of the Holy Cross, and one to St. Gregory. This makes ten in all. The six altars not definitely located were placed in the transepts, although it is not possible now to give their exact position. The chapel of the Holy Cross was situate at the north side of the north transept, *super le charnel-house*.** One altar was beneath the east window of the aisle now occupied by the corporation seats, and the piscina belonging to it still remains in the south wall. The remaining four were no doubt dotted about in the ample space of the transepts. Probably if the walls were stripped the remains of other aumbreys and piscineae would be found. Above the chancel arch, at its apex, still can be seen the great iron hook from which the rood was suspended, above where the rood-loft used to stand at the entrance to the choir.

The church of St. Mary in the fifteenth century presented a very different appearance from that which it has to-day. The windows were all filled with painted glass, the walls were richly decorated with the most brilliant and tasteful colouring, and many frescoes were to be seen. The altars themselves were rich in carving, in costly decoration, in tapestries and needle-work, in splendid hangings, with embroidered work. Before them burned lamps or candles, glimmering softly in the dim light. It was a privilege and a great joy to devout folk, or to the members of the town guilds, to maintain a light before their favourite altar. Pictures and carvings abounded, most of these highly coloured. A mediaeval Bridgwater inhabitant in his will directs that he shall be buried in St. Mary's Church *before the image (or painting) of St. Sebastian*." There were no bare or whitewashed walls then. Colour abounded in every direction. Even the capitals of the columns were painted; hardly a space was

left untouched. The font in St. Mary's still shows traces of the painted work it possessed in early days, when its vine tracery was all richly gilded. All the church, indeed, was then one blaze of colour. It appealed most marvellously to the sense of beauty in the worshippers, or, as others might say, it appealed powerfully to the senses. Our parish churches and cathedrals to-day are very impressive and singularly beautiful. But they are only the shells that remain. The brilliant interiors have all disappeared; the stone walls are content to appear in their native sombre hue.

In those times many interments took place within the church, whose crypt was ever looked upon as the fitting and honourable home for the dead. The practice, though less frequent, prevailed up to the last century. But then it was discontinued, and vast quantities of concrete were laid in the crypt both for purposes of stability and also of sanitation. The grave-stones in the churchyard** — and, it is to be feared, within the church also — have been carelessly treated in the past. They have been taken up, broken, and laid down again, out of their place. Some beautiful Latin inscriptions are broken off midway. Many gravestones now form part of the floor of the nave.

The carved woodwork of St. Mary's is exceedingly fine. The sixteenth-century screen in front of the corporation seats is a splendid piece of work, very richly carved. Formerly it ran across the church, north and south, at the second pillar (going from east to west) in the nave. In front of the choir and the two transept chapels formerly was placed the old screen now standing on each side of the chancel. Its date is about 1420, and it is full of quietly tasteful work. Between these two screens, at the early part of the nineteenth century, sat the mayor and corporation in the nave, facing west. Outside the screen, westwards, was then the pulpit, which is now moved back to the north pillar by the entrance to the choir, and is a most beautiful piece of ancient wood-carving. Within the altar rails are placed some old oak miserere seats, with finely carved ends (fifteenth century), and some other old bench-ends of the same date have been rescued from oblivion to form a credence table. The altar itself is Jacobean work, very gracefully treated.***

Above the altar hangs the famous picture, concerning which so many legends are current. The story of its coming to Bridgwater

is really a very simple one. It was the gift of the Poulett family, of which family Sir John Poulett, in 1627, was made Baron Poulett of Hinton St. George. The fourth Lord Poulett was made an earl in 1706. He held high office under Queen Anne, and was *Custos Rotulorum* of Somerset, and K.G. He died in 1743. He had four sons, John, the second earl; Peregrine; Vere; and Anne : also four daughters. John became second Earl Poulett; Peregrine, twin with John, was born in 1708, was member for Bridgwater, and died 1752. Vere was the third earl. He was born in 1710, and was elected one of the members for Bridgwater in 1741. In 1764 he was chosen to be recorder of the borough, and died April 14, 1788. Vere's son John, born in 1756, succeeded to the earldom in 1788.

Now in 1788 the picture was already hanging in the church. In that year the Rev. S. Shaw, Fellow of Queen's College, Cambridge, went on a tour through the west of England, and visited Bridgwater. He writes: *In the church is a fine altar-piece of Our Saviour taken from the Cross.** He describes the picture as *being a present from the late Mr. Powlett, uncle to the present Earl of Hinton St. George, in this county.* This Mr. Powlett was clearly Lord Anne Poulett, so named because Queen Anne was his godmother. For he was uncle to John, fourth Earl Poulett, the second and third earls having no uncles. John was evidently in possession of the title when Mr. Shaw visited the church, which must therefore have been after April 14, 1788, when Vere died.*** This Lord Anne Poulett, who never succeeded to the earldom, was born in 1711. He served in 1768, 1774, 1780, and 1784 as member for Bridgwater, and died July 5, 1785. The picture, therefore, has been in the church at least since this latter date, and thus has been on view there for a minimum period of a hundred and twenty-one years. Probably the period is a longer one, although there is no evidence to show the exact date when Lord Anne sent it. The Poulett family were thus intimately connected with Bridgwater by many and long-continued and close ties, and the gift of the picture was therefore a most natural thing for Lord Anne to do.

Whence did he get the picture? There are no written data to go upon, but the local tradition (rejecting certain incongruous variations, such as that he took it by conquest from a ship of the Spanish Armada, which feat, if he had achieved it, would have made him over two hundred years old) fits in so well with probabilities that it may well be

accepted. The tradition is that, in the course of the interminable wars which at that time (*circ.* 1780) we had with France, an English man-of-war took captive a ship (French or Spanish), and brought her as a prize into Plymouth harbour. The prize and the cargo were sold by auction, and Lord Anne there purchased the picture, which was found in the cargo of the ship. Its subsequent arrival in Bridgwater was the outcome of the transaction. As concerning the artist, opinions have varied. *De gustibus non est disputandum.* It has been assigned by various authorities to the Italian and to the Spanish school of painters. For reasons which it is not necessary to advance, the writer's belief is that it is the work of the great Spanish artist Murillo, who painted so many sacred pictures, and who died at Seville in 1682. It is, and has long been, one of the most highly-prized pictures in the west of England. It was painted, one would think, for what it now is, i.e. the altar-piece of an ancient parish church.

Since the first days when there was a vicar of Bridgwater the office has continued on the same lines, in theory, until now. The names of the earliest vicars have not been preserved. The earliest name which has yet appeared in the documents is that of one James, who witnessed a deed on May 12, 1245. It was a grant by William de Ferndon to Richard de Godynelande, son of Robert de Godynelande, of the moiety of his messuage in the town of Bruges, between the house of Robert de Varley and that of Stephen Tinctor, in free marriage with his daughter Dionisia. After the grantor's death and that of Alfreda his wife, the grantee was to have the whole messuage ; in default of issue the premises were to revert to the grantor, with other grants. Witnesses: Master Daniel de Wemedon ; James, vicar of Bruges ; Henry the Constable ; Walter de Kentleshere ; Roger Brun ; Will, de Evemere ; Will. Basset ; Albinus de Godynelande ; Robert of Dorchester, chaplain. Dated Bruges Walteri, 4 Id. Mai. Day of SS. Nereus Achilles and Pancratius, 1245. There is, however, a still more interesting deed amongst the archives of the town. It is a quit-claim by Juliana Manger, daughter of Clarina Manger, to the parishioners of Bruges Walteri, for the support of the Mass of the Blessed Virgin in the parish church, of her right in a burgage formerly belonging to William Manger, for four marks and a yearly rent. Dated Bruges Walteri ; Monday after the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin ; 2 Henry III (i.e. a.d. 1218). This is evidence that the church

was in complete working order, with all the ecclesiastical custom of that day in full activity, at the beginning of the thirteenth century. This document, it will be noted, is just after the removal of the Interdict of Pope Innocent III.

Another document of that period is instructive. It is in Latin, and the date is unfortunately gone (circ. thirteenth century). It is a grant by the whole of the burgesses of Bruges Walteri to Ffaramus Tinctor of a burgage in the town of Bruges which Richard Lupus formerly held in the North Street, between the house of Walter de Kentleshere and that of Walter Orlof, originally bequeathed by William, vicar of Bruges, to the service of the Virgin Mary (i.e. to the parish church) at a yearly rent of eighteen silver pence. Here, then, is another early vicar who may date even further back than James in the previous document. It is witnessed by some whose names have already appeared: Walter de Kentleshere, Walter Orlof, Laurence Wilde, Rob. Wilde, clerk, Walter Brun, Rob. Cissor, Henri Tinctor. It is sealed with an imperfect seal of Bridgwater Church, the Virgin and Child, in green wax; worded SIGILL: BEATE: MARIE... Another thirteenth century deed is an indented grant by the burgesses to J. W. of a stall in Bridgwater, between those of John le Hunte and Philip the Provost of Partone, at a yearly rent to the Proctors of St. Mary's Mass in the parish church of Bridgwater, of 10d., and to the chief lord of the town of 12d. The burgesses in another deed grant to J. half a burgage... between the half-burgage of J. M., held of St. Mary, and the burgage which belonged to N. F., which half-burgage A. L. gave, one moiety to St. Mary's Mass in the parish church, the other half to the great cross of the church, at a yearly rent of 12d. Adam Lupus grants a stall in the High Street of the town (between that of Walter Wodie on the west, and that of Blessed Mary on the east) to Tho. Dodde, 12d. yearly payable to the chief lord of the town, and a premium of 24s. to be paid beforehand. Richard Boye, in the middle of the thirteenth century, grants a half-burgage, outside the East Gate (in Eastover) towards Horsie on the west, between the burgage of St. John's Hospital and the half-burgage of Richard Boye, paying yearly a rose at Midsummer (St. John Baptist's Day). How very closely, thus, in the thirteenth century (none of the preceding documents were of later date than that) the Church authorities and the town-folk were bound together. These burgages were stalls, held for

the sale of goods for profit, in the open street, and they were, it is clear, held by the Church authorities (vide the above documents) as a means of income. St. Mary's has a burgage; William the Vicar bequeaths one to the church; St. John's Hospital possesses one also. Mrs. Green, in her *Town Life in the Fifteenth Century*, refers to this. *Monks and heads of religious houses were, according to Dr. Gross, excluded from citizenship, though given rights of trade; but from the Charter Rolls, John, 1215, it appears that in Bridgwater the Brethren of the Hospital of St. John were to be capable of taking up burgages in the town and to have the same liberties within and without the town as Burgesses.... In the documents at Bridgwater there are many instances of houses and market stalls being held by clergy. In all the bills of sale stalls in High Street are named burgages, and a lawsuit shows that a wool stall there was sold to the Abbot of Mulchelney.*" It should be noted that the brethren of St. John's Hospital were not monks; there were never any monks living in Bridgwater. But the point is, how curiously intermingled then were business matters and religious matters. The Church's interests were not forgotten, even when men sold goods at their stalls, and the stall of Blessed Mary took its place beside the rest.

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* *Walcinus, or Walter de Douai, one of the chief landowners in Som. in 1086, held Bathentuna or Bampton, in Devon, and lands in Dorset or Wilts, The head of his barony was Castle Cary, where Walter had his castle; it afterwards passed to the Lovells, probably by descent. Bampton, and other of Walter's estates in Dev. and Som., descended to the family of Paynel or Paganell by the marriage of his grand-daughter and heiress Juliana to Fulk Paganell, see Domesday of Somerset, I, 61. 62. . . . Briggfe, i. e. Bridgwater, another of Walter's estates which descended to the Paganells." (Bath Chartulary, Som. Rec Society, p. 80)*

** Extract from *Bath Chartulary*, Som. Record Society, p. 38, *Hæc sunt res quae dedit Walcinus de Duaio Deo et ecclesiae S. Petri Bathoniensis et Iohanni episcopo. ... Et uxor ipsius Walcini cum filiis suis, consilio baronum suorum, dedit medietatem decimae de Careio et ecclesiam de Brigga cum omnibus decimis et consuetudinibus quæ ad ecclesiam illam pertinent.* John was Bishop of Bath from 1088 to 1122

***He refers to *Ecclesiam de Brigga cum omnibus pertinentiis suis* as Bath Priory property. *Bath Chartulary*, p. 68.

Reginald, Bishop of Bath 1171-91, is most affectionately spoken of by the Bath Priory authorities. *Reginaldus, Episcopus hujus loci, omnes terras nostras a praedecessoribus suis ad opus fabricæ ecclesiæ nostræ diutius detentas, devote restituit, et quæ a praedecessoribus suis nobis restitutæ erant, affectuosius ab ipso nobis confirmatæ sunt ecclesias de Brugges et de Kary et de Rodestok nichilominus in usus proprios nobis confirmavit,*" etc. *Ibid* p. 154.

**** *Carta Willielmi Paynel, de Manerio de Brugewalter :* —

Sciãnt præsentēs et futuri, quod ego Willielmis Paynel, filius Fulconis Paynell de Bamtone, concessi (etc.) Willielmo Briwere et hæredibus suis, donationem quam Fulco Paynel pater meus ei fecit de Burg'hwalteri, scil totum manerium de Burghwalteri, integrè (etc.) Tenendum de me et hæredibus meis, per servicium dimidii militis, pro omni servitio (etc.) Testibus, Reginaldo de Mohun, Ricardo Briwere, et aliis. — Dugdale's Mon, Ang, Add., Vol II. p. 912.

***** *Carta Fulcodii Paganelli, de Ecclesia de Burgewalter :* —

Ego Fulcodius Paganellus de Bahantune, omnibus qui præsens scriptum viderint vel audierint, notum esse volo, quod Ecclesiam de Burgewalter, de Sumersete, quæ ad donationem meam pertinet, et me patemi successione contingit, intuitu pietatis, et spe remunerationis ætemæ, et pro saluta animæ meæ, et patris mei Willielmi Paganelli, et matris meæ Julianæ de Bahantune, et Aide (sic) uxoris meæ, et filiorum meorum Willielmi et Fulcodii, filiarumque mærum Julianæ et Christianæ et ancestorum et successorum meorum animabus, donavi deo et bæto Martino, et Monachis Majoris Monasterii in perpetuam elemosinam (etc) Feci autem hoc donum assensu predictæ Adæ uxoris meæ, et filiorum et filiarum mearum, præsentibus et audientibus testibus, quorum nomina subscripta sunt, Willielmo Paganello fratre meo, Stephano de Bahamtune, Alberto de Bahamtune, etc — Ex dictis collect Rob, Glover Somerset Herald Miscel, lib. 5, f. 40a.

p.2

* Request by R. Priors (of Bath) to J. (Jocelin), Bp. of Bath and Glastonbury, to confirm a grant of the church of Brug'Walter which the said Prior and his convent have made to the Hospital of Brug'Walter, saving the Priory of Bath one hundred shillings a year" (*Bath Cart.*, p. 14)

** *Quit claim* by Robert, Prior, etc, to William Brewer of the advowson of the church of Bruge, saving 100s. yearly payable to the same Prior. Witnesses : Herbert Hawesweia,

Roger de Sancto Laudo, Roger de Monte. Forti, Walter de Wikes, Richard de Forda and many others" (*Bath Cart.*, p. 20).

**** *Ibid.*, II (Linc Inn MS.), p. 103. "Letters of the Prior, etc, to the Master of the Hospital of St John the Baptist of Bruggwalter, commanding him to pay to Brother Robert de Sutton during his life the yearly rent of 100s. due to the Prior from the church of Bruggwalter. Dated Monday next after the Feast of St Martin the Bishop, 1332."

p.4

*Bridgwater documents.

**The following curious epitaph occurs on a stone in the pavement leading to the south porch of the church. First, in Latin and Greek, words: *Sacred to the memory of John Harvey, gentleman. A remembrance.*

Vermibus esca licet mea putrida membra recumbunt

Exultans surgam victima grata Deo

Uma triumphali spoliatur turgida curru ;

Et Lethum stimulos perdidit acre suos ;

Ergo ne detur mihi candida Palla quid obstat

Læta resurgendi cum venit illa dies ? "

Perhaps we may offer the following translation.

Though worms destroy my body

I shall rise rejoicing, an offering pleasing to God.

The advent of the conqueror deprives the burial urn of loathsomeness,

And death, though sharp, hath lost its sting.

Why, then, should not the white robe be given to me

When comes the joyful resurrection day ?

The inscription ends with the following in Latin : *My entrance on the stage of this world was on the 20th day of July, 1623 ; my exit was on the 1st of January, 1672 ; in the forty-ninth year of my age."*

***Two fine oak screens have lately been given to the church. One was the gift of the late Dr. Parsons, for many years churchwarden. His screen is at the west side of the organ chamber, facing the north aisle. The other screen, the gift of Dr. Axford in memory of his father, who for many years was a resident in the town, is at the east end of the south aisle, leading into the south transept chapel. Miss Lovell Marshall has also decorated this chapel with oak panelling. The members of the choir and the congregation have panelled the chancel with oak, and have also restored some of the stalls in the choir

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*Shaw's *Tour to the West of England*. See *Pinkerton's Voyages*, Vol II, p. 260

** Pinkerton's extract simply states 1788,

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without giving the day or month.

Edited by Tony & Jane Woolrich, 06/02/2020