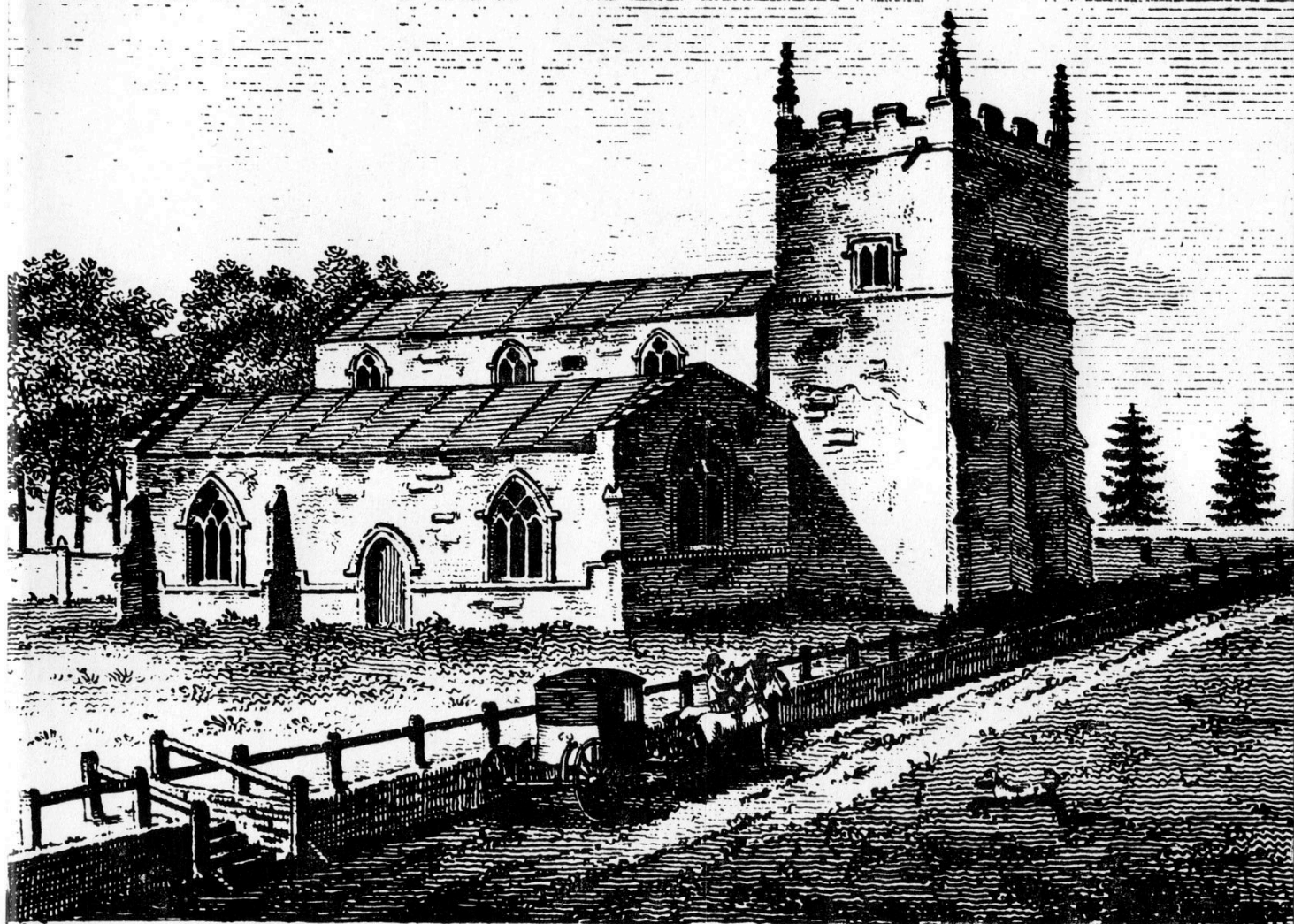


ALL SAINTS



THE CHURCH IN 1741

SCRAPTOFT

LEICESTERSHIRE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to extend my grateful thanks to the staff of:

LEICESTER MUSEUM ARCHIVES DEPARTMENT

LEICESTER CITY LIBRARIES

LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY RECORD OFFICE

and to all who have helped in any way during my researches.

Publication has been assisted by a prize for Writing Parish Church Guides awarded by the Provost and Chapter of Leicester Cathedral following a course at the Vaughan College, Leicester, in the Autumn Term, 1965.

N. K. Freebody, M.A.

December 1968

ALL SAINTS, SCRAPTOFT

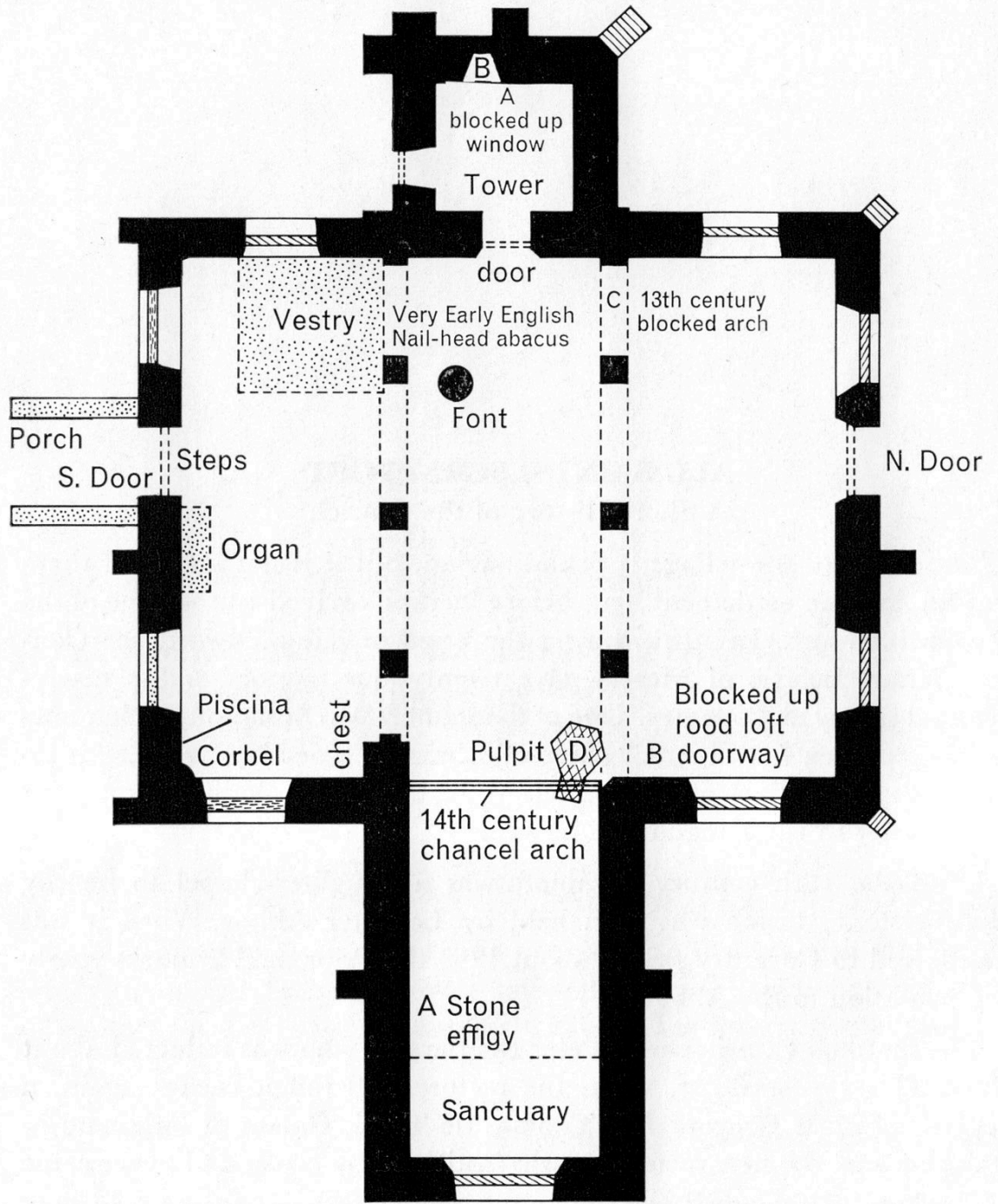
A Short History of the Church

The name of the village is Scandinavian, but it is not known if there was an Anglian settlement here before 'Scrapi' arrived at the time of the Danish invasions. In 1043, during the reign of King Edward the Confessor, Earl Leofric of Mercia gave twenty-four manors to the newly-founded priory at Coventry. One of the manors was Scraptoft, which may have even then had a small place of Christian worship, for there is no doubt that the Earl and his pious wife, the Lady Godiva, supported Christianity in the Kingdom of Mercia.

Until the 13th century Scraptoft was a daughter-chapel to nearby Humberstone, which was then held by Leicester Abbey. When it was transferred to Coventry Priory about 1265 the Prior paid 2 marks yearly compensation to the Abbot.

The first known priest was 'Peter the parson' who was inducted about 1206. Thirty years later, when the rectory had fallen vacant again, a nephew of Pope Gregory IX, Thomas de Trevi, Canon of Fulginate in Italy, became the new rector. He was instituted by proxy and never came to England. Although it was common practice to have absentee rectors, Thomas de Trevi made no arrangements for his distant parish. He was, therefore, ordered by Bishop Grossteste of Lincoln to appoint a priest for 'the cure of souls'. A local chaplain, Thomas de Scraptoft, was ordained in 1236 and he became vicar for the time being, taking only the lesser tithes for his income.

In 1268 Bishop Gravesend re-organised many of the poorer livings in the diocese, including Scraptoft. From now on it became a permanent vicarage and the rectory reverted to the patrons. The Priory of Coventry kept the great tithes and were responsible for the cost of the ordinary expenses of the church. Extra-ordinary expenses such as the repair of the



SCRAFTOFT CHURCH GROUND PLAN

(By kind permission of Mr. A. Womack)

Scale : 18 feet to 1 inch

- | | | | |
|---|--|--------------|---------------|
| A | | 13th century | Early English |
| B | | 14th century | Decorated |
| C | | 15th century | Perpendicular |
| D | | 18th century | Georgian |
| E | | 19th century | Victorian |
| F | | 20th century | Modern |

chancel and the supplying of books, and ornaments were shared between Coventry Priory and the vicar of Scraftoft in the proportion of two to one.

The priest at this time was 'William the chaplain' who lived in the rectory house. He farmed the glebe which later, in 1341, consisted of two virgates of land for the vicar, four virgates for the rector, Coventry Priory, and three lay fallow in the open fields.

During the 13th century the living increased in value from £7 6s. 8d. to £20 0s. 0d. This was partially through Bishop Gravesend's efficient re-organisation, but it also reflected growing prosperity for the church was rebuilt in stone about this period.

Little is known of the 14th and 15th century incumbents but Peter Kylbourne, who held the living in the early part of the 16th century, left an inventory. This shows that he lived in a modest two-roomed vicarage and farmed his own glebe. Not until the reign of Queen Elizabeth I did a Scraftoft vicar hold a degree. He was Robert Singleton, M.A. an absentee, living in Oxford. He died of the plague at St. John's College and a brass to his memory is in the chapel there.

Scraftoft vicars were frequently endowed with longevity. Perhaps a small parish, a comfortable vicarage, and a healthy situation helped them to live to a venerable old age in the service of God.

A GUIDE TO THE CHURCH

The visitor who approaches the church from the west side of the village will see the pleasant setting of the church and a Queen Anne mansion nearby, framed in a background of trees. Sited at the top of a rise it is a dominant feature in the village landscape. Built in cruciform plan much of the church fabric, dating mainly from the 13th century, has not been altered. The three feet thick walls contain a variety of local stone, ironstone, limestone and sandstone. The original stone is mostly a soft Rutland sandstone probably from the Collyweston and Ketton district. Victorian restoration introduced other stone: Clipsham to the parapets and copings; Ancaster to the tower buttresses; and Mountsorrel granite used as a rubble facing to the south aisle.

After entering through the wrought-iron gates, a gift of the congregation in 1947 to the memory of a past vicar, a perambulation round the churchyard path is recommended. This gives the visitor a chance not only to inspect features of architectural interest, but also to enjoy the view. To

the north east lies Scraptoft Hall, fronted by a fine wrought-iron screen and gate, together with an expanse of ornamental water. Looking west from the foot of the tower, is the open space of the Edith Cole Memorial Park. The vicarage kitchen garden, immediately across the lane below the churchyard wall, occupies the site of two long-vanished glebe cottages.

The lowest stage of the 45 ft high tower is 13th century, Early English. A deeply-splayed window opening in the west wall of the tower, of which the internal jambs remain, is probably of the same date. Two buttresses, north and south of the tower, were obviously in position before the aisles were built.

The middle stage of the tower, built of squared ironstone rubble together with a large diagonal buttress at its south west angle, is Decorated work of the 14th century. About the same time, the west window in the lowest stage was converted into a smaller light, and a similar ogee-headed light was inserted into the south wall of the tower.

The highest stage of the tower, built of ironstone, may date from the restoration which took place in the 15th century. It is surmounted by an embattled parapet with angle pinnacles, which is typical of the Perpendicular period.

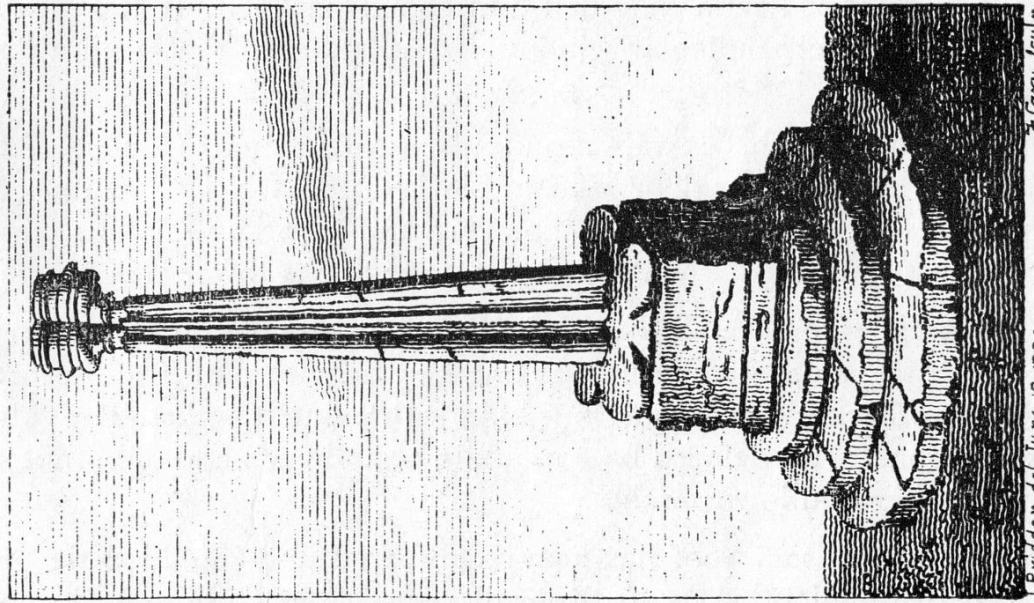
The doorway at the foot of the tower was inserted at a later date. A weather-cock given by Mr. A. T. Sharp in 1931 rises above the tower, on which a spire has never been built.

The south porch was renovated about 1903, the earlier one being of a plain plaster walled construction. The bosses terminating the moulded door hood are badly mutilated. Both the door and windows of the south aisle were rebuilt in the late 15th century. The Perpendicular windows in the south and east walls date from this period. The east window is unusual in having a transom between the mullions.

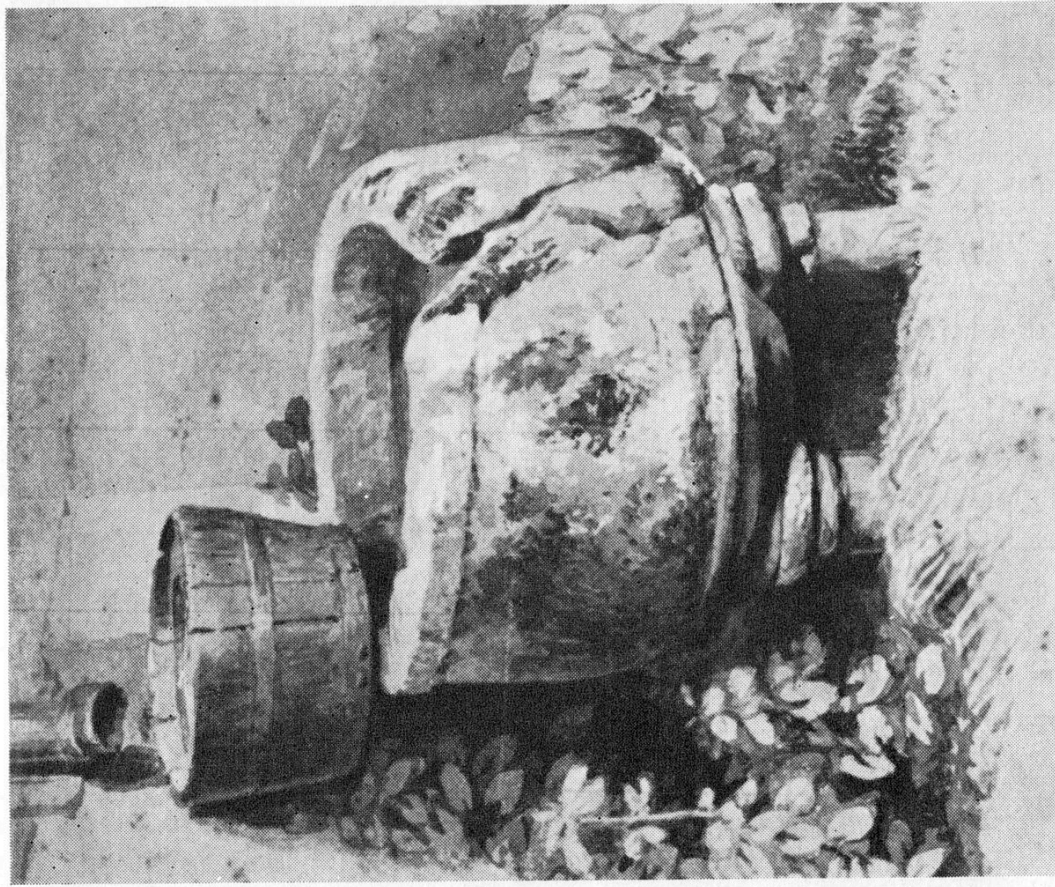
Near to the porch is an Early English stone cross which has a moulded shaft standing on a plinth above three circular steps. The column is surmounted with a restored lantern top.

In this part of the churchyard there are a number of interesting slate headstones. They are social documents in themselves, and reflect the attitude of the 18th century gentry-folk to their servants. The visitor who has time to browse will find tombstones to several of the eighteenth century Hall servants and the village schoolmaster.

14. SCRAPTOFT CROSS.



The Cross in 1791. (taken from Nichols)



John Flower's Sketch of the Thirteenth Century Font (1839) (Now restored and in Church.)

Memorials executed by the Firmadges, father and son, are fine examples of country craftsmanship and worthy of inspection. William Firmadge, junior, carved his parent's tombstone, which has a relief of Hope with panels of angels' heads, a torch, globe, hour-glass, serpent, scythe, pick and an IHS monogram among other ornamental devices.

The blocked chancel lights can be seen best from this point outside the church. They were filled up in order to accommodate the 18th century monuments of the Wigley family. The two windows flanking the altar are Perpendicular. These square-headed windows with tracery are a Leicestershire peculiarity. The east wall of the chancel, which was rebuilt in the 14th century, contains a restored window with flowing tracery. This was, no doubt, copied from the original when the 19th century stained glass memorial window was introduced. The small blocked window on the north side of the chancel is c.1300 with forked tracery.

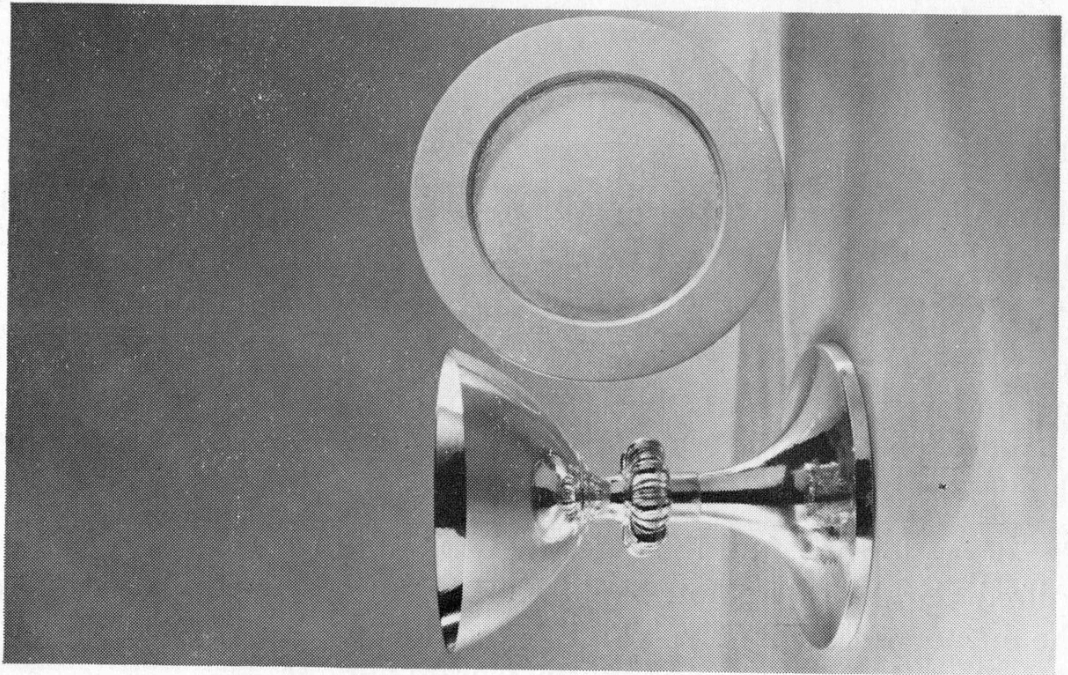
The north aisle has a continuous string course and buttresses, which are typical 13th century features. In the first half of the 14th century much rebuilding must have taken place, for this north aisle, with gabled ends and a heightened side wall, was largely reconstructed. The interlacing tracery in the side windows and the flowing tracery in the end windows are 19th century restorations, again probably copied from the original work. The Victorian restoration also included the north door, which has no porch.

The whole church was re-roofed at the end of the 15th century when a clerestory was added to the nave, and the side walls of the chancel were raised and topped with moulded and coped parapets. It was probably then that the Perpendicular windows were added to the south aisle and chancel.

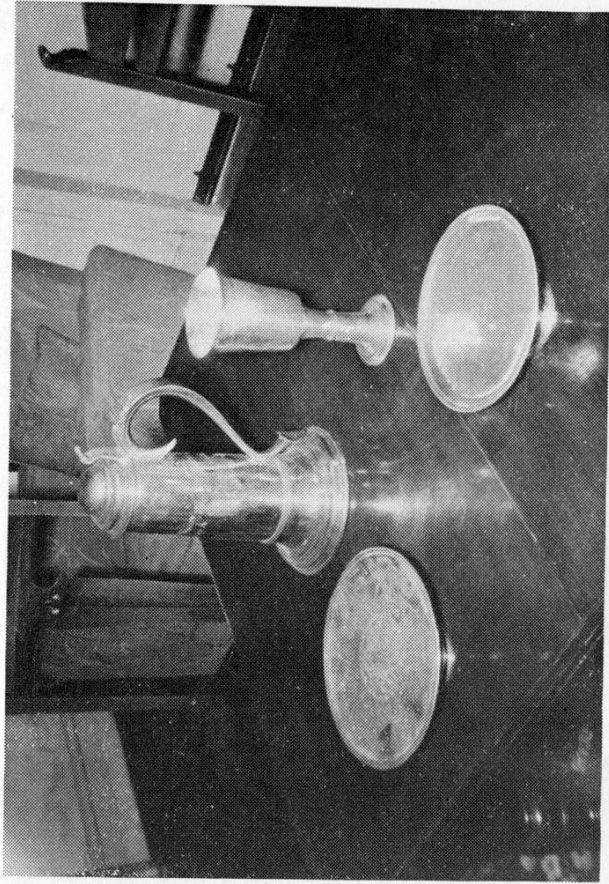
Inside the church, examination will reveal further evidence of alterations. Over the tower doorway is a blocked up early 13th century arch. The west wall inside the tower shows signs of an original lancet window, which was mutilated when the upper stage of the tower was buttressed.

The arcades of both aisles are of about the same period, Early English, although the south arcade having one abacus with nail-head decoration may be earlier. Each contains four bays with pointed arches. The columns are octagonal with defaced base mouldings, and each end of both arcades have smaller and lower arches.

The 15th century roof has heavy cambered and moulded tie beams, braced by small brackets to the wall posts. These terminate in corbels



Modern Church Plate. Donated 1968.



The Queen Anne and Georgian Church Plate.

carved into curious heads. A short king post, with grotesque carved brackets, supports the ridge. Between each tie beam and its principal rafters there is traceried panel infilling. Carved bosses decorate some of the intersecting roof timbers. Both aisle roofs are of the same period, but the north aisle contains no traceried infilling.

Moving anti-clockwise from the north door there are a number of interesting features worthy of examination. The stained glass window on the right, one of a pair at the north end containing figures of saints, was given in 1899 by the children of Thomas and Elizabeth Corah. They lived at the Hall, and the church also contains other monuments to members of their family.

At the west end of the north aisle is a window in memory of the Craddock family of Leicester. The window is one of a pair at this end of the church.

One of the most poignant memorials in the church is on the right hand side of the tower doorway. It is an oval, grey marble tablet, carved with figures in high relief of a woman and three children. The bereaved father and husband, William Firmadge, junior, executed this work.

Over the tower doorway is a Royal Coat of Arms of the Hanoverian period, and above it is fixed a funeral hatchment of one of the female members of the Wigley family.

Nearby is the plain 13th century lead-lined font which was repaired and restored in the 19th century. This font was sketched by the artist John Flower in 1839, when it was then used as a water-butt in the churchyard.

The south west corner of the church was converted into a vestry in 1948. Some of the panelling appears to be the remains of an 18th century box pew.

Four steps ascend to the south door, giving some indication of the change in levels between the churchyard and the floor of the building at this point. The door still bears its massive 18th century L-shaped strap-work hinges.

The organ to the left of the doorway was built in 1911, and presented by Alfred Corah of Scraftoft Hall. Nearby is the stained glass window to the memory of the family. This is a very fine example of 20th century work and carries the arms and motto 'Coram addesse'.

At the east end of the south aisle are memorials to Scraptoft clergy and their wives. The earliest is a slate floor slab of 1740 to Lucy, the second wife of the Rev. Richard Bradgate. It was she who donated the silver paten to the collection of church plate.

The most interesting architectural features in this corner of the church, apart from the unusual east window which contains a fragment of stained glass, probably relate to a pre-Reformation chapel to the Holy Trinity. One is a small corbel in the angle of the south and east walls which may have carried a statue. The other is a small piscina now so heavily plastered over that any decoration it may have is obscured.

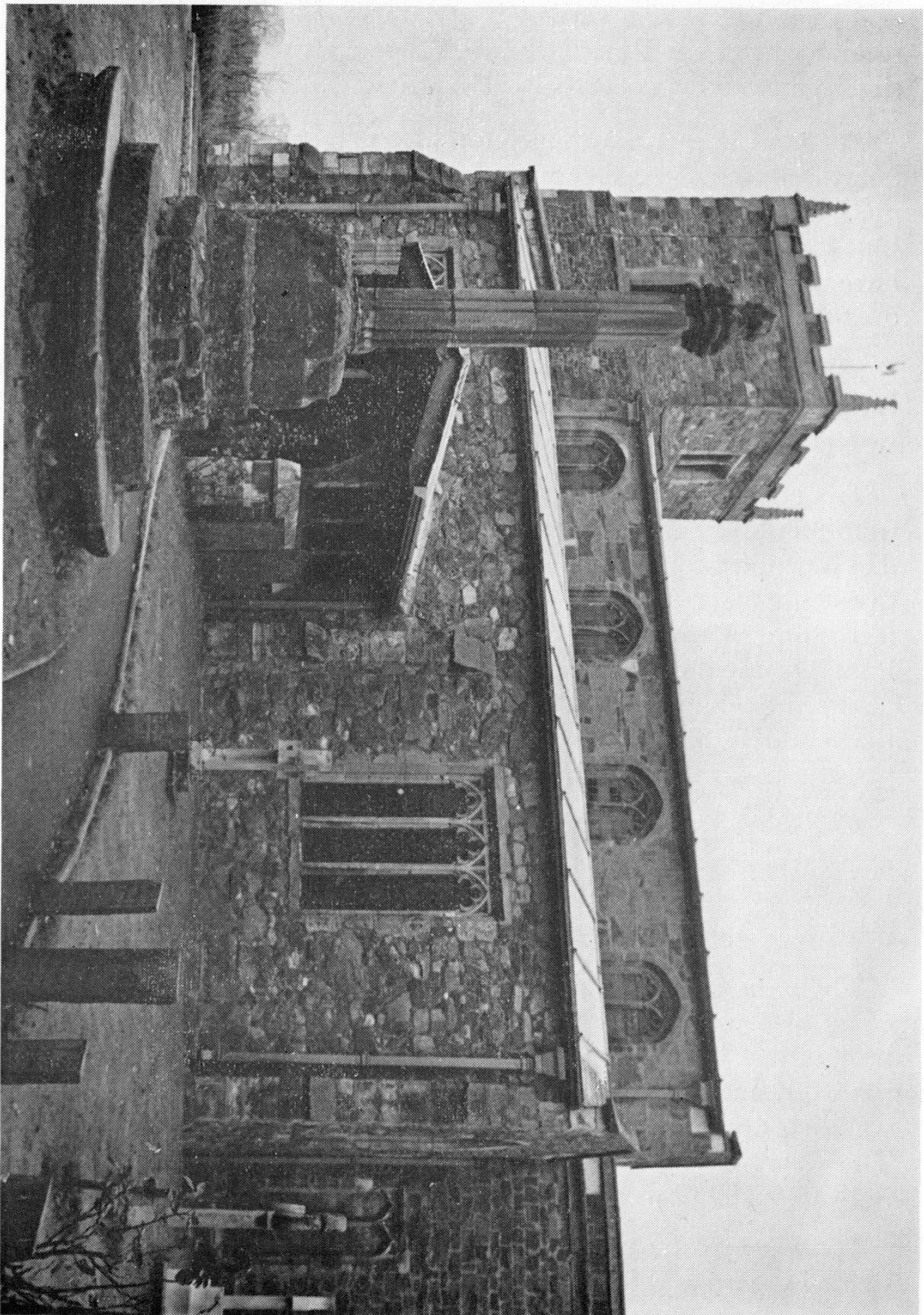
Moving into the main aisle, the visitor will see the eagle lectern. This was a gift from the parishioners and friends of the Rev. William Rolleston, who died in 1894 after 40 years as parish priest.

The chancel arch is c.1330 and is of two chamfered orders springing from moulded corbels which rest on carved human heads. Both chancel and sanctuary contain a number of monuments to the Wigleys who came to the village as the manorial lords in the 16th century. The earliest of this group of memorials is a slate floor slab near to the chancel step. Probably dated c.1670 it is to Baptist Patrick Noel, the eldest son of Sir Andrew Noel and Ann his wife, the widow of Edward Wigley. Beneath the mural to Sir Andrew Noel is a floor stone in an excellent state of preservation, carved with the Noel arms.

Ann Wigley, the last surviving sister of Squire James Wigley, also has a mural which was erected by the vicar, Samuel Topp, at his own expense. He was a distant relation of the Wigley family and his simpler tablet is nearby.

The most remarkable memorial on the south side of the chancel is an effigy of a priest c.1250 with his hands raised in prayer and a chalice below them. The lines of his vestments can still be seen, although his face has worn smooth. The monument must have been built sideways into the wall in order to make room for the Wigley memorials of the 18th century. This figure may commemorate the founder of the aisleless stone church built over 700 years ago.

Looking across to the north side of the sanctuary is the ornate monument to Sir Edward and Lady Letitia Wigley. Taking the form of two shallow arches with opened curtains above, the niches are filled with free-standing portrait busts. This Restoration knight was buried before his wife and she



The Church, and Cross (as restored in 1965).

photo: Midland Press.

obtained a faculty in 1714 for this monument. It was Lady Letitia 'the disconsolate relict' who rebuilt Scraftoft Hall during her long widowhood. Sir Edward's children and his father-in-law, Arthur Cressey of Brigsley, Lincolnshire, lie buried in the chancel.

In the sanctuary are the flags of the local Scouts and Cubs who belong to the 101st Leicester group. A Union Jack hangs from the south wall and the Mothers' Union Banner stands in the corner. The frontal, a gift made in 1962, enhances the altar. The stained glass window and the altar cross were Victorian benefactions to the memory of Alexander Charles Barclay Esq., who was a tenant at the Hall for 21 years.

The most delightful monument in the church is on the north side of the chancel. This is to James Wigley, M.P. He was the last male heir of the family who had moved over 230 years before to Scraftoft from Wirksworth in Derbyshire.

The high flown sentiments of the inscription on the white marble tablet may not be to modern taste, but the classical design is excellent. The simple but pleasing lines of the sarcophagus, with a seated figure of Britannia in relief above, together with the painted coat-of-arms below the inscription, are in sharp contrast with the florid design of Lady Letitia's choosing. Squire Wigley is shown, in bas-relief, supervising his servants planting trees, for it was he who landscaped the grounds of the mansion, which his mother had rebuilt.

He and his wife Martha, whose more modest floor slab is partially under the pulpit steps, had no children. Another memorial connected with this family is that of fifteen-year-old Letitia Hartopp. The Hartopps of Little Dalby were linked through marriage to the Wigleys, and after the death of James Wigley they became the absentee squires of the village.

The panelled pulpit, with egg and dart moulding, is part of the furnishings provided by James Wigley in 1765, when the church was repaired at his expense. Close by, is an ogee-headed arch, perhaps the blocked up rood-loft doorway, dating from the late 14th century. Partially hidden by the pulpit is an early 18th century memorial to two of the children of Robert Edwyn, a local landowner who later moved to Baggrave Hall.

The north aisle contains more memorials to early 19th century tenants at the Hall, the Carter family, and a late 18th century vicar, John Kerchevall.

The plain white tablet on a black background upon the north wall of the north aisle is to Richard Hunter Bird and his wife. They were tenants

at Nether Hall, the dowerhouse to Scraptoft Hall. During the 19th century when the Hall was let as a hunting box to a succession of families, Captain Bird filled the role of resident squire. The present owner of Nether Hall is Mr. A. T. Sharp who is now patron of the living. He received the advowson in 1960 from Mrs. F. L. Burns-Hartopp, the last descendant of the Wigley family to hold this office.

East of the north door is the Pares mural commemorating another early 19th century tenant at the Hall, John Tylston Pares. His funeral hatchment above bears the Pares coat of arms and the motto 'Pares cum paribus'.

For the visitor who wishes to read more about the church and village of Scraptoft a bibliography is appended.

- N. Pevsner. *The Buildings of England. Leicestershire and Rutland.*
Victoria History of the Counties of England, Leicestershire Vol. V.
J. Nichols. *History of Leicestershire, Vol. IV.*
J. Throsby. *Select Views of Leicestershire.*

Bells

1. Smallest by G. Oldfield, Nottingham.
Inscription. GOD — SAVE — HIS — CHURCH — 1656 —
2. Middle by T. Newcombe, Leicester. c.1560–70.
Inscription. GEVE THANKS TO GOD
3. Largest by H. Watts, churchwarden of St. Margaret's, Leicester, 1615
Inscription. ABCD EFGHI KLMNOP

Parish Registers

The parish registers which date from 1539 are in an excellent state of preservation. The earlier ones are in the custody of the Leicestershire Record Office.

Plate

The Elizabethan plate has disappeared since the year 1712 when the terrier then included a cup with a cover.

Silver dish, plain, carrying arms of the first and second husbands of the donor, Lady Ann Noel (Wigley née Armston), h.m. 1705.

Silver paten given by Mrs. Lucy Bradgate in 1740. She was the widow of the Rev. Richard Bradgate, vicar of Scraptoft, and daughter of Mr Parker of London. His arms are on the paten, which was a secular piece of plate, h.m. 1712.

Silver cup, h.m. 1740. Silver flagon, h.m. 1745. Given by Lady Letitia Wigley according to her will made in 1740.

A modern chalice and paten were donated in 1968.

INCUMBENTS

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 1206 | Peter the Parson. Patron the Prior of Coventry, who holds the 'tithes as of old'. |
| 1236-37 | Thomas de Trevi, nephew of Pope Gregory XI, rector, non-resident. |
| 1237 | Richard de Scraptofte, chaplain, resident. |
| 1269 | William, chaplain. |
| 1248 | Rolland, vicar. |
| 1341 | (a vicarage house exists). |
| 1357 | William Collinessone, vicar (murdered). |
| 1381 | (Emma, mother of the vicar, entered in a taxation list). |
| 1413 | John Peckleton, vicar.
Roger Ippen, chaplain. |
| 1496 | John Bisshop, vicar, aged about 80 years old, born at Tugby. |
| c.1525-1534 | Peter Kylbourne, vicar, resident. |
| 1537-71 | William Rede, vicar, presented by Roger Wigston, also vicar of Billesdon, and Houghton-on-the-Hill where he was buried. |
| 1571-77 | Robert Singleton, M.A., vicar, presented by John Wigley, gent, Wirksworth. Non-resident, died of plague at St. John's College, Oxford. |
| 1577-1604 | Henry Styrke, B.A., vicar, married. Patron John Wigley. |
| 1604-17 | Nicholas Fisher, M.A., vicar, born at Edmondthorpe 1573, previously vicar of Lowesby, married. Patron Henry Wigley, gent, vicar of Wymswold, 1619. |
| 1618-39 | Thomas Spell, vicar, patron the King, resident only during the last year of office. Died Cambridge. President of St. John's College, 1640. |
| 1620-23 | Henry Elborowe, curate, Sizar, St. John's College, Cambridge, M.A. Oxford. |
| 1623-25 | John White, curate, moved to Norton by Galby. |
| 1626-29 | William Burton, B.A., curate and schoolmaster. |
| 1630-39 | John Pole, M.A., curate, resident. |
| 1640 | John Judd, curate. Patron Henry Wigley. |
| 1644- | Robert Lewes, vicar. Patron Henry Wigley. |
| 1680 | Timothy Chamberlain, M.A., deacon under Robert Lewes. |
| 1681 | Richard Bradgate, curate, under Robert Lewes. |
| 1694-1733 | Richard Bradgate, vicar. Patron Sir Edward Wigley. |

- 1713 Henry Browne, clerk, teacher at Shawell.
- 1718-21 Joseph Kilby, curate.
- 1733-56 Joseph Ledbrook, M.A., vicar. Patron James Wigley Esq. Pluralist, rector of Aston Flamville, died age 65.
- 1756-66 Henry Wigley, M.A., vicar. Patron James Wigley Esq. Resigned, d. Pensham, Worcester.
- 1766 Charles Allen, curate.
- 1767-85 John Kerchevall, M.A., vicar. Patrons Ann Wigley and Edward William Hartopp. Died age 66.
- 1786-92 Samuel Topp, M.A., vicar, resident. Patrons Ann Wigley of Scraftoft and Edward Hartopp Wigley Esq., of Little Dalby. Rector of Owston, curate of Withcote. He resigned temporarily and was reinstated 1789, died age 46.
- 1792-1849 Joseph Gill, M.A., vicar, 57 years. Patron Edward Hartopp Wigley Esq., of Little Dalby. Also rector of Pickwell 37 years, died age 93.
- 1842-48 Alfred Henry Adock, curate.
- 1849-90 William Lancelot Rolleston, vicar, 40 years resident, also vicar of Gt. Dalby, died age 74.
- 1891-1922 Philip Sydney Pryce Jones, vicar, 30 years, died age 78.
- 1922 C. L. Matthews.
- 1923 W. G. L. Bettison. Patron, Mrs. F. L. Burns-Hartopp.
- 1925-45 George James Pattison, vicar, non-resident, also vicar of Hungerton where he lived. Patron Mrs. F. L. Burns-Hartopp.
- 1946-48 Maxwell Gregory. Patron Mrs. F. L. Burns-Hartopp.
- 1949- Reginald Malsbury, B.A. Patron Mrs. F. L. Burns-Hartopp. (Patron now Mr. A. T. Sharp).