

The Pecok Brasses (Redbourn).

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A few years ago there was a brass inscription fixed on the south wall of the chancel (the side arch being then filled up with plaster), "Pray for the soulys of Rychard Pecok and Elisabeth hys wyfe, which Rychard dyed ye XIV. day of December in ye yere of our Lord MCCCCXV, on whose soulys Ihu have mercy Amen." The matrix of this brass is on the floor at the east end of the south aisle. When Mr. Cussans wrote his history (in 1880) there was the effigy of a civilian with the indents for the wyfe and four sons and two daughters, and the badge, a peacock. The piscina in that aisle indicates a chapel or chantry (of a much earlier date than this brass); this may have been connected with the Pecok family, which was one of considerable importance here in early times.

Cussans quotes a document from which we learn that in 1321 John Pecok, of Redbourn, possessed the manor of Corneth (now Cornard) Parva, in Suffolk. One of the signatories to the document was John Turnor, Chaplain of Redbourn. He was probably chaplain of the Chantry. This John Pecock acquired the manor of Windridge, in the parish of St. Michael, St. Albans, by marrying an heiress. His monumental brass (date c. 1350) is in St. Michael's Church, with a French inscription ("Johan Pecok et Maud sa femme gisunt yci"). A knightly member of the same family is also commemorated by a brass, which portrays him in complete armour, of the time of Richard II. The shield below, charged with three peacocks, gives his family name. In 1403 Edmund Pecok, of Redbourn (probably the son of the above John Pecok) alienated the Manor of Windridge. In 1454 a Thomas Pecok was witness to a deed signed at Redbourn. It was that by which the Manor of Aygnells was conveyed to Abbot John Whethampstede from the widow of John Spendlove.

In the south porch there is the indent of a brass with the Pecok badge. The effigies were of a civilian, wife,

one son and eight daughters. Mr. Cussans dates it c. 1470. It may have commemorated this Thomas Pecok. The family was connected by marriage with the Ashes, Swanbournes, Frowyks, and Conningsbys, who were owners of estates round about. The Pecok estate in this parish was probably held under the Abbots. I have not been able to identify it, but it probably comprised Dean End Farm, for in 1647 a Richard Pecok possessed this farm.

The documents quoted afford grounds for believing that the chapel in the south aisle was the Pecok Chantry ; that aisle may have been erected mainly by the Pecoks.
