

South Mimms, Middlesex.

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South Mimms, also written Mims, Mymmes, Myms, and in some ancient records, Mimmine & Mymmys, is not mentioned in the Survey of Domesday.

South Mimms is bounded on three sides by Hertfordshire parishes, Northaw and North Mimms bordering upon it to the North, Ridge to the West, and Chipping

Barnet to the South, whilst Monken Hadley and Enfield, in Middlesex, complete the inclosure on the East.

It contains about 5,400 acres of land, of which 1,097 acres were allotted by an Act of Parliament passed in the year 1777, when Enfield Chase was inclosed.

The park of North Mimms extends very nearly to South Mimms village, from which it is approached by the now rural lane, but which from what I can gather was formerly the old highway to the North, and branched sharp to the left, close to the present lodge to North Mimms park, and continued its way through a somewhat sinuous course to St. Albans.

The present main road (from where this rural lane branches off) to St. Albans was formed in the year 1826.

The parish records show that the old road must have been extensively used, as in the registers, commencing with 1558, are numerous entries of the burial of nameless strangers here; in 1727 seven having "died upon the road" and "one drowned in the Parish."

South Mimms, as the registers also show, suffered much in the year of the plague; seven interments are mentioned by name, "besides 100 more which died of the plague in the same year." To quote Mr. Cass: "Reference must next be made to the connection existing between South Mimms and the monastery of Walden, or Saffron Walden, in Essex. The earliest notices of the parish which we possess are concerned with this connection. The Abbey of Walden, first founded as a Priory in 1136 by Geoffrey de Mandeville, first earl of Essex of that family, was converted into an Abbey *temp.* Richard I. Its founder endowed it with the churches of Enfield, Edmonton, South Mimms, and Northall in Middlesex, a mill at Enfield in Middlesex, also the Hermitage at Hadley in Middlesex and common of pasture for cattle in the park where the Hermitage stood." And he continues:

"Previously to 1618 the Vicarage had become separated from the rectory. The latter was given by Geoffrey de Mandeville, Earl of Essex, to the abbot and convent of Walden; at the dissolution it was granted by Henry VIII. in 1539 to Lord Audley. It had belonged to William Stamford previous to 1546, and after passing rapidly through different hands, King James gave it, in 1606, to William Harrison, Thomas Bulbeck, and their heirs.

For a considerable period it has been united to the manor in the hands of the Marquis of Salisbury. The advowson of the Vicarage was possessed by the Marshe family from about the year 1618 to the beginning of the last century." From them it passed on through different members of the Parker family and eventually to William Parker Hamond, Esq., of Haling House, Surrey, of whom the late Vicar was a cousin. The first Vicar Cass gives is: "William was perpetual vicar in 1220," and continues to say that "as far as Robert Hill inclusive, who died in 1538, the patronage was in the abbot and convent of Walden."

The Parish Church, which is dedicated to St. Giles, is almost in the centre of the village with the old main road running on the north side of it. The churchyard was enlarged towards the south a few years back. The ground plan of the church consists of a nave 49ft. 2in. long, 21ft. 2in. wide; a chancel 36ft. long, 17ft. 10in. wide; a north aisle to nave, 15ft. 6in. wide (all internally); a north aisle to chancel, a western tower with staircase in south-east corner, and a south porch. The church underwent a thorough restoration commencing on Monday, 19th March, 1877, Mr. Street being the architect, during the progress of which the entrance to the now missing rood loft and the staircase to the same were opened out, and from the character of the masonry there discovered, lead to the supposition that the south wall of the nave is anterior to the existing chancel, and the wall also showed signs of having been exposed to the action of fire in the neighbourhood of the roof-loft staircase. The foundations of a wall were also discovered at the juncture of the nave and chancel, which is conjectured to have been the former eastern termination of the church, as the masonry is similar to that discovered in the south wall.

The church as it now remains to us has not many ancient features, except the piscina in south wall of chancel which appears to be of late "Early English" date, as are parts of the font, but the central support appears to be a "Perpendicular" addition and of a different kind of stone.

The north aisle to nave, which has a brick external face (supposed to be a restoration) was erected between 1523 and 1526, and is separated from the nave by an

arcading of four bays, with octagonal piers, moulded caps and bases, carrying depressed four centred arches.

The aisle on north side of chancel, or Frowyke chapel, or chantry, is separated from the chancel by two bays of arcading similar to those in nave. There being no chancel arch, the old rood-screen must have made the only division between the nave and chancel. In the south of the chancel is one of those low side windows, about which so much discussion has been carried on lately, but which is most generally believed to have been a window for lepers, or other infected persons outside the church.

The windows in the south wall of nave cannot be a restoration of the former ones, as in a little book, written some time before the restoration, entitled "Church Walks in Middlesex," they are described as being "of two lights, trefoiled, with a quatrefoil in the head, and double feathering in the cusps," and the east window of chancel is described as being a "window of three lights cinquefoiled, is blocked in the tracery, as is the south window of two lights."

The windows in the north aisle are square-headed, and contain some curious remains of stained glass, 1526 being the date of their insertion, according to a memorandum in the parish register, which is given at length in Gass, with description and illustrations.

The belfry windows are square-headed, and in this stage are six bells, hung in 1811 and 1812. The present south porch is modern, but there was formerly one of stone. Two curious altar tombs remain with a groined canopy to each, each supported by four corner pillars, that in Frowyke chapel is the older of the two, and is to one of the Frowykes, having upon it the arms of Frowyke quartered with Knolles, but no inscription. Gass says, "Upon the slab lies the effigy of a knight in plated armour, his shoulder and elbow pieces ornamented with the leopard's face, as in the arms and on the screen. The feet rest on a lion, and under the head is a helmet encircled with wreath and surmounted by a crest. This, which is mutilated, seems to be the body of a bird."

That in the chancel, with neither effigy or inscription, is supposed to be Henry Frowyke's tomb, who in his will 1523 particularly requested to be buried in the parish church,

and that a memorial to himself might be made "nigh to the wall by our lady in the north part of the choir where I would have some memory or convenient tomb to be made," but it has been suggested owing to the initials R.H. on the tomb, that Sir Robert Hill, who appears as one of the witnesses to the will, and who was then Vicar to South Mimms, may have appropriated the tomb to himself which was prepared for his deceased friend who died in 1526.

Under the tower is a brass to Thomas de Frowyke, who in his will, proved in 1448, requests to be buried under the tower; the inscription under it is supposed to be by Abbot John Wheathampstead.

The brass by the side is to the memory of his wife, six sons, and twelve daughters. The original settlement of the Frowykes was a place called Old Ford, just in this parish, on the western edge of Hadley Green; but Gass tells us in 1877 that "nothing remains at this day except a moated site, converted into a kitchen garden, and attached to the adjacent farm." We also learn that "Durhams, or more recently Durham Park, derives its name from a family, one of whose heiresses in the 14th century married Thomas de Frowyke, son of Henry de Frowyke, of Old Ford. ("The will of her father, John Durham of South Mimms, was made in July, 1368, and proved on the Monday after the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, 43 Edw. III. (A.D. 1369). He desires to be buried in the churchyard of St. Gile's, at South Mimms, near the west window, and desires all his tenements in the city of London to his wife Joan during the minority of his son John, but if his son shall die before attaining his majority, then to his said wife for life, with remainder to his daughter Margaret for life, with remainder to his grandson Henry, son of Thomas de Frowyke").

The church possesses some remains of old woodwork, the Frowyke chantry is enclosed with a late Perpendicular, parclose screen of oak, some of the cusps having leopards faces carved on them being the principal charge in the Frowyke armorial bearings (Az. a chev. between three leopards heads carbosced or.) At the west end of nave are a few of the old pew ends with panels of what is generally known as "linen pattern."