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## Old Gorhambury

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**T**HE illustration on the opposite page represents the hall and clock tower of Gorhambury House, built by Sir Nicholas Bacon, as they existed in 1801.

It is taken from an oil painting by George Arnold in that year, and was discovered by Lady Verulam shortly before her death. It is here reproduced by the kind permission of Lord Verulam.

It forms a most interesting and valuable record of the surviving fragment of the Tudor house and shows that both hall and clock tower were substantially intact in the early years of last century.

It is not clear why these two parts of what had been a complete quadrangle should have been preserved, when during and after the building of the present mansion (1777-1784) the greater portion was demolished. It is therefore all the more regrettable that the preservation of these important fragments was not maintained during the nineteenth century. The hall, with its classical porch of two stories, would doubtless be in fair state to-day if only the roofs and gutters had been kept in order. As it is, the porch, sustained by buttresses and stays, stands isolated from the hall of which portions only of the front and back walls remain.

The octagonal turret, which contained originally the principal stairs, is now almost entirely fallen. The painting shows the niche with its statue of Henry VIII which still stands, now isolated, but originally forming the central feature of a loggia, extending the whole length under a long gallery built by Sir Nicholas Bacon in honour of Queen Elizabeth, and completed in time for her second visit in 1577.

The turret contained a bell cast by Anthony Bartlett in 1563, and now preserved in the turret of the stables: on each face of the octagon there appear to have been sculptured panels, but of which I have not found any trace about the ruins.

The porch is shown complete with its pediments and statues, and the window on the front face has been changed to a heavily-barred wooden sash, while those at the sides retain the stone framed casements. The sash has now vanished, but its insertion explains why mullions and transomes have been cut away.

The doorways seen on the right of the picture are interesting. That at the top will have been in the attics over the hall ceiling, and the peak of a dormer can be detected, by which access was gained to the flat over the porch. The first floor doorway will have given access from a stair—or possibly a room, to the gallery over the hall screens, while the pair of doors on the ground floor will in all probability have been the original service communications between hall, buttery, pantry and kitchen, for these offices were originally situated in the right-hand end of the wing already demolished in 1801, and which was altered to serve other uses when the second or kitchen court was built early in the seventeenth century. In the angle of the court one of the two twelve-light hall windows is shown together with two four-light windows in the return wall; the lower four-light window and that of the hall are still *in situ*.

This George Arnold had also drawn the Abbey, for there is a letter at Gorhambury from him but undated, written from 7, Pitfield Street, Hoxton, asking the 3rd Viscount Grimston to allow a proof print of St. Albans Abbey to be dedicated to him, and the reply of Lord Grimston, dated February 3rd, 1798, congratulating Arnold on the print. Can any member throw further light on the local work of this artist?