

## ASHMANSWORTH

( -----AESCMERESWORTH -- X<sup>th</sup> Cent. ----- )  
(ESMERESWORDA. ESSHERESMERESWORTH. - XIII<sup>th</sup> Cent.)

THE CHURCH is now dedicated to S. JAMES but was originally dedicated to S. NICHOLAS. When the Church was restored in 1899, some fragments of Roman urns and pottery were discovered. It is thought that the CHANCEL was part of a former Saxon church, but the Nave dates from the early XII<sup>th</sup> Cent. The two windows in the North side of the Chancel are somewhat earlier than A.D. 1200. On the south side is the head of a XII<sup>th</sup> Cent. PILLAR PISCINA. The Chancel Arch is very narrow, as is usual in early Churches. It is perfectly plain, having no attempt at moulding or ornamentation. On either side are SQUINTS which do not seem to have been part of the original design, but were made in order that worshippers in the Nave might have a view of the main ALTAR. The Altar is of early Georgian work, as is also the PULPIT which was originally a "Two Decker".

The windows in the North side of the Nave are of XVII<sup>th</sup> Cent. work. Below them is an original but much damaged Doorway with a Semi-circular head. It is now blocked and its outer arch seems to have been rebuilt, a relieving arch of tiles showing in the wall. In the South wall of the Nave near the East end is a XIV<sup>th</sup> Cent. Window of trefoiled lights. High up in the same wall is a small window of early but uncertain date. The window in the West wall is comparatively modern.

Formerly there was a Double Gallery at the West end of the church, that on the South side being appropriated to the Earl of Portsmouth, that on the North side to the Rector.

The Wall Paintings which were uncovered in 1887 and 1899 have been fully described by Mr Keyser in the "proceedings of the Hants Field Club". In the Nave are traces of at least three different schemes of mural decoration, carried out, one after the other at different periods, the earliest dating from the end XII<sup>th</sup> Cent. The small XIV<sup>th</sup> Cent. painting of St CECELIA on the North wall of the Chancel was restored in 1938.

Above the CHANCEL ARCH, painted in blue on canvas, are the Royal Arms encircled by the Garter. They are the Arms of King Charles II, and date about 1660. They were placed there to fill up the gap left by the removal of the ROOD (that in a representation of the Crucifixion). One of the ends of the sawn off ROOD BEAM may still be seen embedded in the wall over the Pulpit. On either side of the Arch may still be seen faint representations of the Holy Catholic Church and the Last Judgement.

On the North Wall of the NAVE there are the remains of a large painting of S. CHRISTOPHER. About the time of the Reformation, all the wall paintings were covered up and on top of them were painted various texts with ornamental borders. On the North wall is a XVII<sup>th</sup> Cent. version of the Lord's Prayer, while on the South wall are two texts from Ecclesiastes.

Consecration Crosses are found incised in the plaster, two on each side of the Nave.