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WOLD NEWTON
All Hallows
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CHURCHES OF HISTORIC INTEREST

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ALL HALLOWS', WOLD NEWTON

ONLY four miles from Binbrook, where the sound of pneumatic drills heralds an ultra-modern aerodrome, a patch of the real old England lies tucked away in the Wolds—a place where few motor cars pass to violate its peaceful calm, and where the water of a beautiful lake, lying still and untroubled, is symbolic of the surrounding atmosphere.

The village of Wold Newton has the reputation to upkeep of being one of the most ancient communities of this part of the country. It was an important centre for Roman agriculture, and for well over a thousand years a little church has watched over the cluster of farmsteads from its grassy eminence; modernity has not dared to break on this idyllic spot, where even to-day the digging of graves in the ancient churchyard continues to reveal fragments of Romano-British pottery.

There have been five churches looking down successively on to the village since before the ninth century, so that if we were to re-live the scene of well over a thousand years ago, we should probably see that same lake, the same finely cultivated fields and surrounding them all, a tiny church of rough wood and thatch. Tradition has it that the first church at Wold Newton, answering this description, was destroyed during the Danish invasion of the ninth century.

In its stead the villagers settled to build another place of worship, and we learn that a second church of roughly-hewn stone was standing in 1085, "with 40 acres of land to maintain the priest. The third, and finest structure, known to have been erected about the year 1140, is frequently referred to in old wills and records of the Middle Ages, and consisted, as far as we can gather, of a chancel, a "High Quire," as it is described, a nave, with north and south aisles, and a western tower containing three bells. From a few fragments of glass which have been dug up from the foundations, it is quite possible that even at that time the windows were filled with beautiful painted glass.

A SCENE OF BLOODY BATTLE.

To walk through the still quietude of the village to-day, where all lands of birds nest undisturbed above the slow-moving plough, it is almost unbelievable that men have fought and plundered there, and about 1643, in the height of the civil war, troops from Hall created a miniature battle in the peaceful churchyard, where villagers had sought refuge. It was in this skirmish that the laborious toil of the men of the village was dreadfully abused, when the soldiers razed the splendid church to the ground.

However, they proceeded to assist in the building of another on the restoration of the Monarchy in 1660, but funds must have been low, and spirits damped for the fourth church was a mean, plain structure, only thirteen feet in width.

Dissatisfied with this meagre building, the Rector of 1680, the Hon. the Rev. G. W. Bourke, decided to replace it, and in the following year the Archbishop of Canterbury dedicated Wold Newton's fifth church, which stands to-day, superbly designed by Mr. James Fowler, the late Louth architect. Outside, it is a joy to the eye, nestling amongst shady trees which are almost as ancient as the tombstones lying beneath them, and the richly furnished interior secretes many of the treasures of centuries past.

All Hallows is the name of the little edifice, where representative Saints of the Calendar surround the walls, each standing on a piece of stone taken from England's most famous abbays (including our own Louth Abbey, Crowland, and Thornon). There is the poor man, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Christopher the strong, the missionary St. Paulinus, who was the first Christian missionary to visit Lincolnshire, St. Gregory (who sent Paulinus from Rome), and St. Gilbert of Sempringham, the Lincolnshire farmer monk, whose Order owned property in the parish. St. Thomas of Canterbury stands proudly by a copy of the famous French Madonna, and an original painting of Bishop King (the work of a famous relative of a past Rector) overlooks the pulpit.

TREASURES OF CENTURIES PAST.

Old Flemish lamps and picturesque altar candles, undoubtedly of the Renaissance period, are treasures which accompany an Elizabethan chalice, and Communion spoon with its base an original Mediaeval pattern (incidentally, the oldest piece of Tudor Church plate in Lincolnshire). In keeping with the old world atmosphere is a finely moulded wine flagon of original Restoration pewter, and ancient silk priest's vestments of glorious rainbow hues, including one of delicate green dating from the days of Queen Anna.

A font in decorated style, of 14th century origin, which has played its part in the christening of the village babies for over 400 years still stands by the south door, catching the dappled rays of light from the stained-glass windows. As the eye follows them from the north wall in clockwise direction, the rich windows tell the story of Our Lord, of the Annunciation, the Nativity Crucifixion, Resurrection, Ascension, and Pentecost. And linger to lend an almost ethereal touch to all those things so beautiful in their antiquity.

Tiny as the village is, it can boast one of the richest and finest little churches of the county for it has staunch supporters in the villagers, who retain numerous stories of All Hallows' and its Rectors. One of the finest, they will tell you, was the Rev. Anthony Henneage, an ancestor of the well-known Hanton family, who held office there from 1507-1537, and gave fifty years of devoted attention to the parish. They can tell also of Rector Pilkington, a vicar of Puritan of post-Reformation times, whose intolerant creed led to the dilapidation and finally the destroying of the old church; and of a certain very fat reverend gentleman who found difficulty in entering the church door, and on his death-bed asked for two ve men to carry him to his grave.

THE CHURCH AND MAN.

The Church has always been looked upon as holding together a community, and in this small village it is, and always has been an essential factor. From its green hill, All Hallows' looks down with pride on the little group of farmsteads and vast acres of cultivated land, just as its predecessors have done for over ten hundred years. There is peace and plenty there, far from the main roads, and abundant evidence that where the church flourishes, the community flourishes also.