

Percy H. Reaney: The Consecration of Hempstead Church.
Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society, 1937,
N.S.21, 134.

Definite information as to the actual date of the consecration of our churches is rare and is for that reason the more valuable when discovered. Hempstead was originally a chapel-of-ease that was later raised to the dignity of a parish church, the erection of which was, therefore, comparatively late. On 8 January, 1365, eight candidates were "admitted to the first tonsure at Hamstede and on the same day the lord dedicated the church with the eemetery."¹ The church was, therefore, consecrated by Simon of Sudbury, then Bishop of London; but the year 1365 merely forms a terminus ad quem for the date of its erection. The Royal Commission on Historical Monuments² states that the nave, with the north and south aisles, was built c.1350, and this estimate we may still accept as approximately correct; for, as the Rev. Montagu Benton has pointed out to me, the date of the consecration of a church does not necessarily afford reliable evidence as to the exact date of its building. Consecration was sometimes delayed for a considerable time, especially in the thirteenth century, when many bishops appear to have neglected their duty in this respect.

1. Registrum Simonis de Sudbiria, vol.ii,p.30.

2. Essex (North-West),vol.i,p.158.