

## Notes.

The Editor regrets that he has been compelled by exigencies of time and space to omit several papers, including one upon the Old Hall at Nunney, now destroyed, with plans and drawings, by Rev. E. Peacock, and communicated by G. Walters, Esq., our Local Secretary. It is proposed to publish some of these in a future volume.

N.B.—The Committee will be glad to receive notices of any matters of archæological interest for publication.

---

### Bronze Figure from Crucifix, found at Shepton Mallet.<sup>1</sup>

BY F. J. ALLEN.

This image was found in 1882, lying several feet underground, in the garden of Mr. James Allen, Park House, Shepton Mallet. There is no clue to the circumstances which brought it thither. The spot is not near the church, it has never been built on, and the adjacent house is only about a hundred years old.

At the time of finding the right arm was much bent, and an attempt to straighten it produced a crack; but in every other respect the condition of the figure is perfect. Its length (excluding the arms) is nearly six inches. The body is gaunt and angular, girt with a loin-cloth. The head and face are executed in a simple but pleasing manner. The conventional treatment of the hair and beard betokens an early date. The arms are very long and thin, the legs on the contrary very short. The right leg is crossed over the left; the right foot pierced, but not the left. The body of the figure is hollow at the back, and the surface has been finished by tools after casting.

(1). This crucifix has been presented to our Museum at Taunton by Mr. F. J. Allen.

The work corresponds in character to that of the thirteenth century. The British Museum has a figure (minus its limbs) which appears to have been cast from the same model. This latter is said to be of Irish workmanship. Whether it is certainly so, I know not: but at all events one cannot but be struck with the resemblance between these bronze figures and the sculptures on the West Front at Wells; and in the absence of other evidence I should be inclined to attribute them to the same school of workmen.

---

### Discovery of Saxon Sun Dial on the South Porch of North Stoke Church.<sup>1</sup>

BY REV. FREDK. O'MELIA, *Rector of North Stoke.*

The dial of which I have the honour to enclose a rubbing and tracing for the Somersetshire Archæological and Natural History Society, was discovered on the *south porch* of North Stoke church, by the Rev. W. S. Calverley, F.S.A. He pronounces the dial to be Saxon. It is on the east side of the porch, and stands at a perpendicular height of  $5\frac{1}{2}$  feet. Superficial area of stone on which dial is carved, 13 inches by 17 inches. This stone forms part of the edge of the porch doorway. The stone is the stone of the locality; same as that of which the church is built. The dial is what is termed an "erect direct south dial."

I beg to draw the attention of the Members to the mark to which the four o'clock afternoon ray extends. It measures  $6\frac{1}{2}$  inches by 4 inches, and lies east and west, declining towards the west. In a pamphlet by Mr. Calverley, on *Ancient Dials in the Diocese of Carlisle*, there are diagrams of dials, many of them very like the North Stoke dial. That of Caldbeck church, Cumberland, has a mark opposite the *four o'clock* line very similar to this mark on the North Stoke dial. The

(1). Communicated by the Rev. Prebendary Scarth.

general outline of the mark is that of a Latin cross, but it is very much worn by the weather. The gnomon is gone, but the holes in which it was fastened are clearly marked. The diameter of the circle (which is complete) is  $6\frac{1}{2}$  inches. There is a round mark, but no line in the dial to indicate six o'clock in the afternoon. There is a smaller mark at the end of the line for three o'clock in the afternoon.

Since communicating an account of the discovery to the *Bath Chronicle*, I have heard that there are two dials of the same character on the south porch of the church of *Newton St. Loe* (Decorated period), and another on a Perpendicular buttress of *Stanton Prior* church. These churches are distant but a few miles from North Stoke. Should the dial at North Stoke be, as Mr. Calverley asserts, an early Saxon dial in position, I beg to suggest that very great local interest attaches to the discovery.

Mr. George V. Du Noyer, M.R.I.A. (*Achæological Journal*, vol. xxv, p. 207), states that dials of early mediæval date are of great rarity. He instances four churches in which they may be found in position, viz., Bishopstone, near Eastbourne, Sussex, and Kirkdale, Edstone, and Swillington churches, in Yorkshire. At Swillington the circle is complete, as in the North Stoke dial. The Rev. Prebendary Scarth adds another to the list, viz., that of Aldborough, near Hull.

Mr. Du Noyer quotes an opinion of Mr. Edmund Sharpe, as to the dial of Bishopstone church, which, I think, may in some important respects be applicable to the dial at North Stoke: "This dial," Mr. Sharpe says, "was probably set up at the time of the Norman or Transitional additions to the church of Bishopstone."

The font at North Stoke is generally considered to be of the early Norman or Saxon period, and in the process of restoration, ancient steps to the rood-loft and the jamb of the door above have been discovered.

The chancel arch, our Architect, Major Davis, considers to

be of *very early Norman or Transitional date*. It is a very interesting piece of work, and is a blending of the round and pointed arch.

This year, in excavating the foundations of a mediaeval barn that stood at a distance of 150 yards from the church, pillars, pottery, and other undoubted indications of the existence of a Roman villa *in loco* were discovered. A few months ago, near the church (about a quarter mile distant), a massive Roman sarcophagus was also excavated. I beg to suggest that the village of North Stoke grew around this *Roman Villa*. Some Roman bricks are to be seen in the walls of the church.

On the porch are *two heads* carved in stone. One, that of a Norman knight in chain armour. May not this Norman ornamentation be a subsequent addition to the porch, the builder at the same time exhibiting the Norman animus against the Saxon by obscuring the dial, as ill understood or despised?

In conclusion, I may state that the visit of Mr. Calverley to North Stoke church, and the interesting discovery he has made, realise in an unexpected manner and place the inference of the Rev. Prebendary Scarth in reference to ancient dials in England and Ireland. In an interesting paper "On Ancient Methods of Measuring Time," which he has kindly sent me, he says, "I feel assured, from what I myself have seen in different churches in England, that many such dials of a remote period, with their primitive markings, might be discovered."<sup>1</sup>

---

(1). *Vide Proceedings of the Bath Natural History and Antiquarian Field Club*, p. 207.