

NOTES ON FONTS.¹

A. ADDITIONAL NOTES ON LEADEN FONTS.

B. ADDITIONAL NOTES ON FONTS WITH REPRESENTATIONS OF THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS.

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A. ADDITIONAL NOTES ON LEADEN FONTS.

Since my paper on "Leaden Fonts" was printed in the *Archaeological Journal* for 1900² two more leaden fonts have to be recorded, and notice of one which has now disappeared must also be appended.

In the year 1898, the Rev. B. J. S. Kerby was instituted Vicar of the Church of the Holy Trinity at Penn, in Buckinghamshire. The font was coated over with colour and believed to be constructed of stone, but one day the vicar tapped it with his knuckle and it appeared to him that it did not sound like stone. So he applied his knife, discovered it was a leaden bowl, and had it cleaned and restored to its present condition. (Plate I.)

This circular bowl³ is quite plain and is scratched all over with initials and dates, the earliest of which is 1625. It stands on a low pillar⁴ having a round base,⁵ and this rests on a circular platform of 1 foot 3 inches in height with a circumference of 7 feet 6½ inches.

It was Mr. R. Garraway Rice, F.S.A., who first drew my attention to a rectangular leaden vessel standing on the lawn of Greatham House, near Pulborough, in Sussex. This vessel is constructed of sheet lead about

¹ Read before the Meeting of the Institute, on the 2nd May, 1906.

² See *Arch. Journ.*, Vol. LVII (Second Series VII), 1900.

³ External depth of bowl = 1 foot. Internal depth = 8½ inches. Rim =

3 inches. Internal diameter = 1 foot 8½ inches.

⁴ The pillar = 5½ inches in height having a circumference of 3 feet 8 inches.

⁵ The base is 6½ inches in depth with a circumference of 4 feet 6 inches.

$\frac{1}{4}$ inch in thickness, and the top measures 1 foot 8 inches by 1 foot 7 inches, having a depth of $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches outside. There is a little foot at each corner, and in the middle of two opposite sides are indications of where the lock and hinge for a cover have been placed. There are many scratches on the outside, which has recently been painted

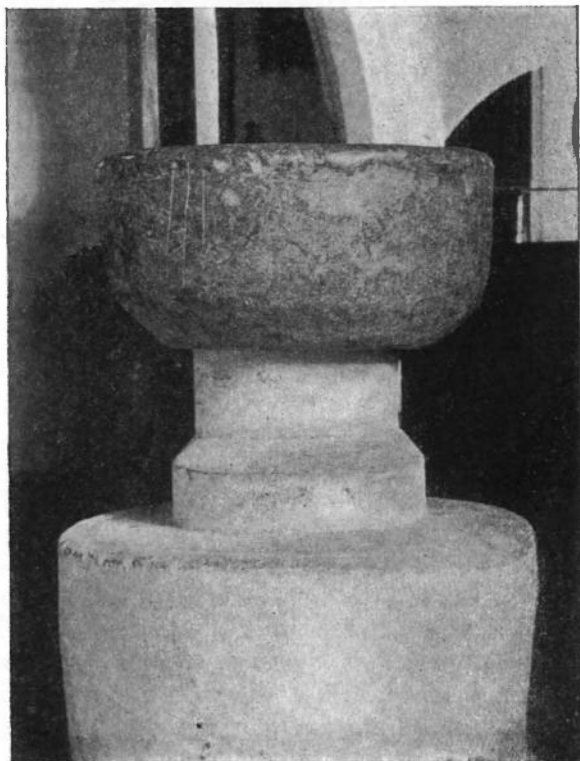


PLATE I.—LEADEN FONT, HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, PENN, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

white by the owner of Greatham House ; and in the centre of three of the faces may be found a small raised circle having a diameter of $2\frac{7}{8}$ inches. The leaden vessel stands on a stem¹ possessing a round capital² and a square base.³ (Plate II.)

¹ The stem is $11\frac{1}{4}$ inches in height having a circumference of 2 feet 10 inches.

² The round capital is 3 inches in

depth possessing a circumference of 5 feet 2 inches.

³ The base or plinth is 1 foot 2 inches square by 6 inches in depth.

At the present time this vessel is being used as a flower-pot; but it is not unlikely that it was the ancient font of Greatham Church. The church was restored about forty years ago and glories in a brand new font. The old font was discarded at the restoration, and, as the lawn of Greatham House adjoins the churchyard, it was doubtless placed there for preservation. At first it was conjectured



PLATE II.—LEADEN FONT, GREATHAM CHURCH, SUSSEX.

that this leaden vessel might be the lead-lining of a stone font, but it is scarcely likely that a lead-lining would have raised circles as ornamentation upon three of the sides.

In the year 1828 there existed a leaden font in the church at Leigh, in Surrey, for a writer in *The Gentleman's Magazine*¹ of that date remarks that in this church

¹ See *The Gentleman's Magazine* for 1828, Part I, p. 489.

"the font is a large stone, surmounted by a leaden reservoir." Since this was written the leaden font in Leigh Church has disappeared and been replaced by a stone one.

I venture to take this opportunity of correcting an error which unfortunately appeared in my paper on "Leaden Fonts"¹ respecting the one in the church of St. Mary the Virgin at Burghill, in Herefordshire. (Plate III, figs. 1 and 2.) In the early years of last



PLATE III. FIG. 1.—LEADEN FONT, BURGHILL CHURCH, HEREFORDSHIRE.

century the tower of this church gave way² and seriously crushed and damaged the font, which was removed to the vestry for safety. In the year 1880 the font was restored³ by the late Lord Saye and Sele, Archdeacon of

¹ See *Arch. Journ.*, Vol. LVII (Second Series, VII), 1900, pp. 45-46.

² The tower was rebuilt in 1812.

³ The leaden bowl has a circumference of 67 inches, and the border ($4\frac{1}{2}$ inches in depth) consists of a flowing scroll pattern. The bowl is placed on the ancient stone pedestal

consisting of thirteen niches containing mutilated figures. One has a nimbus and is doubtless intended for our Lord, and the other figures for His twelve apostles. The external depth of the bowl is 13 inches, and the internal depth is $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Hereford. While endeavouring to straighten the lead it was found to be so thin that the lower ornamental portion was lost. So the font was relined and strengthened on the outside by the present moulding.

The museums of Gloucester, Maidstone, and Lewes each possess a small leaden vessel, and it has been claimed by some writers that these are fonts, but it is very problematical if they were ever used for the baptismal rite.

The one in Lewes Castle is a rectangular vessel, 14 inches long by 8 inches high. It had iron handles, of



PLATE III. FIG. 2.—THE SAME, ENLARGED.

which parts remain, and it is ornamented with rows of dots, while the front is adorned with a triangle containing a pattern and a small cross. The leaden vessel in Maidstone Museum is somewhat dilapidated. It is circular in shape, and was found in the Medway. It has a diameter of $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and is only $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches high. The rim is half an inch wide, and is supported by twelve flanges. At each of two opposite points in the rim are two flanges which meet at right angles. This arrangement is intended to support an arched handle which was inserted at three points. The spaces between the flanges are decorated in

low relief with an ornament of graceful foliage.¹ The leaden vessel in Gloucester Museum is considered to be thirteenth century workmanship, and was found at the old Woodchester Church in Gloucestershire. The bottom is a circular disc of lead, and on this are placed four sheets of lead, thus giving the vessel a rectangular shape at the top of $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches square. The circular base has a diameter of $8\frac{3}{4}$ inches, and the vessel is $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches high. The four sides bear impressions from the same mould. These give us the emblems of the Crucifixion with the heads of Pontius Pilate and the High Priest, while below is the dead Christ on the knees of the Blessed Virgin Mary. His head and feet are supported by two kneeling figures which are doubtless intended for St. John and St. Mary Magdalen. The panel is surrounded by an elegant border of trailing vine leaves.

Some years ago Mr. C. Roach Smith described another leaden vessel, found at Felixstowe, which, he considered, belonged to the tenth century. "It had lost its rim, but seems to have retained some traces of two or three flanges. It was 6 inches high, 31 inches in circumference, and had an iron handle. There were but four ornaments on its exterior, each of which represented a stiff-stalked plant with leaves and flowers at its base, having also two branches each, like the central stem, ending in three leaves."²

It is difficult to surmise what was the use originally made of these four small leaden vessels. The one from Woodchester is thought to have been a lavabo for washing the priest's hands at the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. The others may have been for a similar purpose. At any rate, they were portable, having handles. Were they Holy Water stoups, or is it possible that they were salt-cellsars?³

B. ADDITIONAL NOTES ON FONTS WITH REPRESENTATIONS OF THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS.

Since my paper on "Fonts with representations of the Seven Sacraments" appeared in the *Archaeological*

¹ See *Archaeologia Cantiana*, Vol. XII, p. 300.

² *Ibid.*

Three small leaden vessels are illus-

trated in a paper on "English Lead Fonts" by Mr. Lawrence Weaver, F.S.A., in the *Architectural Review*, Vol. XIX, pp. 99-100 (March, 1906).

Journal,¹ another font belonging to this series has been recorded. This font stands in the interesting church of St. Nicolas at Denston, in Suffolk, and my attention was drawn to it by Mr. V. B. Redstone. (Plate IV.)

The bowl² is octagonal like all the others belonging to this class, and it is supported³ by eight half angels having



PLATE IV.—FONT IN THE CHURCH OF ST. NICOLAS, DENSTON, SUFFOLK.

their wings extended and their hands clasped or placed on their breasts. The pillar⁴ is adorned with eight shallow trefoil-headed niches. The square plinth⁵ upon which the pillar rests is modern.

¹ See *Arch. Journ.*, Vol. LIX (Second Series, Vol. IX), 1902, p. 17.

² Bowl and chamfer = 1 foot 11 inches (bowl = 1 foot 2½ inches, chamfer = 8½ inches). Rim = 4 inches. Interior depth of bowl = 1 foot 2 inches.

Diameter of interior of bowl = 1 foot 11 inches.

³ The chamfer = 8½ inches.

⁴ The pillar = 1 foot 1½ inches, with a base of 7½ inches.

⁵ The plinth is 2 feet 4 inches square × 3½ inches in depth.

The heads of the sculptured figures in the eight panels¹ are sadly mutilated, and each panel has rays of glory behind the carving emanating from the centre. This same peculiarity is found on the fonts at Great Glemham and Woodbridge, which are also in the county of Suffolk.

The eighth panel represents the Crucifixion, and on either side of the crucified Saviour, which is sadly mutilated, stands the figures of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. John the Evangelist.

The seven sacraments are not arranged in their correct order and reckoning from the eighth panel we have Ordination, Matrimony, Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, the Holy Eucharist and Extreme Unction. The sculptor has placed Baptism and Extreme Unction on the opposite side as if to indicate that they were the first and last of the sacraments to be received.

Baptism is denoted by a fifteenth-century octagonal font standing on two steps, and having the bowl adorned with quatre-foils and the pillar with shallow niches. The priest stands behind the font and is vested in surplice and stole, and he is reading from an open book held by an acolyte vested in a surplice with long sleeves. The god-parents are a man and a woman. The man is dressed in a long gown and he holds a round cap in one hand, while the woman carries the infant candidate for baptism. The butterfly head-dress of the godmother indicates that the font dates back to the latter years of the fifteenth century.

In the panel representing the rite of Confirmation we find a bishop, vested in cope and mitre, holding a book, while a woman dressed in a gown with long sleeves carries the infant candidate.

Penance is portrayed by a priest who is vested in surplice and stole and seated in a panelled pew. A woman kneels before him, and two other penitents—a man and a woman—approach the confessional. The woman is dressed in a gown with sleeves and a tight-fitting bodice.

In the panel for the Holy Eucharist we find an altar with a chalice placed upon it. There are no candlesticks or cross upon the altar, and the priest, who is vested in alb and stole, is communicating a man and a woman.

¹ Each panel = 10½ inches × 8 inches.

The man is dressed in a long gown, and the woman has a tight-fitting bodice and a butterfly head-dress. A server, vested in a surplice, kneels near the altar.

A priest is uniting the hands of a man and a woman in the panel for matrimony; and a bishop is ordaining a candidate for the sacred ministry in the sculpture depicting the rite of Ordination. Extreme Unction shows a dying man in his bed. The coverlet is turned down and the priest, vested in surplice and stole, is anointing him. The acolyte, vested in a long surplice, holds some object which may be either the open ritual or the casket of oil. The bed of the dying man has presented some difficulty to the sculptor, who has depicted it raised up and placed at an angle of about forty-five degrees.