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A. C. HADDON, Sc.D., F.R.S., President, in the Chair.

The following papers were read:

ON TWO FOURTEENTH CENTURY ESQUIRE BEDELLS¹.

BY THE REVEREND HENRY PAINE STOKES, LL.D.,
Corpus Christi College.

ON SOME CONSECRATION CROSSES IN EAST
ANGLIAN CHURCHES.

BY MR T. D. ATKINSON.

I believe that all we know positively about Consecration Crosses² may be told in very few words: That at the consecration of a church the bishop made with oil of chrism twelve crosses on the outside of the building—three on the north side, three on the south, three on the east, and three on the west—and twelve more crosses inside. The rubric of the Consecration Service requires that the crosses should be ten palms—equal to seven feet five inches—from the floor. But many extant examples are much lower than this; some are only three or four feet from the floor. Then again it is required that the crosses shall be in circles, but unless many of the crosses which I take to be those made at the consecration are not so, this injunction also was violated. The rubric required that a candle should be burned under the cross on certain occasions, and yet we seldom find any remains of the metal bracket for this candle or a hole in the stonework into which the bracket could be fixed.

Examples of consecration crosses inside the church are far more numerous than outside. They are almost invariably

¹ This paper will appear as an Octavo Publication.

² I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to papers by Mr John Gage in *Archaeologia*, xxv, and by Dr Middleton, *Archaeologia*, XLVIII.

painted, the outline being faintly incised on the plaster. The nearest instances to us at the present moment are two in the old chapel, now the library, of Pembroke College. They are now hidden by book-cases. There is a mutilated example in Trinity Church, on the north wall of the north aisle (fig. 1); it

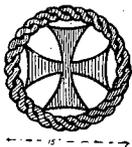


FIG. 1.

Cambridge, Holy Trinity Church.
North wall of north aisle, inside.

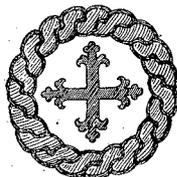


FIG. 2. Heydon, Norfolk.

North wall of north aisle, inside.

is about the orthodox height of ten palms from the floor, and is surrounded by a green twisted wreath, the cross itself being red with a black outline. Red is the most common colour for inside crosses. An example of unusual form, also enclosed in a green wreath, is that at Heydon in Norfolk (fig. 2). The two most common types are to be seen in two churches of extraordinary interest on the east border of our own county; the derelict church of Landwade contains two of the most common type of all on the north and south walls of the nave (fig. 3); while the

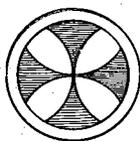
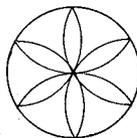


FIG. 3. Landwade.

North and south walls, inside.

FIG. 4. Isleham (inside) and
Great Eversden, north-west
buttress of tower.

deserted and desecrated church at Isleham contains not less than seven, of a type also common (fig. 4). But this building has long been used as a barn, and I am disposed to think that three of these seven crosses are the forgeries of some young agriculturist. I shew a plan of the church on which their positions are marked (fig. 5). I need hardly observe that the positions of crosses are as important or more important than

the details of the crosses themselves. These latter must have been dictated generally by the fancy of the individual painter,

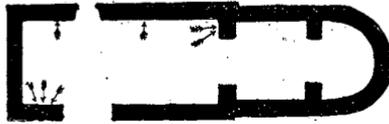


FIG. 5. Isleham Old Church.

Sketch-plan to shew positions of Crosses.

while the positions no doubt followed a rule or rules, and these cannot even be conjectured till a large number of examples have been recorded. It will be observed that at Isleham two on the east wall of the nave almost touch one another, and that three others are crowded together on the south wall. If we strike out one of the former and two of the latter we get a suggestion of an orderly arrangement. No colour remains; only the incised lines, emphasized in one case with a tar-brush. Perhaps further investigation would settle which, if any, were forgeries.

The nearest approach that I have seen to a complete set are those at Attleborough, in Norfolk, a church remarkable also for its grand rood-screen and loft re-erected at the west end. Here there are remains or indications of about half-a-dozen disposed symmetrically and at equal distances on the north and south walls of the aisles. There are several in Great Livermere Church in Suffolk, including one in the chancel, which position for some reason that I cannot explain is rare.

Sometimes consecration crosses are found on window jambs: at the charming little church of Coton there is a carving which at first sight might be taken for an example, but closer examination shews that it is not. In the north wall of the chancel there is a 'low-side-window,' and this has been blocked up by a slab of stone which formerly was part of the inner jamb of some window of the fifteenth century. This piece of jamb bears the carving which looks rather like a mutilated consecration cross. As a matter of fact it is I think a representation of a broken wheel with spikes in the tire and swords or daggers

between the tire and the axle. I imagine it to be a St Catherine's wheel. There was formerly a gild in the parish dedicated to St Catherine.

We often notice on one jamb—generally the east jamb—of the doorway a small cross somewhat rudely cut or scratched. Mr J. T. Micklethwaite thinks that this is “an addition to the ordinary dedication cross¹.”

The outside crosses have almost all gone. The hand of time has done much, and the hand of the architect has probably done more. But not the weather or even the process known as ‘restoration’ would have obliterated so many examples if they had been carved on the stonework. Presumably therefore they were generally painted. The best examples, and the best known, are those at Salisbury Cathedral. I give an example cut on the face of the north-west buttress of the tower of Kenninghall Church in Suffolk (fig. 6).

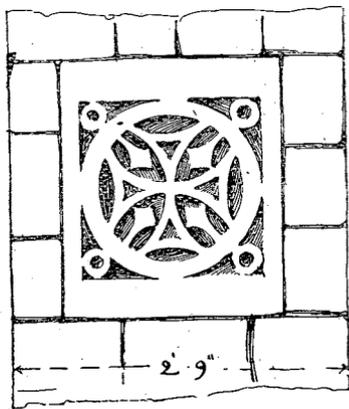


FIG. 6. Kenninghall.

North-west buttress of Tower.

A remarkable instance of external painted crosses is mentioned by Professor Middleton. At North Repps, in Norfolk, patches of plaster about a foot square were laid on the wall, and the crosses were painted on them. These all remained to the full number of twelve and were seen by him.

¹ *The Ornaments of the Rubric*, Alcuin Club Tract, No. 1.

But when the church was restored every one was destroyed, crosses, plaster and all. North Repps was probably unique. I suppose that there is now no church which preserves twelve crosses all outside or all inside. Salisbury Cathedral has sixteen in all, but eight are inside and eight are outside. I think that I may affirm that there is no external cross on any church or college chapel in Cambridge. But on one of the tower buttresses of Great St Mary's—the west face of the southernmost of the two west buttresses, to be precise—is a round sinking fourteen inches in diameter and about an inch deep. The ground of the sinking is slightly convex. This is a piece of modern 'restoration'; the sinking is, I am told, a copy of one which was on the old stone which formerly occupied this position, and my informant¹ adds that this is the mark from which the miles were measured along the roads leading out from Cambridge. This may well be, and the thing may be the remains of a consecration cross into the bargain. The sinking is just the size of a consecration cross but is rather near the ground, especially for a church standing in a public thoroughfare. The cross, if ever there was one, was, we may suppose, carved in relief or made of metal.

The chapel of King's Hall was consecrated in 1499; the following record is preserved in the accounts: "Expense circa novam Capellam. Expense circa consecrationem ejusdem viz. pro prandio xx.s. It' pictori qui fecit cruces circa ejusdem xvj. d.²"

I may perhaps be allowed to give a word of warning in regard to the circles with rays or spokes which we sometimes see scratched on buttresses of churches and which look so like consecration crosses. They must be carefully examined, for they sometimes turn out to be rude sundials made by a sexton or by workmen engaged upon building some part of the church. On the other hand there are cases in which a true consecration cross is so elaborate that it might not be recognized as one; the central cross at the east end is developed into a crucifix, some-

¹ Mr Gilbert Hattersley, who has succeeded to the post, which his uncle held for so long, of warden of the church.

² Willis and Clark, *Architectural History*, II. 451 note.

times with accompanying figures; Coggeshall in Essex is the nearest example.

I now come to two types of cross which I venture to suggest are consecration crosses.

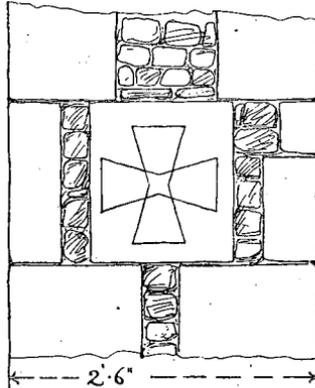


FIG. 7. Helion Bumpstead.
North-east buttress of Nave.

The first of these is illustrated by an example (fig. 7) from the little church of Helion Bumpstead, still unspoiled by 'restoration,' and long may it remain so. This cross—the immediate subject of the present paper—is marked by very faintly incised lines on the face of the north-east buttress of the nave, and is about the right height from the ground. The surface within the lines is just a shade darker than the surrounding stonework, suggesting that the cross was painted; the lines are certainly so faint that they cannot have been meant for more than a guide to a painter. This cross is the only example of the sort that I have seen: that is to say, it is not in any way architectural or decorative like the cross at Kenninghall (fig. 6), so that I think there cannot be any doubt that it is a consecration cross; at the same time it is not surrounded by a circle,—a fact which will have a bearing on the type to be described next. Middleton gives a similar but smaller example from Chichester Cathedral.

The second type of outside cross, which I am disposed to associate with the act of consecration, consists of a cross-shaped

panel of split flint let into the stonework. There are a good many examples of this about Cambridge. The largest number that I have seen on one church are the four at Fen Ditton. They are on the buttresses of the chancel, and are conspicuous from the road, being some ten feet above the ground.

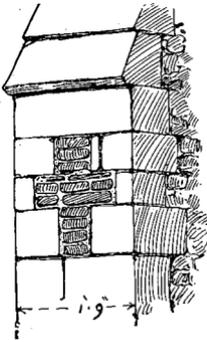


FIG. 8. Great Shelford.
South buttress of Chancel.

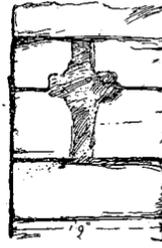


FIG. 9. Great Shelford.
South-east buttress of Chancel.

There are remains of three at Great Shelford. In one of these brick was used in place of flint (fig. 8). This is an important example for my present purpose, for it might be argued that the neatly worked crosses at Fen Ditton are merely decorative, while this Shelford cross is certainly not. It will be noticed that the top right-hand quoin is rather short, and that a narrow slip of stone has been placed at the end of it to make the cross symmetrical. Probably the brickwork was originally plastered and painted. Another example from Great Shelford (fig. 9) has clearly been cut after the buttress was built; the sinking is now filled with cement.

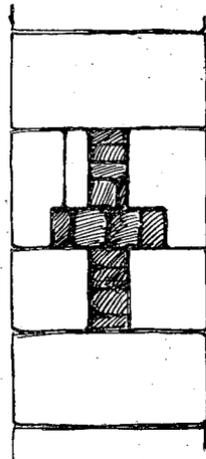


FIG. 10. Linton.
Outside.

There is a good example of a flint cross at Linton (fig. 10). Here one of the quoins has been, as it were, lengthened, like the one at Shelford (fig. 8), but here again the cross, instead of

being formed by the alternation of long with short quoins, has been deliberately cut into the stones.

There is perhaps a difficulty in connecting some of these crosses with the consecration: namely, the great height at which some of them were made, when they might have been just as conveniently made near the ground. Thus those on the tower buttresses at Steeple Bumpstead are some fifteen or twenty feet from the ground. There are at least two contemporary representations¹ of the consecration of a church in which the crosses are at a considerable height from the floor. In one instance the bishop stands on a moveable stage and in the other he has mounted a ladder in order to reach the cross. But still I think the people of Steeple Bumpstead cannot have expected the bishop to anoint their crosses.

ON HOBSON'S CONNECTION WITH THE SO-CALLED HOBSON'S WATERCOURSE.

BY JOHN EBENEZER FOSTER, M.A., Trinity College.

So much misapprehension exists as to the connection of the celebrated Thomas Hobson, the Cambridge carrier, with the watercourse wrongly named after him, that I have shortly recorded the real facts of the case.

The watercourse itself is an ancient one, for in a letter which Dr Perne, then Vice-Chancellor, wrote to Lord Burleigh on the 21st Nov. 1574, about the prevalence of the plague in Cambridge he refers to it as then coming from Shelford to Trumpingtonford, and thence to the Mills in Cambridge, and shewed how it might be used to scour the King's Ditch to the benefit of the University and Town, as the corruption of that watercourse was one of the causes of the plague².

Nothing appears to have been done at this time, but in 1606 subscriptions for carrying out the scheme were collected³; and, on the 26th October, 1610, Thomas Chaplyn, Lord of the

¹ Both mentioned by Middleton.

² Cooper's *Annals*, Vol. II. p. 322.

³ Masters, *Hist. of Corp. Chr. Coll.* p. 133.

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