PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

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23 JANUARY—13 MARCH 1911.

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Communications

MADE TO THE SOCIETY

LENT TERM 1911.

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Monday, 6 February, 1911.

The Rev. Dr STOKES, President, in the Chair.

Mr T. D. ATKINSON made three communications, illustrated with lantern slides.

1. SOME CONSECRATION CROSSES.

A few years ago I called the attention of the Society to some of the comparatively few remaining examples in the churches of East Anglia of those crosses which record an important part of the ceremony of consecration[1]. By far the greater number are internal crosses of the ordinary type painted in red colour on the plaster. There are in our part of the country but few external consecration crosses. This is no doubt due to the intractable nature of our building material. Our walls being built of flint, practically the only places on which the crosses could be carved were the faces of the buttresses, where freestone was used. Probably therefore the external crosses like those inside the church were painted on plaster. At the same time I ventured to suggest that some of the crosses which we see on our church walls formed by pieces of neatly knapped flint let into freestone may possibly be consecration crosses.

In the West of England, where the art of sculpture was more highly developed than elsewhere, and from whence the lead, copper and tin mines were at no great distance, we might expect to find consecration crosses both within and without, carved in relief or cast in metal. Those at Salisbury Cathedral are well known. I wish briefly to note examples in two other buildings, namely Exeter Cathedral and Glastonbury Abbey.

Exeter. The present church, begun by Bishop William Warelwast (1107—1136), is said to have been completed during the episcopate of Henry Marshall (1194—1206). There is no reason to doubt that at Exeter the usual practice was followed

[1] *Proceedings*, XI, 255, 8 May, 1905.

and that the presbytery and choir were first finished and closed towards the west by a temporary wall and consecrated. Then when the nave was completed it was consecrated. This second consecration by Bishop Marshall not later than 1206 is recorded by two crosses carved in relief on the outer face of the south wall of the south aisle (fig. 1 A), one in the second bay from the west, and one in the second bay from the transeptal tower. These crosses are formed by sprays of foliage of the well-known Early English trefoil, bold but not very refined (fig. 2). They are sunk in a circular panel surrounded by a shallow moulding.

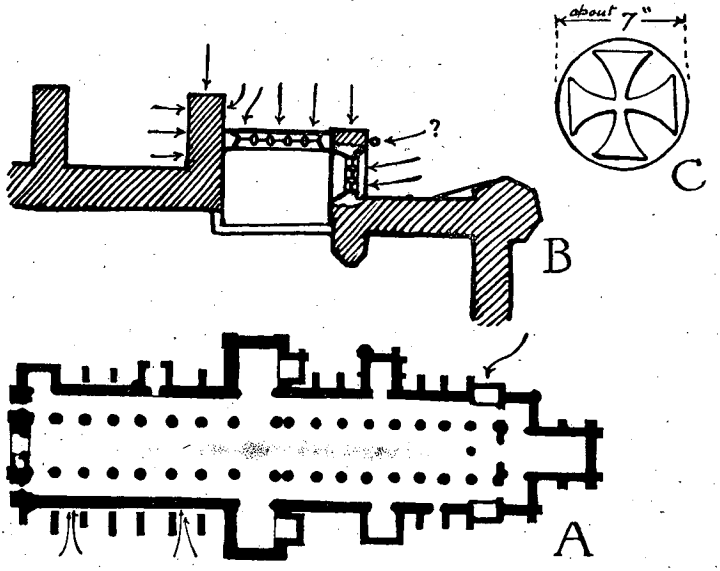

Fig. 1. Exeter Cathedral. A. Plan of the Cathedral. B. Plan of Speke's Chantry Chapel. C. Cross on Speke's Chapel.

The centre of the cross is in both cases about nine feet from the present ground level.

There cannot be the shadow of a doubt that these crosses belong to Marshall's time, and they shew that when Bishop Grandisson rebuilt the nave in the latter half of the fourteenth century he did not entirely destroy the Norman work, but left at all events the wall of the south aisle standing to a height of at least ten feet. They prove also, if proof were required, that

Grandisson did not, as has sometimes been supposed, add four bays to the west end of the nave. Grandisson's consecration is believed to have taken place on 21 Nov. 1367.

An interesting point about the consecration by Bishop Marshall is that close to the westernmost cross there is an unfinished cross of exactly similar character. This false start is about seven feet from the ground, and as that is the height required by the rubric—ten palms or seven feet five inches—the reason for the change must have been, one would think,

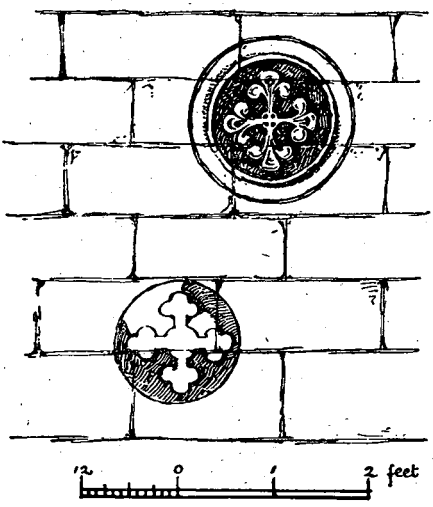

Fig. 2. Exeter. Crosses on the wall of the south aisle.

that the act of consecration might be the better seen by those taking part in the procession. Just below the easternmost cross there is also a faint incised line, the arc of a circle, as if another cross was to have been cut here also, but that in this case the mason was stopped before he had well begun.

I have found no other marks of the consecration of the main building, but the chantry chapel of St George, founded by Thomas Speke in 1518, between the two easternmost buttresses on the north side of the presbytery, has a complete set of twelve external crosses[1] (fig. 1 B). They are quite simple

[1] Only eleven are visible, but a rain-water pipe has been fixed just where the twelfth *ought* to be and no doubt *is*.

maltese crosses left in relief in sunk circles about seven inches in diameter (fig. 1 c). They are cut on the old buttresses between which the chapel is built and on the new wall. I have never before found evidence of such a small chantry chapel, and one moreover requiring such a slight amount of new building, having been, if I may use the expression, so thoroughly consecrated. Nor have I found that this example is noticed in descriptions of the cathedral. No doubt the inside of the chapel had also its twelve crosses, but these were probably painted and have disappeared.

Glastonbury. The very slight remains of this famous abbey fortunately include the little gem at the west end of the great church, known as Saint Joseph's Chapel (fig. 6). This has been shewn by Professor Willis to be the Lady Chapel[1]. It appears to stand on the site, and perhaps preserves the size and general form of an ancient chapel dedicated in honour of the Blessed Virgin, constructed of what is called "wattle and daub," a building "misshapen in form but endowed abundantly with heavenly virtues." Here were buried the founder, Joseph of Arimathea, and King Arthur. "What a famous man believes as to his remote ancestral origins," says Mr Monypenny, "is often of more import than the dry literal truth." I think that the remark applies with equal force to a monastery. There was therefore every reason why the monks of Glastonbury should hold Joseph's Chapel in the highest veneration. Its later history is briefly as follows. The whole church and monastery were destroyed by fire in 1184. The Lady Chapel was immediately rebuilt, the monastic buildings repaired, and the foundations laid of a larger Great Church. The completion of the Great Church was long delayed, but the Lady Chapel is said to have been dedicated in 1186. Two years is rather too short a time for the completion of even this small building, and we may suppose that the ceremony of consecration took place between 1186 and 1190. It is of this consecration that the building still retains evidence.

[1] *The Architectural History of Glastonbury Abbey*, by the Rev. Robert Willis. Cambridge, 1866. From this monograph I have taken the outline of the history here given.

The chapel was at this time a simple parallelogram, complete in itself and detached from the great church (fig. 3). In the thirteenth century the two were connected by a building forming a porch to the great church; the east wall of the chapel was pulled down and its place was taken by a reredos.

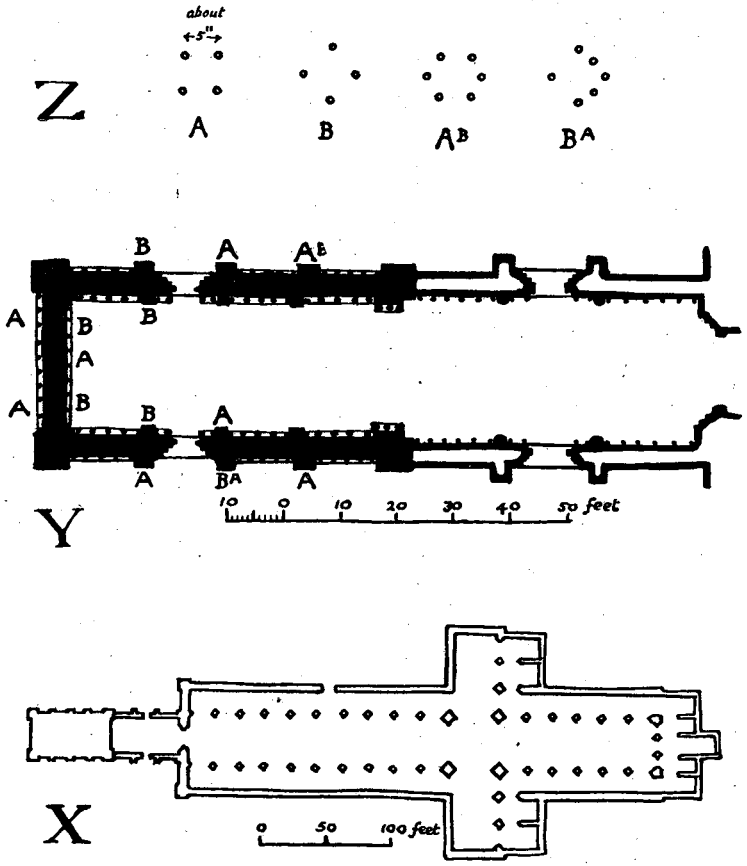

Fig. 3. Glastonbury. X. Plan of the Abbey Church. Y. Plan of St Joseph's Chapel and Porch. Z. Pin-holes for crosses.

In the fifteenth century a crypt was made under the chapel and under the greater part of the porch.

This somewhat long introduction has been necessary to my purpose, and I have tried to make it as short as possible. I now come to my immediate subject. There are on the chapel walls

no signs of the ordinary carved or painted consecration crosses, indeed there are no actual crosses at all. But at eight points outside the building, and in six places inside, there are groups of pin-holes which were undoubtedly the means of fixing metal crosses. Metal crosses seem to have been rare, and it is certainly unusual to find so near an approach to a complete set of crosses. I have therefore thought them worthy of your notice, especially as I have not found that they have been previously described.

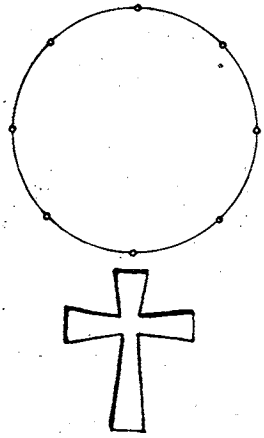

Fig. 4. Chichester. Marks of Crosses. (From *Archaeologia*.)

The groups of pin-holes are about nine feet from the ground. They may be said to be of two patterns, A and B (fig. 3 Y, Z), indicating the use of two forms of cross, for I think it is clear that the patterns which I have called A B and B A (of each of which there is only one example) are really false starts, B A being begun as A and finished as B, and A B being begun as B and finished as A. There is, it will be seen, a certain imperfect symmetry in the arrangement of the two types. It will be remembered that there was formerly an east wall; there will therefore be little difficulty in assigning, with some confidence, places for the remaining four external crosses and six internal crosses.

The only other instances of the use of metal crosses which I can call to mind are at Salisbury and Chichester Cathedrals. In neither case does the actual cross remain. These examples are described and illustrated by Professor Middleton[1]. I reproduce his illustration of the Chichester cross (fig. 4). The lower cross was he thinks perhaps filled with metal. Above it are iron pins on the circumference of a circle for the fixing of a metal cross on the occasion of a re-consecration. At Salisbury Middleton noticed that the stonework was stained green, and from this he, of course, gathered that the metal used was bronze. He also says that they were probably gilded. We may perhaps venture on the same assumption, although we

[1] *Archaeologia*, XLVIII, 456.

have no evidence. As to the forms of the crosses I have ventured upon a conjectural restoration (fig. 5). I suppose that we are all agreed that a conjectural restoration is not worth the

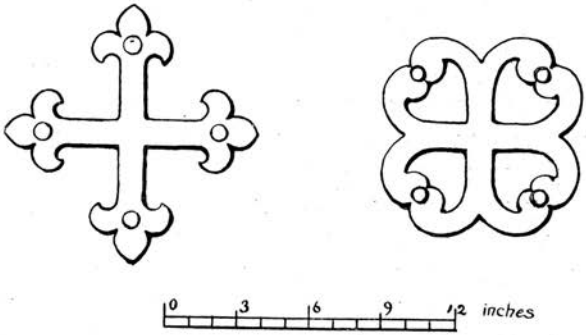

Fig. 5. Glastonbury. Conjectural restoration of Crosses.

paper on which it is drawn, at least if it is the conjecture of someone else. But these two sketches will serve to shew my meaning as to the attachment of the crosses to the wall. When

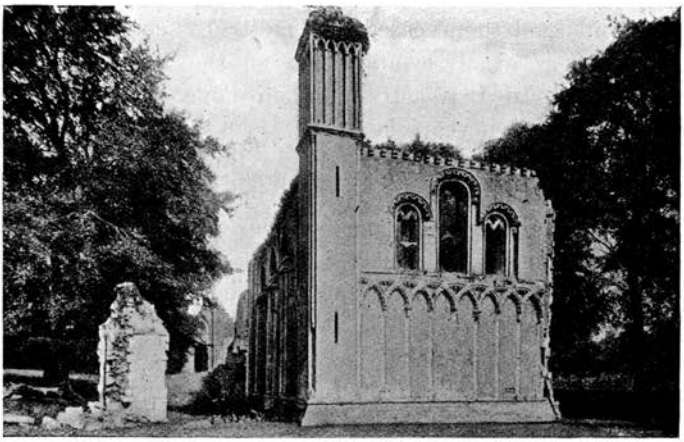

Fig. 6. Glastonbury. St Joseph's Chapel from the north-west.

therefore Reginald, bishop of Bath, came to Glastonbury on Saint Barnabas' Day to dedicate Our Lady's Chapel he saw on its white walls four and twenty golden crosses glittering in the June sunshine.

2. The Sign of the Cromwell Arms, Ely.

The great Sextry Barn or Tithe Barn of the Prior and Convent, and afterwards of the Dean and Chapter of Ely, stood upon a piece of ground abutting upon the west side of the churchyard of St Mary in the city of Ely. The building was a noble piece of architecture of the thirteenth century; it measured near two hundred and twenty feet in length, and its walls were four feet thick[1]. On this same piece of land there stands a house of about the same period—for it still retains some of its medieval features. This house was in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries occupied by the family of Steward, which had for several generations held the post of farmers of the convent and chapter tithes. In 1636 died Sir Thomas Steward. He was succeeded by his nephew, Oliver Cromwell, who thereupon left St Ives and took up his abode in the official residence.

The house continued to be occupied by the farmers of the tithe till 1836, when the Tithe Commutation Act was passed. Payment in kind then ceased, and most of the old tithe-barns became useless, at all events when on the scale of the Ely Sextry Barn. In 1840 Mr Jonathan Page, the last of the farmers, died. Two years later the Dean and Chapter pulled down the fine old barn and sold the dwelling house of the Tithe Farmers. The house was thereupon converted into a beershop, under the name of *The Cromwell Arms*, in commemoration of the most famous of its former occupiers. Later in the century it ceased to be an inn, and in 1905 became the House of Residence of the Vicarage of St Mary.

Having said thus much by way of preface I proceed to quote the following lively narrative with which I have been favoured by the Reverend Kenelm Henry Smith of Ely.

In the early "Forties" of the last Century the House now St Mary's Vicarage was sold on the Decease of the Tenant of the Great Tithes (the late Mr Jonathan Page) by the Dean and Chapter, over the Head of the then Incumbent, who bid for it, to a retired Post Boy, a man of the name

[1] C. A. S. *Quarto Series*, Vol. I, part vi, 1843. A description of the Sextry Barn at Ely lately demolished. By Professor R. Willis. 1846.

The Sign of *The Cromwell Arms*, Ely.

of Rushbrooke. He having saved some Money, having been "first call" at the Lamb Hotel, started a small Brewery, and obtained a Beer Licence, shrewdly calling it "the Cromwell Arms." Here for years he lived and provided visitors and *Radical* Samaritans with his "Rushbrooke's Home-brewed Ale": which was Meat and Drink.

Later on he although Nabal married a perfect *Abigail* in the shape of Mrs Maile (?) widow of a Cambridge Boniface who had kept the Inn at Cambridge opposite St Benedict's Church where the Leicester Coaches put up. She was a perfect Hostess and a Rare good woman. Later on Rushbrooke shrewdly conceived the Idea of applying to the Ely Bench of Magistrates for a Spirit Licence. He did so and *failed* in his application. His Rage knew no bounds And in a few Days he set up over the Front Door a Sign painted in flaming Colours, as only our Local Artist John Toombs the Town Cryer could paint them for the Cromwell Arms. There were as far as I can recollect *three* Personae in the Tableau.

1. Dean Peacock, Chairman of the Bench, a man of Rugged Features, pourtrayed to the Life with a Clay Pipe and College Cap awry. Manifestly *Foo.* [2] Beside him sat Revd. G. Hall, Minor Canon and J.P. whose Countenance was most recognisable, and [3] another I think much begrimed with Dirt and Smoke owing to exposure of the Sign Board which I am inclined to think pourtrayed the late Wm. Layton Esq. of Woodhouse, once Sheriff of Cambridgeshire. Above was a Clock marking 12.30 A.M.

But I won't vouch for the absolute accuracy as this happened in the *Early Fifties* of the last Century.

The result was phenomenal. Crowds stood, acclaimed and guffawed daily. The likenesses were so marked and real and the Hits so palpable.

At last the Local Parliament interfered (pity they don't with regard to the Cartoons at the entrance to the Cemetery to-day !) and the obnoxious sign was removed.

Rushbrooke, as might have been expected, came to Bankruptcy later on and the place was sold. He died in Ely Workhouse. His long suffering wife survived him alas in Poverty many years.

K. H. S.

ELY, *Feb.* 15, 1911.

The signboard has lately been acquired by the Reverend Canon Punchard, D.D., Vicar of St Mary's, and it is by his kindness that I am able to exhibit it here this evening.

The panel measures three feet seven inches by two feet seven inches. There are now but two figures visible. That on the left is clearly the Dean; he wears a tall hat of old-fashioned shape (not a college cap), and holds a scroll bearing the legend:

"Wines Brewers Monopoly no Spirits." The figure on the right, the Reverend Mr Hall, wears a college cap. Over a chair in the background there hangs what looks like a Doctor's Hood. I can find no trace of the third figure mentioned by Mr Smith[1].

There is no artist's signature, and if John Toombs allowed the work to go forth without his name he perhaps deserves no less credit for his discretion than for his modesty. Of his skill as an artist there can be no question, and I confess that I should like to know more about him. I am sure that you will agree with me that the painting is not without merit as a work of art. It is something of a caricature, as a satire should be; perhaps it is strong caricature but it is not gross. The design is well balanced, the drawing has vigour and precision, the colouring is broad and must have been effective when fresh.

The painting cannot perhaps rank as an antiquity, but it has some interest as a piece of local history, and satire of this order seems to have been—must have been—extremely rare on Public House or other signboards. There is something in the mode of expression adopted by our worthy publican which recalls the satirical sculptures and paintings of the middle ages and places it worlds apart from the refined modern modes of revenge upon a clergyman—writing anonymous letters or refusing to go to church.

[1] The original painting does not lend itself to photographic reproduction. The accompanying illustration is reduced from a tracing.

The legend "The Cromwell Arms" proves to be a palimpsest. Under it my wife has detected an earlier inscription. This we have been unable to read; it looks like "The White Slave."

3. Inn Signs painted by Richard Hopkins Leach.

Since the subject of the foregoing paper was announced, my friend the Curator of the Museum has suggested that this would be a suitable occasion for bringing before the notice of the Society a well-known signboard which has been lately presented to the Museum by Mr Maxwell Leach. It is the sign of *The Man Loaded with Mischief*, which formerly adorned the Inn of that name on the Madingley Road. It was painted by Richard Hopkins Leach, the grandfather of the donor.

Mr Barnet McLeod Leach thinks that the sign was put up some time between 1830 and 1840, or perhaps a little earlier than the first date. It is, of course, a free translation of the famous sign designed by Hogarth. A description of the original is given in Larwood and Hotten's *History of Signboards*[1]. The Cambridge example and one or two others are mentioned, and the coloured frontispiece is a picture of *The Man Loaded with Mischief*, though it is not quite clear from which example it is copied. The authors say that the Cambridge example has "this expressive addition, that the man was tied to the woman by a chain and padlock." This chain and padlock are shewn in the frontispiece, and the padlock bears the word "wedlock." So one might suppose that the frontispiece is a reproduction of the Cambridge example. But it is certainly not a reproduction of the sign which I exhibit, and I think it is not an exact copy of any Cambridge sign. It is rather a compilation by the authors from more than one sign, and from a certain engraving which they mention. It seems clear that the engraving has been used because the frontispiece bears the names of the draughtsman and engraver: "*Drawn by Experience*," and "*Engraved by Sorrow*." These words would not be found on an inn sign.

I have been rather prolix on this subject because it is clear that the sign which I exhibit is not the sign seen—or at least not the sign described—by Larwood and Hotten. Probably this

[1] *History of Signboards, from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, by Jacob Larwood and John Camden Hotten. London: J. C. Hotten, 1866.

is the sign they saw, and they had forgotten when they wrote how much it differed from Hogarth's original. For Mr Leach has a good deal toned down the robust satire of that great man, who as usual crowded every inch of his picture with meaning. For instance in the background he put a pawnbroker's shop, and over the door is written "S. Gripe, pawnbroker." Two cats are fighting on a roof, and so on. I am sorry that I cannot shew a slide of this painting, which is very characteristic of Hogarth's manner, whether or no tradition is right in assigning it to him.

The Cambridge picture is signed "R. H. Leach." The reverse shews another rendering of the edifying theme.

By the kindness of Mr Leach I exhibit two other of his grandfather's signs.

The John Gilpin, which used to hang in Gold Street, Cambridge. Two very spirited pictures of Gilpin's famous ride. Signed "R. H. Leach."

The Hop Vine from Fair Street. Two pictures of harvest scenes. Mr Leach thinks that one represents hop-picking and the other barley-reaping. Dated 1834. Not signed.

Mr Leach has also kindly furnished me with the following notes.

Richard Hopkins Leach was born in 1794 and died in 1851. He was apprenticed to an engraver and worked as such. Later he painted in water-colour, miniature, etc., and in oil. The signs were paid for at fifteen shillings the side; this seems to have been the rule; the landlord supplied the board ready for working upon. Other signs painted by Leach are *The Pike and Eel* (retouched), *The Baron of Beef* in Bridge Street, *The Old Castle* or *The Castle* in St Andrew's Street now preserved in the hotel, *The Cricketers* in Melbourne Place (a pencil sketch for this is in the possession of B. McL. L.).

I have been careful not to suggest the possibility that our late fellow-townsman can have been the author of the scandalous sign of *The Cromwell Arms*.

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