



The Berks, Bucks & Oxon Archæological Journal.

An Old Oxford Font.

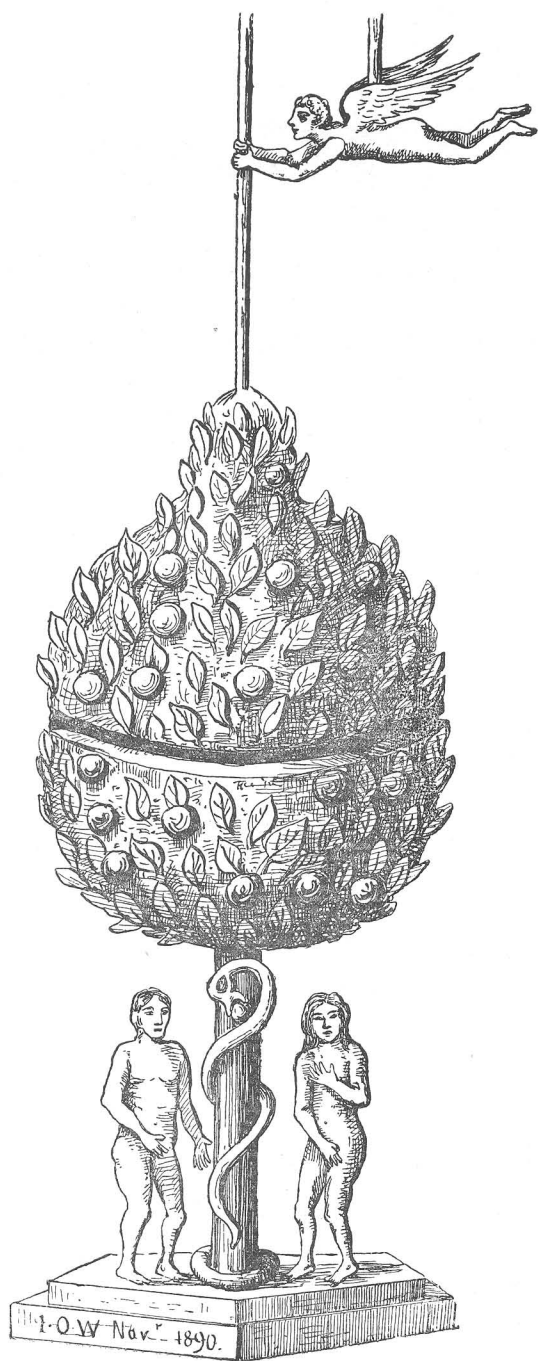
By Emma Swann.

AN interesting discovery has just been made by the Rev. J. R. King, Vicar of St. Peter in the East, Oxford, of the old wooden font, which, in the early part of the century, was in this Church. He has found it in the private chapel of Lord Zouch; at Parham House, in Sussex. A card attached to the font says that the font formerly belonged to St. Peter's Church in Oxford.

This font, which is almost unique, was sketched by the late Professor Westwood 72 years ago. Some time afterwards it disappeared from the Church, and, although many efforts have been made to trace it, all have been unsuccessful until now. A reproduction of Professor Westwood's original sketch, was given in the "Proceedings of the Oxford Architectural and Historical Society" for the year 1890.

The font is made of wood; this alone gives it an unusual character, only two *ancient* wooden fonts, it is believed, remain beside this, viz., those of Evenechtyd in Denbighshire, and one now in the possession of Lord Mostyn.

The sculptor of the font is unknown, but, it was most probably Grinling Gibbons, as he carved a font of very similar appearance, but in stone, for the Church of St. James, Piccadilly.



The St. Peter's font represents the Tree of Life. The support of it is the stem of the tree, a serpent with an apple in his mouth twines around it, and on each side stand figures of Adam and Eve, these figures are about one-third the height of the font.

The bowl is carved with foliage and fruit, as is also the cover, both together representing the head of an apple tree.

The cover is suspended from a pulley by a rope, the weight being in the form of an angel, who appears to be floating above the font.

The present modern font in St. Peter's in the East was, I believe, erected about the year 1856 ; but, a portion of the original Norman font, probably of the same date as the carving of the south porch, is still preserved in the window of the south porch. It was circular in form, and carved with figures of the apostles, and ornamented with the distinctive Norman zigzag pattern.

St. James the Less, with his Fuller's club, may still be traced on the fragment.

An engraving of the Norman font is given in one of the early volumes of the *Archæologia*.

Proceedings of Societies.

BERKS ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY.—An afternoon Meeting was held in the Abbey Gate, Reading, on July 1st, under the chairmanship of Mr. Charles Smith, Vice-President, and was attended by the Rev. J. M. Guilding (Hon. Treasurer), the Rev. P. H. Ditchfield (Hon. Secretary), the Revs. Alan Cheales, T. Flook and J. J. Goadby, Mrs. C. Smith and Miss Smith, Miss Pigott, the Misses Jackson, Mrs. Suffield, Miss Dowsett, Miss Righton, Miss Bird, Miss Strong, Miss Williams, Mr. W. M. Childs, Miss Pollard, Mrs. Ryan, Mr. Ernest Wright (Assistant Secretary), &c. Formal business having been transacted, the Chairman said that, the Queen being their Patron, it was thought desirable that the Society should send an address to Her Majesty, and called on Mr. Ditchfield to read the draft which he had prepared.—The Rev. P. H. Ditchfield read the address, and moved a resolution to the effect that it be