



The Norman Doorways in the County of Berkshire.

By Charles E. Keyser, M.A., F.S.A.

THE County of Berkshire, though perhaps not so noted as some of the Midland Counties for the grandeur of its Churches, still possess many ecclesiastical structures of great interest, which will well repay the most careful examination. This is especially the case with regard to the Norman work still remaining, and though perhaps we cannot cite any example which can compare with the remarkable Church at Iffley, still we can point to many fine specimens of this impressive and severe style of architecture still existing in every part of the county. As elsewhere, so in Berkshire, the Norman builders seem to have devoted their chief energies to the enrichment of the doorways, and though perhaps we do not come across such a diversity of ornament as is to be found in Yorkshire, Gloucestershire, or Oxfordshire, still most of the ornamental mouldings usually identified with the Norman style may be noted by a careful observer. Much loss has been caused by restoration and destruction both in mediæval and modern times. The scanty remains of Reading Abbey arouse sentiments of deep regret at the obliteration of some of the most magnificent work of the 12th century, which human genius was able to devise and carry out in this country, while the utilitarian spirit which has instigated the entire rebuilding of many of our Churches, both in the last and present century, has been responsible for the total disappearance of many most interesting features which might well have been spared and incorporated in the modern structures. Thus with regard to the Norman doorways even since the publication of the *Ecclesiastical and Architectural Topography of the Diocese of Oxford*, published by Mr. J. H. Parker in 1850, examples at Brimpton, Easthampstead, Leckhampstead, Shaw, Stratfield Mortimer, Streatley

and Woolhampton have disappeared, while others at Welford, Wallingford, St. Leonard's, Wokingham, &c., have been so much modernised as to have entirely lost that archaic interest, which formerly attached to them. However, we may perhaps console ourselves by the idea that things might perhaps have been worse, and that we are fortunate in still possessing a good number of examples remaining as witnesses of the extraordinary energy with regard to Church building which characterised our ancestors in the 12th century. From the personal observation of the writer, and from the various authorities* he has been able to consult, there appear to be no less than 87 Churches or other early buildings still, or till recently, retaining their Norman doorways. In this number there are included those at Shalbourne Church, which is now by the recent rearrangement of the county boundaries in the county of Wiltshire, while the interesting examples at Langford and Shilton, within detached portions of Berkshire, are scheduled with those in Oxfordshire, with which county the parishes have been incorporated for all practical purposes by an Act of William IV.

With regard to the dates of the doorways a rough estimate has been hazarded, viz., (1) the Saxon style, which seems to have held its ground till about the year 1080; (2) from 1080—1130, the early Norman, when the doorways were usually of plain and massive character, with bold roll mouldings and shallow ornaments; (3) 1130—1175, the period when we find the pure Norman style, with its wonderful variety of enrichments; and (4) from 1175—1210, the transitional, when we find the pointed arch with Norman ornamentation, or the semicircular arch with the characteristic mouldings and features of the early English period.

The only existing examples of our subject in the Saxon style in the county are at Aston Tirrold, where the south doorway, which has been stuccoed over, and a blocked square-headed doorway in the north aisle, in which a cross coffin lid has been inserted, are plain specimens with long and short work to the jambs.

Of the early Norman period there do not appear to be many

* In Lyson's *Magna Britannia*, Berkshire, are illustrations of several Norman doorways, and the majority are referred to in J. H. Parker's *Ecclesiastical and Architectural Topography of England*, Diocese of Oxford. Mention is made of a considerable number in Vol. XLIV. of the *Archæological Journal*, though some of the instances there claimed to be of Norman date, seem to belong to a later period. In the *Transactions of the Berkshire Archæological and Architectural Society* (1879—1880) are nice illustrations of the doorways at Tidmarsh and Swallowfield. Large photographs of about 40 of the finest examples were exhibited before the Berkshire Archæological Society in 1899.

examples, though some of the plain doorways, e.g., those at Lady Place, Hurley, and on the north side of St. Mary's Church, Reading, may belong to this or any other period. The finest are the north and south doorways at Buckland (fig. 1), almost identical in their design, with the star ornament on the hoodmould, two recessed orders each with a bold roll moulding, plain lintel and recessed tympanum, and two jamb shafts with cushion capitals on each side. At Eaton Hastings is an early north doorway, now within the vestry, with plain arch, lintel and jambs, and plain recessed tympanum. At St. Leonard's Church, Wallingford, the north doorway, which has been much renewed, was certainly of this early period. The blocked north doorway at Marlston may also have been erected prior to 1130.

Of the third or pure Norman period, numerous very fine examples still remain, though no doubt those at Reading Abbey were the grandest in the county. Among the earlier, are the two fine doorways, north and south, at Padworth, both with a roll moulding enriched with an elegant chevron pattern, and the south doorway with a good specimen of the leaf or "antique" ornament. At Aldermaston, the west doorway, which at some time has been taken to pieces, and carelessly reconstructed, has a cable moulding on the arch, massive abacus, one shaft on either side, the one with the cable and the other with the chevron ornament, and two doves pluming on each of the capitals, a design possibly borrowed from some Roman fragment from Silchester. At Wargrave the north doorway looks early, with a hollow and roll moulding in arch, massive shafts ornamented with the cable, and scalloped capitals. On the hoodmould is the "elliptic arched" ornament, usually associated with late work, and though not a common form of enrichment, may still be seen on the following Berkshire doorways, viz. :— at Hanney, Sparsholt (north), and Stanford in the Vale (south). The north doorway at Hanney (fig. 2) is one of the largest and finest in the county. It has a series of semicircles on the main face, and a zigzag band on the chamfer, of the hoodmould, then a course of the elliptic arched, and then a hollow and bold angle roll. The abacus is enriched with the star ornament while the shafts, one on each side to the inner order, are moulded into the cable pattern, and with scroll foliage on the capitals. The south doorway at Bucklebury is another fine specimen, though part of the east shaft has been destroyed. On the keystone at the apex of the hoodmould has been carved a head, with a beaded band on

each side, carried up and enclosing a maltese cross above.† On the face of the hoodmould is a wavy line with beads or pellets on either side, and a lozenge pattern on the chamfer. Then comes a series of large irregular chevrons, then of pellets, and then an inner order of heads, stars, and other figures in a hollow. A series of loops enclosing leaves is carried down the inner jambs. Plain chamfered abacus, one shaft on each side, that on east moulded with the beaded cable, and with varied ornamentation on the capitals. The well-known south doorway at Tidmarsh is perhaps the most highly enriched in the county. Here again is a large head, probably of Christ, within a semicircular frame, on the keystone at the apex of the arch. There are three elaborately carved reveals, the ornamentation being continued without imposts down the jambs to the ground. The outer order has a wavy line enclosing beads, and an inner band partly of scroll and partly of small circles connected by a stem. At the spring of the arch on each side these two courses are diverted outwards, so as to leave a blank semicircular space, the object for which is not apparent. On the middle order we find a series or chain of large beaded medallions, interrupted at the spring of the arch, and on the inner order a row of beads and course of bold raised zigzag, the space between the beads and the chevrons being carved into a leaf pattern. The whole design of this doorway is most uncommon and effective.

The south doorways of Avington (fig. 3), Chaddleworth (fig. 4), North Hinksey and Hatford, and the west doorway at Hurley, are all very fine, and exhibit the varied effects which can be produced by the zigzag ornament. At North Hinksey we find a series of dentils on an angle roll, a somewhat uncommon arrangement. The south doorway at Thatcham is another very fine example with a quarter round on the hoodmould and three reveals. The outer order is very singular with a bold zigzag band into which are affixed a series of double leaves having the appearance of arrowheads, carried round the arch and down the jambs to the ground. There is a similar design on the doorway at Roade Church, Northamptonshire. The middle order has a raised zigzag with pellets between the chevrons on an angle roll, and there is an engaged roll to the edge of the inner order. The abacus has the indented ornament, and the shafts, one on each side to the middle order, are sculptured with the chevron and cable respectively.

† There is a similar cross above the doorway of Londesborough Church, Yorkshire.

On the north doorway at Lockinge (fig. 5) we find the billet ornament, one of the most common mouldings both in Berkshire and throughout the country generally, on the hoodmould, and on the outer order of the arch a very fine example of the frette or embattled moulding, the boldest of all the forms of Norman ornamentation. The north doorway at Faringdon is probably the work of the same artist, with billet on the hoodmould which has dragons' heads at the terminations, and the same bold double frette on the arch. The abaci are also richly carved, and a pattern of beaded semi-circles is carried down the east, and of double leaves enclosing oval medallions down the west jamb. Both these examples are late, and on the border line between the third and fourth of our classified periods. The south doorway at Cholsey is another fine specimen of this date. It has the indented and pellet ornament on the hoodmould, and a bold raised zigzag on the outer order, massive shafts with the inverted trefoil on the east, and beaded scroll foliage on the west capital. There is a plain inner order enclosing a tympanum (fig. 6), on which a plain incised design has been commenced, but not completed. In a building at the Manor Farm in the parish of Brimpton, now used as a barn, but formerly a Chapel, stated by Lysons to have belonged to a Preceptory of the Knights Templars, is a curious little doorway with plain arch and jambs, the inner edges chamfered off, and a tympanum (fig. 6) ornamented with overlapping scallops or scales, and with a large Maltese Cross in alto relievo in the centre. At Charney Bassett on the north side interior of the chancel is preserved the arch and tympanum of a former doorway, with some singular carving, the signification of which is not clear. Round the hoodmould and along the lintel are a series of large pellets, and at the apex is a human head, probably an insertion. On the arch is a design of foliage in the form of a series of double leaves connected together. On the tympanum (fig. 6) is a male figure, with long garment down to the ankles, grasping with his hand the neck of a griffin or dragon on either side. Each of these has a claw pressed against the central figure, and holds his arm in its beak. Can this be an illustration of Psalm XLIV. 18—26? The south doorway (fig. 7) is also curious in its design, with a cable band serving as a border on either side to the flat surface of the arch on which are sculptured twelve human and monster heads. From the mouth of each issue two leaves perhaps intended to portray a double tongue. Here again the symbolism, if any, is not clear, and it is difficult to fathom the motives of our

early builders in placing these grotesque sculptures in so prominent a situation.

At the Grammar School, Wantage, is preserved a very interesting doorway, originally attached to an old Chapel, which stood in the churchyard. It has an outer row of 32 beakheads, the beaks being curled round a massive half-round moulding, both on the arch and jambs. Then comes a bold cable, and then a double band of zigzag forming a series of lozenges on the rounded face of the inner order. Both these ornamented orders are carried round the arch and down the jambs without imposts to the ground. There is much doubt as to what these beakheads, monsters with long beaks, are intended to represent. The best examples of them are to be found on the west doorways of Lincoln Cathedral, Tutbury Church, Staffordshire, and Iffley Church, Oxfordshire. They are especially common in Yorkshire, Oxfordshire, and Gloucestershire, and occasional examples are to be met with throughout Great Britain, extending from Dalmeny, in Scotland, to Landewednach in the extreme south of Cornwall. It has been asserted that they are intended to portray the Devil and his Angels ready to pounce upon the souls of those who come to Church in a heedless and irreverent spirit, as explained in the Parable of the Sower, and this contention would appear to be supported by this example at Wantage. All the heads are of the usual beak type, with the exception of one, on either side just below the spring of the arch, which is larger and more that of a monster with a large foliated tongue coming from the mouth. There are other instances notably at Allestree in Derbyshire, where the larger head is similarly placed in the most prominent situation, and it would be interesting if any documentary evidence could be adduced to substantiate the common theory here put forward. There are other examples of this beak-head ornament to be found in Berkshire, on the north doorway of Shellingford Church, one over the south doorway at Catmore, on the chancel arch at Avington, and a few in the ruins of Reading Abbey.

On the north doorway at Shellingford (fig. 8) are twelve large beakheads round the arch, which is certainly of late date. The shafts are massive but engaged to the jambs and the capitals have flat foliage of late character. This doorway is therefore probably of the same date as those on the south side of the nave and chancel, which clearly belong to the fourth or transitional period. The south nave doorway is a fine specimen of this date (circ. 1180), with a course of the dog-tooth ornament on the chamfer of the hood-

mould, which terminates on dragons' heads, then on the outer order a bold zigzag on face and soffit of the arch forming deeply cut lozenges and showing a sunk roll moulding carried round the angle. There is a plain roll moulding on the edge of the inner order. The abacus is of late character. The shafts to the outer order are banded, and to the inner order, engaged to the jambs. There is a late scroll and foliated pattern on all the capitals. This doorway cannot be earlier than 1180. The south chancel doorway is of the same type with a half round on the hoodmould, then a bold zigzag on an angle roll; on the east side the upper space within the chevrons is ornamented with leaves, but on the west it is plain, the design not having been completed. There is a hollow and angle roll to the inner order. The abacus is similar to that of the south doorway, and there are two shafts on each side all with a central band, and very late foliage on the capitals. The very fine west doorway at Lambourne, which has a head at the apex of the arch, is of the same character as these two doorways at Shellingford, and possibly the work of the same artist. So again in the case of the south doorway at Ashbury (fig. 9). We find a pattern of ornamented cones or nailheads on the hoodmould, which terminates on dragons' heads, and then a very bold zigzag on face and soffit of the arch forming the lozenges with the sunk roll on the angle. The inner order has a plain chamfered edge to the arch and jambs. The abacus is slightly earlier than that at Shellingford and Lambourne, and the massive shaft to the outer order is not banded. There is scroll foliage to the capitals, and this example may be as early as 1175. The blocked north doorway at Swallowfield is another specimen of this same type.

The north doorway at Woolstone is also of this early transitional date. There we see a series of oblong shaped billets on the hoodmould with the dragons' heads termination, a roll moulding on the angle of the outer order, and two rows of outturned zigzag with a course of beading on the inner, a rather late form of abacus, one engaged shaft with scroll and foliage to the outer order, and plain chamfered angle to the inner jambs. The south doorway at Shalbourne is another good example of this same date. On the hoodmould is a row of semicircular headed arches, and on the outer

* Similar examples of a triple arch to the west front are to be found at Ifley (Oxfordshire), Stewkley (Bucks), Chepstow (Monmouth), Ketton (Rutland), and St. Leonard's Priory, Stamford (Lincoln), all being comparatively of late Norman date.

order **two** courses of bold outturned zigzag, with smaller band of zigzag between and on either side. The inner order and jambs are plain. There is one shaft on each side to the outer order with bold fluted capital and a claw to the base. The west doorway of St. Nicholas' Church, Abingdon, seems to be slightly later. There is a fine semicircular arch, with the keel shaped and roll mouldings, and zigzag and other ornaments, while on either side is a blind arch,* obtusely pointed, and above, part of an arcading showing a pointed arch and plain lancet window, all of the same date.

Of the later transitional, we have a plain obtusely pointed doorway with chamfered hoodmould arch and jambs at Hurst. At West Shefford and Welford, where the doorway has been much renewed, we find pointed arches with several courses of zigzag, and at Stanford in the Vale, on the south doorway within a porch now utilised as a coalhole, the elliptic arched ornament. The south doorway at Stanford Dingley has been somewhat over-restored, but is still very interesting. The outer order which is pointed has a half-round on the edge of the hoodmould, and then a roll with a deep hollow on either side. To this order there is a shaft with undercut abacus and early conventional foliage on the capitals. The space between the outer and inner arch is filled in with flints, so as to form a tympanum. The inner arch is trefoil headed,† with half-round on edge of arch and jambs and a rose (? typical of the Rose of Sharon) within a circular medallion at the apex.

There are several semicircular headed arches, which are probably of still later date. The very fine examples at Sparsholt, where on the north doorway we find an excellent specimen of the elliptic arched ornament, cannot be much earlier than 1200, and the south doorway of the neighbouring Church at Childrey, with the dog-tooth on the hoodmould, is still later. The north doorway at Ardington, with several undercut half-round mouldings and a course of the dog-tooth ornament, and the south doorway of St. Lawrence's Church, Reading, with undercut hoodmould, and a fillet band on the roll mouldings of the arch, are the two latest examples which can possibly come within our category, and are probably as late as 1210, when the early English or first pointed style was thoroughly established throughout the country. The doorways at the Manor House,

† Other instances of these trefoiled arches may be seen at Ely Cathedral, Malmesbury Abbey, and the Churches of East Dereham (Norfolk), Langford (Oxon), Inglesham (Wilts), Bibury (Gloucester), Climping (Sussex), and elsewhere.

Appleton, and Old Rectory at Sutton Courtney are semicircular headed, but also of this very late period.

Annexed is a full list of the doorways in the County :—

Abingdon, St. Nicholas Church	W.
Aldermaston Church	W. and N.
Appleford Church	N. and S.
Appleton Manor House	
Arborfield Church	N.
Ardington Church	N.
Ashampstead Church	N. and S.
Ashbury Church	S.
Aston Tirrold Church	S. and N. of N. Aisle.
Aston Upthorne Church	N. and S.
Avington Church	S.
Basildon Church	S. and E. of Porch.
Baulking Church	N. and S.
Beedon Church... ..	N. and S. Chancel.
Bisham Church... ..	N.
Brightwell Church	S.
Brimpton Chapel	N.
Brimpton Church	N.
Buckland Church	N. and S.
Bucklebury Church	S.
Catmore Church	N. and S.
Chaddleworth Church	S.
Challow, East, Church	W. and S.
Challow, West, Church	N.
Charney Bassett Church	S. and N. Chancel interior.
Chieveley Church	S.
Childrey Church	N. and S.
Chilton Church... ..	N. and S.
Cholsey Church	S.
Clewer Church	N.
Compton Church	S.
Coxwell, Great, Church	N. and S.
Coxwell, Little, Church	S. and S. Chancel.
Cumnor Church	W.
Denchworth Church... ..	S.
Easthampstead Church	S.
Eaton Hastings Church	N.
Enborne Church	S

Faringdon Church	N.
Farnborough Church	N.
Frilsham Church	N. and S.
Garston, East, Church	S. and Chancel.
Hampstead Norris Church ...	N. and S.
Hanney Church	N.
Hatford Church	S. and S. Chancel.
Hinksey, North, Church	N. and S.
Hurley Church	W.
Hurley, Lady Place	
Hurst Church	N.
Inkpen Church... ..	S.
Kingston Lisle Church	N.
Kintbury Church	W. and S.
Lambourne Church	W.
Leckhampstead Church	N. and S.
Letcombe Bassett Church ...	N. Chancel.
Lockinge Church	N.
Marlston Church	N.
Moulsford Church	N.
Padworth Church	N. and S.
Reading Abbey... ..	S. of Church, Chapter House and E. side of Cloisters. Doorway to R.C. Schools.
Reading, St. Lawrence's Church	S.
Reading, St. Mary's Church ...	N.
Sandhurst Church	N.
Shalbourne Church	N. and S.
Shaw Church	
Shefford, West, Church	S.
Shellingford Church... ..	N., S. and S. Chancel.
Shinfield Church	N.
Sparsholt Church	N. and S.
Stanford Dingley Church... ..	S.
Stanford in the Vale Church ...	N. and S.
Stratfield Mortimer Church ...	N.
Streatley Church	S.
Sutton Courtney, Old Rectory...	
Swallowfield Church... ..	N.
Thatcham Church	S.
Tidmarsh Church	S.

Upton Church	N. and S.
Wallingford, St. Leonard's Church	N.
Waltham, Bright, Church... ..	N. and S.
Waltham, White, Church... ..	N.
Wantage School	
Wargrave Church	N.
Welford Church	N. and S.
Wokingham Church... ..	S.
Woolhampton Church	S.
Woolstone Church	N. and S. Chancel.

[The illustrations have been kindly presented by the Author. They are reproduced from photographs by Mr. Walton Adams.]

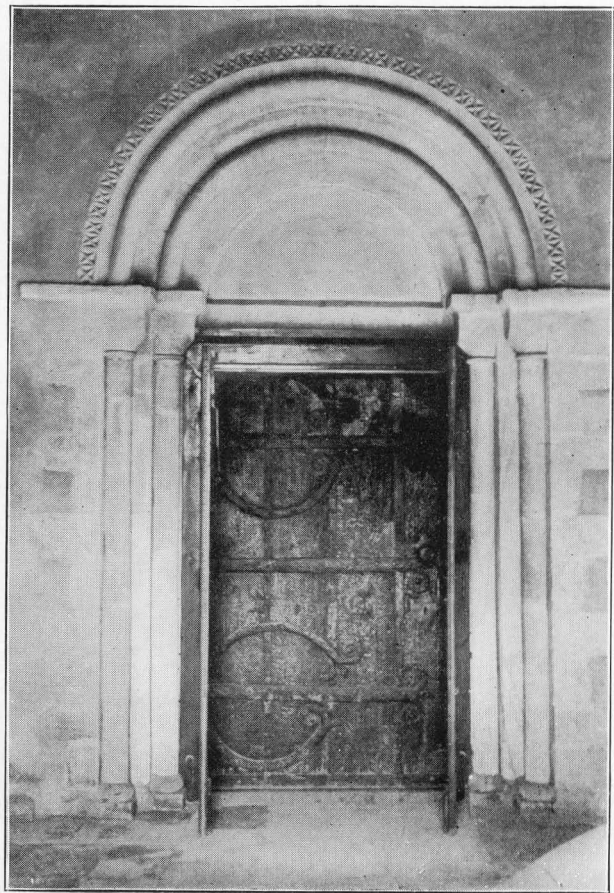
Thomas Southam, Archdeacon of Berks and Oxon.

SOUTHAM, THOMAS (d. 1403/1404), Archdeacon of Berks and Canon of Sarum, was Archdeacon of Oxon 1368; he exchanged for that of Berks in the Diocese of Sarum with his nephew John Southam (see Vol. 3, No. 3, of these transactions), and was admitted 30 January, 1403/4. He was possessed of the prebend of Leighton Manor in 1371, and the appointment was ratified 26 December, 1372.

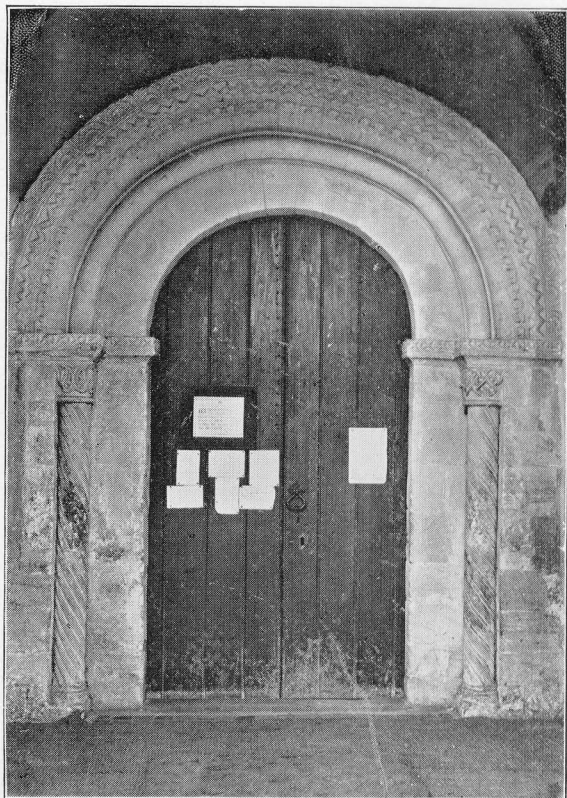
On the resignation of William Waltham, 22 March, 1397/8, he was appointed to the prebend of Kentish Town in the Diocese of London. At the time of his death he was prebend of Combe and Harnham. He visited "Avignon and other places abroad" in 1373, and this may have been caused by the receipt of a notification from Pope Gregory XI. "requiring him to cause restitution to be made of all tithes and other possessions abstracted from Christ Church" (Canterbury).

As patron of King's Sutton Church, Co. Northants, he instituted John Wayte de Wodhous, Pbr., as Incumbent, 1389.

He was charged, with others, to assemble at Westminster on the octaves of St. Michael, 1389, "for the consideration of the business



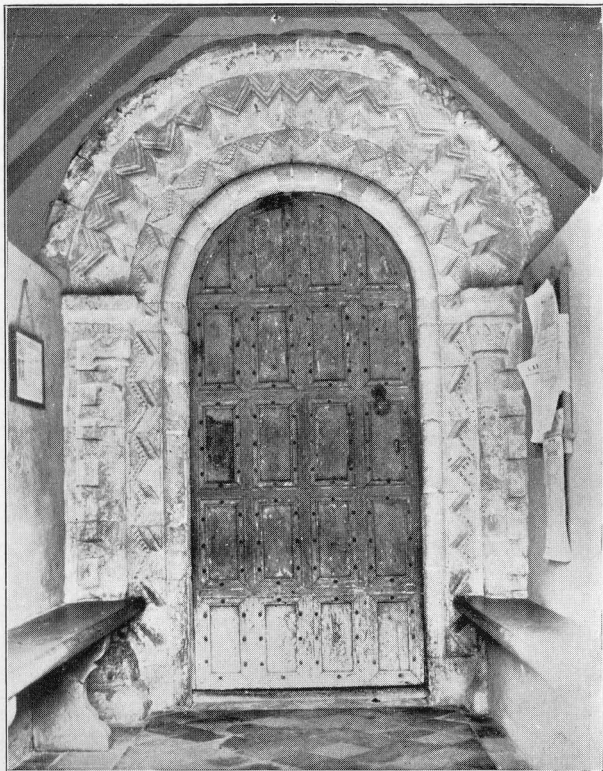
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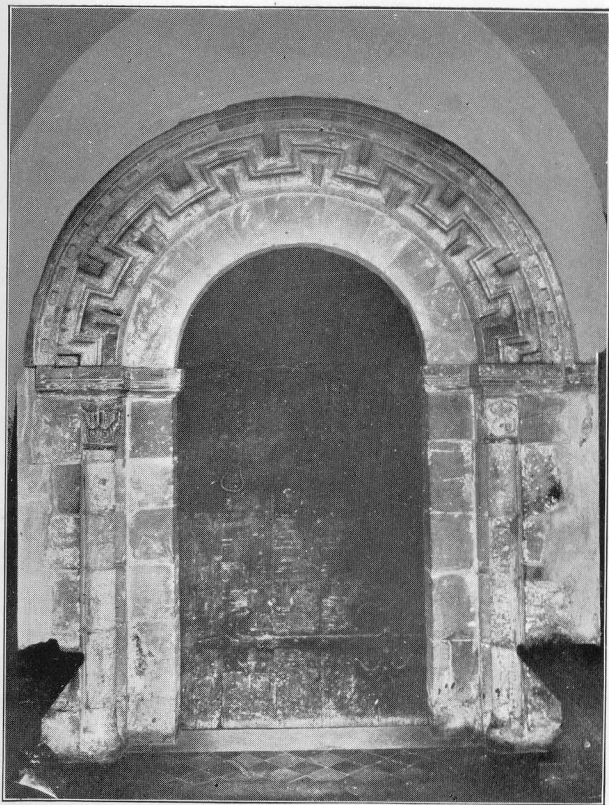
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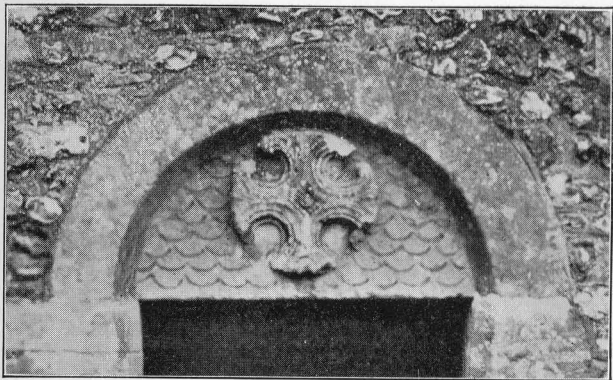
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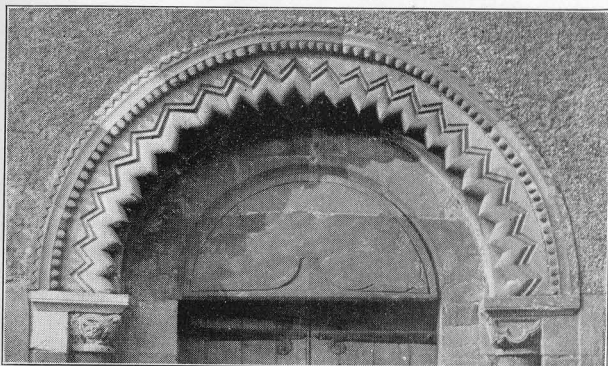
AVINGTON.



WEST LOCKINGE (Lord Wantage's), NORTH.



BRIMPTON.



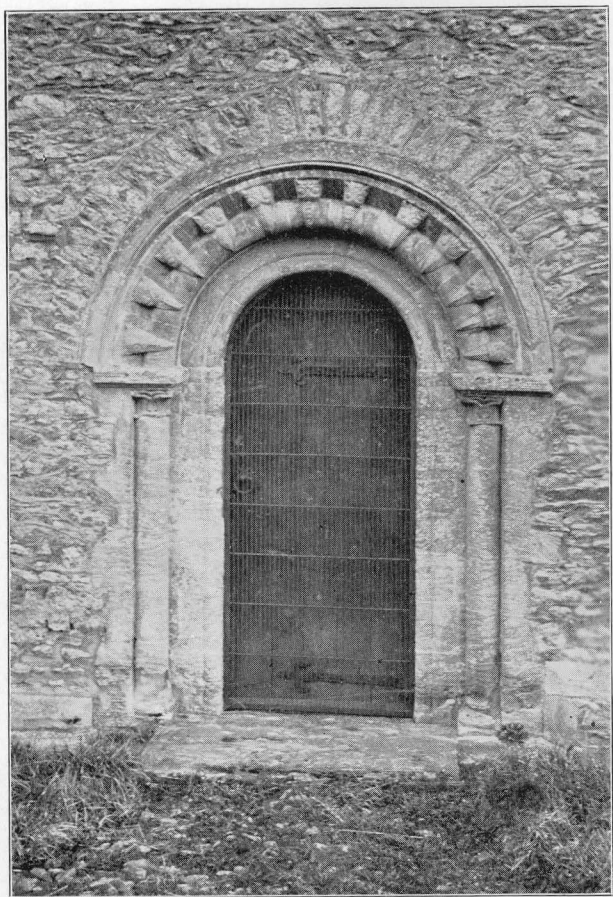
CHOLSEY.



CHARNEY BASSETT.



CHARNEY BASSETT.



SHELLINGFORD.



ASHBURY.