

English Sculpture in some Berkshire Churches.

By MRS. ARUNDELL ESDAILE.

FOREWORD.

"SCULPTURE in England has hitherto been almost wholly monumental, but is now beginning to be used for other purposes." So wrote J. B. Rouquet in 1755, and we are only now beginning to realize the richness of our heritage, to grasp the fact that our parish churches, like our cathedrals, are filled with works of art.

It is seldom that a medieval sculptor can be named, as signatures were not in use till the sixteenth century, and were even then very rare, and relevant documents are very few. With the seventeenth century we are better off for both, and in the eighteenth century signatures are found more often than not, in the case of well known artists especially. But down to 1730, and in some cases a good deal later, medieval and post-Reformation sculptors alike belonged to Guilds or Companies: they were Masons, Marblers, or Alabasterers, or, in the case of the makers of brasses down to the Reformation, Latteners, latten being the proper name for the "brass" which they used; by the end of the sixteenth century, however, many sculptors were prepared to engrave brasses, and the practice continued till the end of the seventeenth century.

After the amalgamation of the Marblers' and Masons' Companies in 1585, and the transfer of the members of the latter, practically all sculptors were officially masons, either members of the Masons' Company itself or, if "foreign" i.e. country-trained masons, were pressed to join the Company when working in London. They were also, as in medieval days, to a large extent, architects, and, masons as they officially were, worked in stone, alabaster, marble or wood, as their patrons wished. Thus William Stanton, whom we shall meet at Hurst, built Belton House for the Brownlowes about 1670 and executed the Brownlowe family monuments in the church exactly as Nicholas Stone had carved the Stonehouse monument at Radley in alabaster and built the famous porch of St. Mary's, Oxford, fifty years before and John Townshend, whom we meet at Wantage, designed College buildings and carved monuments half a century after.

As to signatures, these are excessively rare in the sixteenth century, irregularly used in the seventeenth, common but by no means universal in the eighteenth. Not one of the monuments mentioned by Aubrey as Edward Marshall's (1598-1675) is signed, though we have about twenty which are; and when Edward Stanton (1681-1734) sent a colossal list of works by his father and himself to Le Neve (see *Monumenta Anglicana*, Preface to Vols. IV and V) less than half have proved to be signed. Where

an unsigned monument corresponds closely with signed or documented works therefore, it may be ascribed with confidence to a particular sculptor.

These articles are not a complete survey of their subject, but deal only with those monuments on which I happen to have notes. In 1941 it is impossible to fill in gaps, and these papers are offered to the Society as notes only, not as a treatise such as Mr. Chatwin has produced on the monumental effigies of Warwickshire, and of Mr. Crossley on those of Cheshire. In one respect, however, they are more complete, inasmuch as a number of mural monuments without effigies are included either where they are of interest in themselves, or where they are signed or documented, so that to omit them would be withholding knowledge where it might be of use. I have arranged the places roughly in groups, so that they may be more conveniently visited, and propose to begin with the north of the county.

My debt to my elder son for notes and drawings is throughout great; his B.Litt. thesis on *The Oxford School of Sculptors and Masons* (copy deposited in the Bodleian) is the only material available in this field.

ABINGDON.

A. ST. NICHOLAS.

1. Walter Darrell (1628); tablet by a local mason; interesting for the odd mixture of Gothic and Renaissance detail.
2. The Blacknall family, by Grice of Abingdon. Though John Blacknall, a local benefactor, died in 1625, it was not till 1671 that the Minutes of Blacknall's Charity record "yt Philip Grice should have seaven pounds for setting upp Mr. Blacknalls Statue, his wife and children, and if he did lay them well with gilt and good colors to their liking, he was then to have eight pounds." On January 20 1685-6 the accounts of the Charity record: "Payd for makeing and setting up y^e monuments of Mr. Blacknall and his wife and children £17 11s. od.," a price far below that of London work at that time.
The upper part is an imitation of a Jacobean monument with kneeling figures; the base has Gothic quatrefoils and Jacobean strapwork; a very interesting work by a competent provincial sculptor. (*Plate No. I*).
3. John and Elizabeth Selwood (1715, 1721), good mural monument, probably by Piddington of Oxford.
4. Mary Child (1782), signed I. H. LOND 1788; this pyramidal work with a graceful urn set on a sarcophagus is by John Hickey, whom we shall meet again at St. Helen's.

B. ST. HELEN'S.

1. Attractive tablet for Edmund son of Lionel Bostock (1605), with escutcheon on cornice, carved panels and pretty base. Good London work.

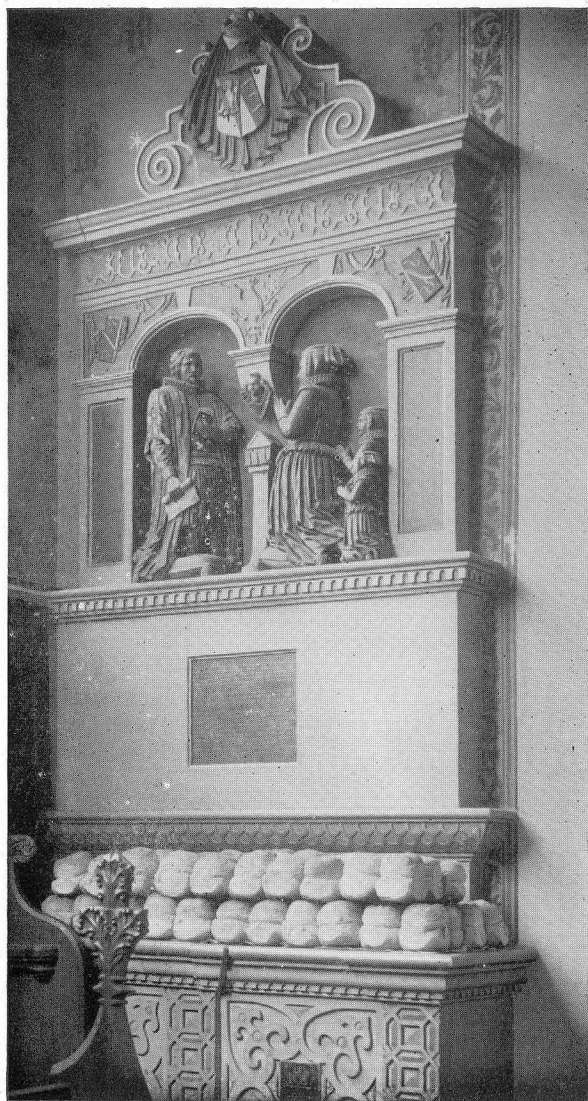


Photo : W. J. Vasey.

PLATE I.

St. Nicholas Church, Abingdon.

Monument erected in 1684 to John Blacknall
and his wife Jane, who both died in 1625.



Photo : Rev. J. B. Joyce.

PLATE II.

St. Helen's Church, Abingdon.

Monument by J. Hickey to Elizabeth Hawkins, 1780.

2. Elizabeth Hawkins (1780), signed *J HICKEY sculpt LOND* 1782. This is the largest, and the best, work by a sculptor much admired by Burke of whom he did the only known busts (Dublin, British Museum), and whom Burke commissioned to execute the monument of David Garrick in Westminster Abbey; unhappily, Hickey died, and the present deplorable work by Webber, against which Charles Lamb protested, was erected in its place. His scheme at Abingdon consists of a vast pyramid flanked by palm branches; against it is set a great sarcophagus with a bust, in front of which History holds a book and supports a medallion with the aid of a cherub; other busts flank this central group. Of its kind, this is one of the finest monuments in England. (*Plate No. II*).
3. Dr. and Mrs. Crossley (1753, 1790), *Nollekens Ft.* A commonplace example of this famous sculptor's work, with a cherub leaning on an urn.
4. John Bedwell (1799), a pleasant mural monument surmounted by pyramid and urn, signed by John Randall of Oxford, and showing the prevalence of a good tradition in that city, whereas local sculpture as exemplified by the works of H. P. Peyman of Abingdon (author of the dreadful "Norman" font, c. 1800) from 1799 onwards, still more those signed by Godfrey of Abingdon, which abound in the church, shows a sad falling off from the vigorous work of less than a century before (see the tomb by Grice of Abingdon in St. Nicholas *supra*).
6. Ann Champain (1804), a lamentable figure of Hope on a Greek stela; an early and poor work by Sir Richard Westmacott, who could do far better even in his youth.

RADLEY.

1. "In 1633 I mad a tombe for Ser William Stonhowes and sett it up at Radley in Oxfordshear by Abington for the which I had 120*l*." This entry in Stone's Notebook (see *Walpole Soc.*, VII, 72 and pl. xxvi d) enables us to identify the author of this fine monument.
Sir William Stonehouse and his wife lie on an altar tomb behind which is a shallow coffered canopy with cornice, broken pediment and shield of arms. At the head kneels their eldest son, with a skull to show that he was dead before the tomb was erected; on the base kneel the other children, less finely carved than the effigies and probably the work of an assistant; their falling veils are as characteristic of Stone as is his vagueness over the geography and spelling of Abingdon and Radley.
2. Admiral Sir George Bowyer (1800), *Nollekens Ft.* A mural monument with Greek detail surmounted by urn; inscription in laurel wreath, trophies below; more attractive than many of Nollekens' minor works.

3. Rather good mural monument to the Davis family (1820, 1822), signed by J. Lock of Abingdon; tombstones by the same mason are in the churchyard.

FERRY HINKSEY.

1. William Fynmore, Fellow of St. John's, "who in y^e year of his age 87, & in y^e year of our L^d 1646, when loyalty and y^e Church fainted, lay down & died." This inscription is to be found on a fine mural monument erected by Finmore's son about 1678, almost certainly by that very interesting provincial sculptor William Byrd of Oxford, whom we shall meet at Wantage and Windsor.
2. William and Martha Finmore (1687), good mural monument, probably by Thomas Wood of Oxford, a plain and well-proportioned work.

CUMNOR.

1. Statue of Queen Elizabeth, first mentioned in 1643 as at Dean Court, Cumnor; then in Cumnor Park; and finally, when in a damaged state, re-cut and re-erected in the church in 1888. One of the most amusing statues in England, with sceptre and orb, standing ruff and pointed waist and cross panels of embroidery on the skirt; the head appears to be entirely recarved. (Lamborn, *Stories Hist. Berks.* (1908), 68).
2. Sir Anthony Forster (1572), a large monument chiefly Gothic in type but with Renaissance detail; the canopy with its graceful quatrefoils is set over a background on which are brasses; the base is pure Gothic, but the columns at the sides are Ionic. Sir Anthony, Keeper of Lord Leicester's purse and a personal friend, was the custodian of Amy Robsart at Cumnor and was strongly suspected of her murder, though his connivance is unproven (see Scott's *Kenilworth* and *D.N.B.*, under Dudley, Robert, Earl of Leicester). The fact gives considerable historic interest to a monument in itself interesting for its blend of traditional with classical art. The church contains other tablets of interest as examples of good and well proportioned work by local masons unnamed.

FYFIELD.

1. Sir John Golafre (c. 1442), armed effigy with shrouded skeleton below. The scheme of the shrouded skeleton and rotting cadaver to emphasize mortality came into use during the fifteenth century both on monuments and brasses, and was softened in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries into the skull and crossbones (*Berks. Bucks. and Oxon. Arch. Journ.* XXIII. (1917.) fig. 24; *Trans. Newbury Field Club V*, facing p. 10.)

2. Curious little incised tablet of 1625 to George Dale, his half-figure engraved in a niche above the inscription.
3. C. Perrot (1687), a very large and curious stone monument by Thomas Wood of Oxford, the fluted base separated from it and placed in the north chapel.
4. Pretty alabaster mural monument to Catherine Dale (1679) laureate skull below, inscription tablet removed.
5. James Perrot (1687) the inscription removed, a fine alabaster with voluted sides and curved pediment, probably by William Byrd of Oxford; name and date supplied from Le Neve's *Monumenta Anglicana*.

This church contains a fine series of floor slabs; those to the Whites (1661, 1662) may be by Byrd, and are of white marble; others to Mary Gilman (1688) and to another White are probably by Thomas Wood. In the churchyard is a stately tomb of 1844 by Lock of Abingdon, much above his work at Abingdon itself. Why the inscriptions of Nos. 3 and 4 should have been taken out and set in the floor it is hard to say: to replace them and the base of No. 3 would be both easy and desirable. A good escutcheon with crest and shield appears to come from a lost monument of the seventeenth century.

KINGSTON BAGPUIZE.

1. Edmund Fettiplace (1710), "I. Piddington Oxon fecit." Fine mural monument with canopy above the Eye of Providence, rich drapery and urns above a panel of angels and an inscription tablet; a fine and decorative work by a good Oxford master.
2. J. and E. Blandy (1736, 1751, erected 1752), pyramidal mural monument with medallions, flanked by standing cherubs, on a well designed base this is almost certainly by the eldest Burnell of London; a similar work is in St. Andrew's, Holborn.
3. "Adron London," a dull tablet with the signature of a sculptor whose work is fortunately not abundant.
4. "BOSSOM F^r OXFORD." The little tablet to Mrs. Deane (1822) bearing this signature seems to indicate that one of the famous boat-building family was a mason *temp.* George IV.

FARINGDON.

1. Canopied altar tomb of Gothic type with kneeling brasses set in the background to Sir Alexander Unton, 1547, and his two wives.
2. Painted marble monument to Sir Edward Unton (*d.* 1583).
3. Large altar tomb with effigies to Sir Thomas Unton and wife (1533), Burton work in poor condition.
4. Effigy of Lady Unton, wife of Sir Henry, in vast mourning hood, kneeling; this was in the vestry when I saw it in 1932;

in 1796, as an engraving by J. Stone shows, it stood against the wall beside the large mural monument.

5. Sir Henry Unton, a large work with twin arches, a heavy entablature and escutcheon above, much strapwork, a banded sarcophagus with lions' heads and curiously carved crests right and left of the inscription panels.
6. Sir Henry Purefoy (1686), urn on gadrooned base above a large panel of cherubs flanking a sarcophagus, cherub heads in clouds above, the whole on a large base. This is unquestionably the work of John Bushnell (*d.* 1701), the sculptor of the statues on Temple Bar and of other famous works for which see *Walpole Soc.*, XV, and notes in Vol. XXI, p. 105. His urn monument to the poet Cowley in Westminster Abbey is on a similar gadrooned base, but having no figures is less characteristic of his style; a documented monument to Henry Stanley (1674) at Little Gaddesden, Herts, has much in common with that at Faringdon.

We now come to the second family whose monuments render Faringdon amongst the most interesting churches in Berkshire; the Admiral and perhaps the most undistinguished of poets-laureate were members of this family, but several of their monuments must be sought in the vestry.

7. Jane Pye (1705), daughter of Nathaniel Curzon of Kedleston, mural monument with reclining figures on a broken pediment, included by Edward Stanton in the list of works by himself and his father sent to Le Neve (*Monumenta Anglicana* V, 211); a graceful and well-proportioned work showing Edward Stanton at his best.
8. Anne Pye, a sister of Allen, Lord Bathurst (1749), good mural monument with urns flanking a sarcophagus set against a central pyramid; probably by Peter Scheemaker (1691-1784), who uses this type of memorial elsewhere.
9. Admiral Thomas Pye (1787), known as "Nosey" Pye, half-length figure in medallion on sarcophagus, pyramidal background; an exceedingly fine and well-carved portrait of the Admiral who fancied himself irresistible, obviously, from signed analogies, by William Tyler, R.A.

UFFINGTON.

1. John Saunders (1599), attractive altar tomb with canopy resting on pilasters with charming floral decorations; shields adorn the background, and two long and finely carved swags of flowers and fruit, emblems of resurrection, ending in spades and picks, emblems of death, framed the admirably carved reclining effigy. Very good London work.
2. Edward Archer (1603), stone altar tomb richly adorned with strapwork and shields.

3. Henry Watts (1712), pleasant mural tablet with cherub heads below, good London work.
4. Floriated cross bearing inscription date 1736, either a remarkable survival (many examples of a late date exist at Brecon) or an old work reused—I think the former.
5. Rev. G. Watts, Master of the Temple (1833), erected by his son-in-law 'Tom Hughes' father, signed "Major, Swindon," a simple tablet of Hellenic type, not a bad example of the provincial monumental mason's work.

An interesting tablet in the nave bears the inscription: "This Church long ruined repaired by Richard Saunders and Thomas Lockey Churchwardens in the year 1678." This Saunders was a descendant of No. 1.

ALDWORTH.

This church is famous for its eight inscriptionless monuments, all of the 14th century, to members of the De la Beche family, of whom, according to Richard Symonds, a pedigree used to hang in the church; it was removed to show to Queen Elizabeth and never returned, and only Symonds' note of 1644 remains to tell us whom they represent. The Decorated canopies stand out from the wall in most unusual fashion; the effigies are crude but vigorous, and illustrate the falsity of the common belief that medieval masons made no attempt to illustrate movement, but confined themselves to what Ruskin called the only Christian type of effigy, recumbent, with hands together in prayer. Here, on the contrary, are works restless and even vehement in their design, and so uniform is the style of these surprising effigies that it seems probable that Sir Nicholas de la Beche (*d.* 1347) had the whole of his ancestors carved and presented to the church; obvious analogies are the similar series of Lumley monuments at Chester-le-Street, presented by Lord Lumley *c.* 1565, and the Poyntz monuments *c.* 1600 (which, however, aim at realism in the costumes of successive centuries) at North Ockenden, Essex, where Sir Gabriel represented his ancestors when setting up his own memorial.

In the south wall is a wall grave, said to be that of "John Neverafraid, who sold his soul to the devil if ever he was buried inside the church or out of it"; Symonds' story probably arose from the position of the monument; two others in the church were known as John Long and John Strong. (See *Berks. Bucks and Oxon. Arch. Journ.*, XXI (1916), Figs. 54-66.)

WANTAGE.

1. Altar tomb of Sir William Fitzwarin (1361) and Amice his wife, with typical Plantagenet effigies; a fine work.
2. John and Mary Wilson (1621), and attractive alabaster tablet with broken pediment and volutes; good London work.

3. William Wilmot (1684), and his son of the same name, erected by the widowed mother and stated by Anthony à Wood to be by William Byrd of Oxford, one of the most interesting of seventeenth century provincial sculptors. The monument is of a mural type common at the time, with broken pediment, cornice and classical columns framing a double arch under which are three half figures, the son in the middle between the father and mother; below the base are three brackets, angels with outspread wings, the latest example of this medieval scheme known to me. The portraits are vigorously carved and resemble other works by Byrd at St. Aldate's, Oxford, and Stanton Harcourt.
4. Another work by an Oxford sculptor of the next century better known as an architect is the mural monument to the Stamp family (1728 etc.), signed "I. Townshend Oxonii fecit." This is a pyramidal work with urns flanking a sarcophagus, a shield of arms and two cherubs and a Crown of Life above; the design is not only interesting as an early work in this manner but, as my son has pointed out, proves the authorship of Berkeley's monument at Christ Church, Oxford.
5. Cartouche tablet to two other members of the Stamp family (1757, 1773) may also have come from the Townshend yard.

(To be continued).

The second article will deal with the country south of Wantage and west of Reading; the third with Reading and the eastern part of Berkshire.