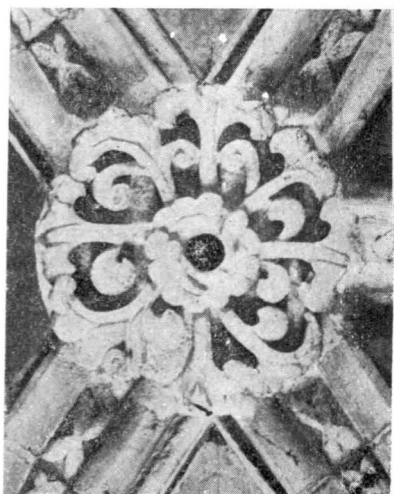
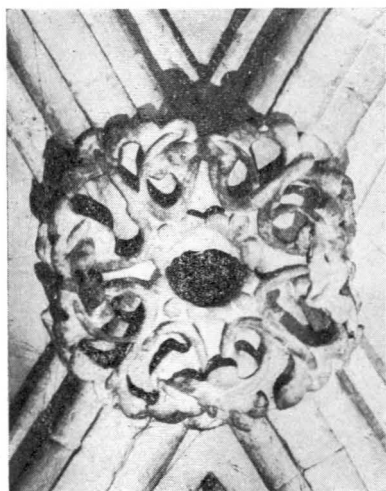


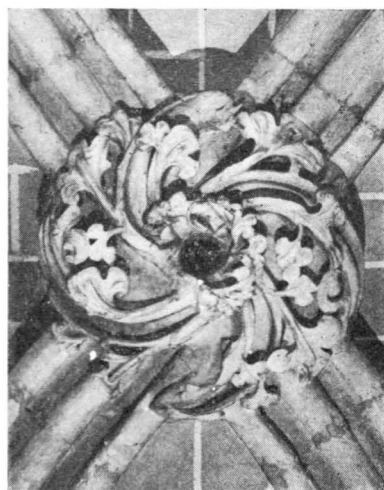
1. Retroquire.



2. South Transept.



3. Quire, North Aisle, 2nd Bay.



4. Nave, 3rd Bay

Sussex Archæological Society.

THE ROOF BOSSES IN CHICHESTER CATHEDRAL.

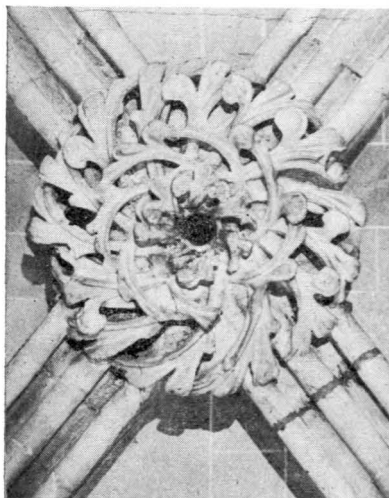
BY C. J. P. CAVE, F.S.A.

THE roof bosses in Chichester Cathedral are not particularly interesting in one way as they almost all represent foliage, but in another way they are of interest as they are very early examples of carved roof bosses.

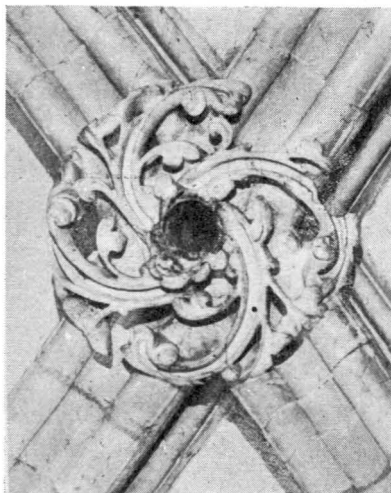
A very serious fire, the second in the history of the cathedral, occurred in 1186, and appears to have burnt the Norman roof and to have damaged the fabric, particularly the east end. It was after this fire that the retroquire was built as we see it to-day, and that the clerestory and the vaulting of nave, quire, and transepts were erected. The cathedral was re-dedicated in 1199, but it is probable that building went on for some time after this date. Most of the roof bosses therefore belong to this period; some probably rather before 1200, some rather later.

The majority of the bosses, that is nearly all those in the quire, quire aisles, nave, and nave aisles, bear the mark of belonging to one period; but they may be divided into two classes:

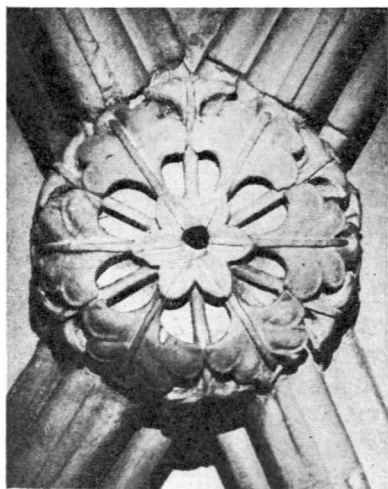
1. Conventional foliage, rather deeply cut; to this class belong all the bosses of the high vault (except the four nearest the crossing which are modern, and the second east of the crossing); also those in the first, second, and third bays of the north aisle of the quire, in the first and second bay of the south aisle of the



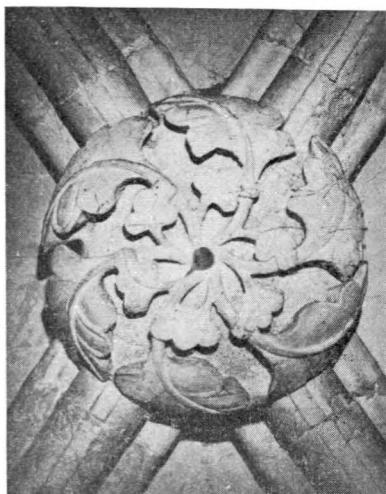
5. Nave, 7th Bay.



6. Quire.



7. Nave, South Aisle.



8. Nave, North Aisle, 2nd Bay.

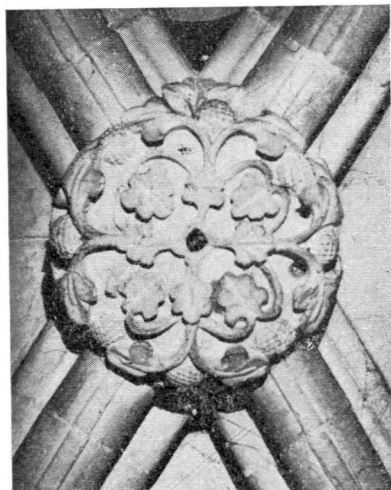
quire, those of the chapels at the east end of the quire aisles, and those in the library. All these bosses have large holes in their centres as part of the original design, doubtless to enable cords to be let down for hanging lamps. In Exeter Cathedral, where a hole does not form part of the design of the fourteenth century bosses, holes have been ruthlessly bored through a number of them.

The bosses of this first class in Chichester have either stiff and rather heavy, awkward foliage (retroquire and adjoining aisles, east end of library, south transept) (Figs. 1, 2, 3), or else rather lighter and more elegant foliage, often with a spiral trend (Figs. 4, 5, 6). In both cases the leaves are rather narrow and cut up, and are not readily differentiated from the stems which bear them.

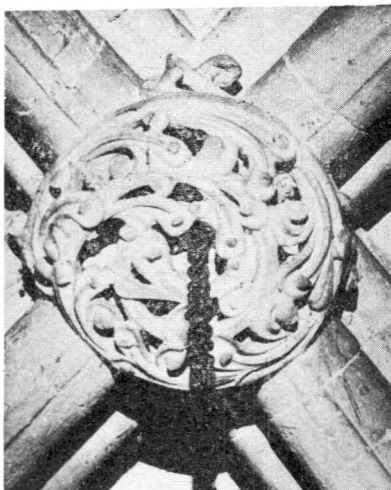
2. Much shallower carving, foliage still conventional but not quite so much so as in class 1. The leaves are usually much broader and not so much cut up, but most of the foliage is rather stiff and awkward; in most cases it seems as though the bosses had been carved over their surfaces instead of having been deeply undercut as in class 1. To class 2 belong the bosses in the fourth and fifth bays of the north aisle of the quire, in the third, fourth, and fifth bays of the south aisle of the quire, and those in the north and south aisles of the nave (Figs. 7, 8, 9). Those in the quire aisles have no central holes, those in the nave aisles have small holes, excepting the one at the east end of the north aisle where the vaulting was rebuilt after the fall of the spire. Three of the bosses in this class do not represent foliage but human faces; they are noticed below.

Belonging to the early series of bosses we may add the two most western bosses in the Lady Chapel and the one in the chapel of St. Pantaleon.

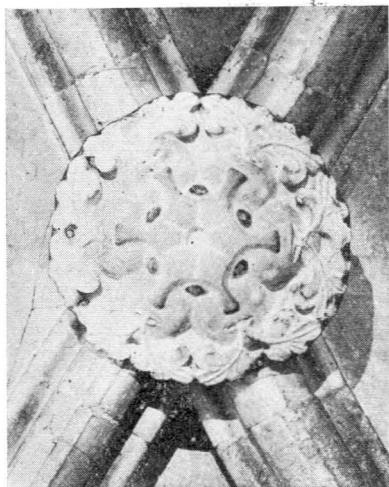
If one may hazard a guess, it is that the bosses of class 1 were made after the fire of 1186 and before the dedication of 1199, and those of class 2 after the dedication, in the early years of the thirteenth century.



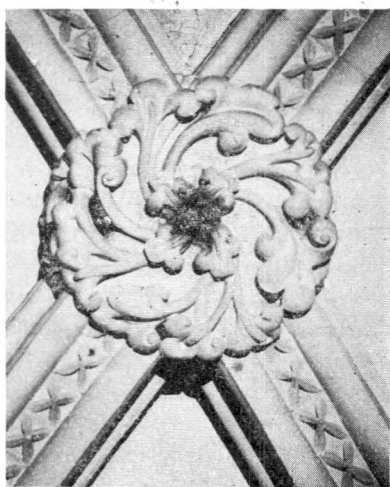
9. Nave, North Aisle, 3rd Bay.



10. Chapel of SS. Thomas & Edmund.



11. Quire, South Aisle, 3rd Bay.



12. South Transept.

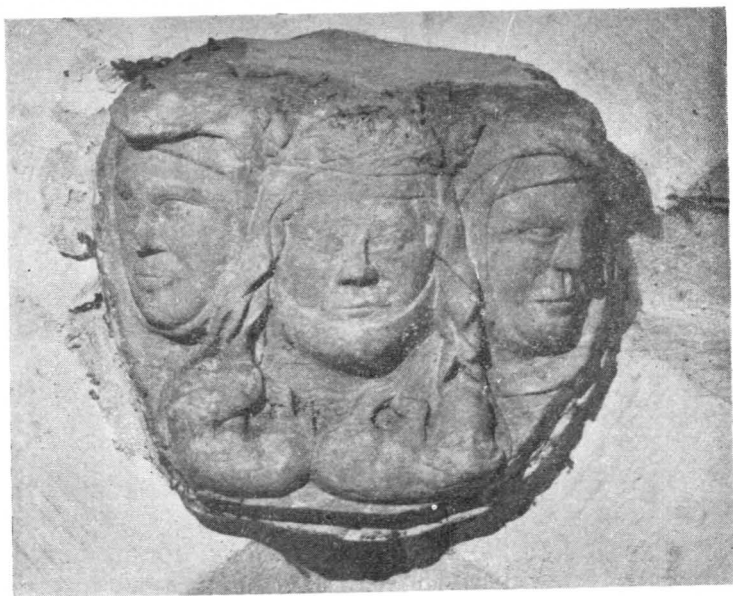
Some of the bosses at Canterbury in the work of the "English William," 1178-1184, are very like the lighter foliage bosses of class 1 at Chichester. In one or two cases the resemblance is so close that it seems reasonable to suppose that the workmen who carved the bosses at Canterbury came on to Chichester, just as the later carvers at Chichester probably went on to Boxgrove. The earlier bosses at Canterbury in the work of William of Sens are in a completely different style.

The four bosses in the chapels on the south of the south aisle of the nave have rather more elegant foliage; that in the most eastern of the north chapels is much lighter and still more elegant than any of the earlier bosses (Fig. 10). All these chapels were built in the period 1225-1275. The other north chapels belong to the end of the thirteenth century, but the bosses look earlier than those in the earlier south chapels; they are, however, very much decayed, but they almost give one the impression of having been made for earlier work.

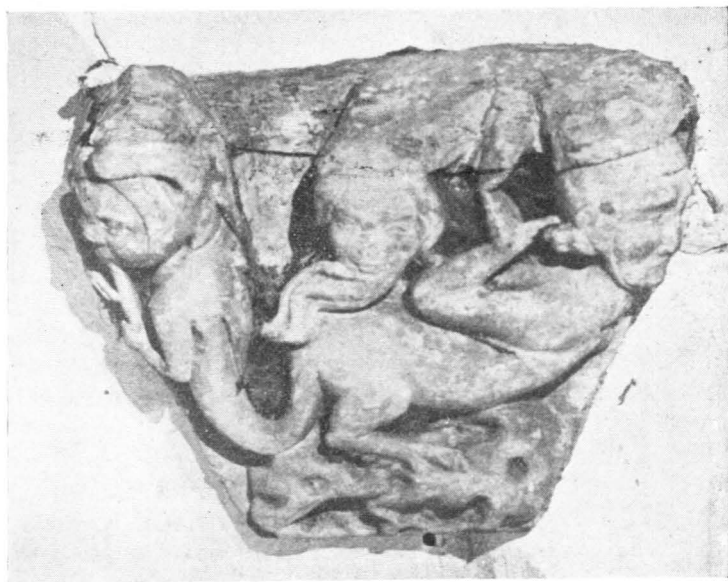
There are a few bosses that require individual mention. The boss in the third bay of the south aisle of the quire (Fig. 11) consists of six human faces whose wrinkled foreheads run together in the centre, and each face shares eyes with its next-door neighbour, so that though there are six faces there are no more than six eyes. Stems come out of the mouths and from the stems leaves proceed and run round the boss. In the quire of Boxgrove Priory there is a very similar boss of eight faces; it has less foliage than the Chichester example, and the faces are more boldly and better carved.

The similarity between the quire of Boxgrove and the retroquire of Chichester is reflected in all the bosses at Boxgrove; they obviously belong to class 2 of the early Chichester bosses. The date of the quire of Boxgrove and of the vaulting of the nave is the first quarter of the thirteenth century.

The boss of the fifth bay of the south aisle of the



13. Sacristy.



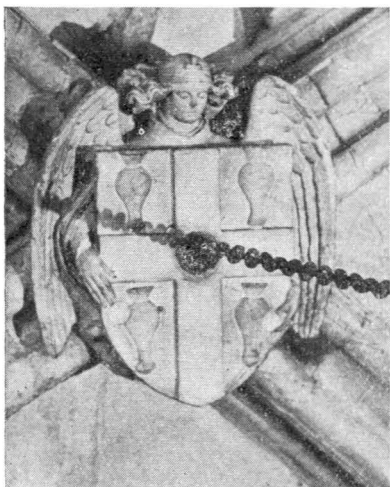
14. Sacristy.

quire has a rather similar design to the above, but, though the wrinkled foreheads of the faces run together in the centre, the faces themselves are separate, and each has two eyes. This vaulting and that on the corresponding bay in the opposite aisle were not destroyed at the fall of the spire, but were probably rebuilt afterwards, and the old bosses would probably be used again; that this boss is original I have little doubt; I have rather more doubt as to the one on the north side.

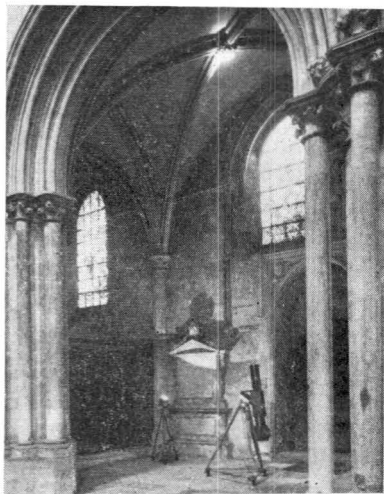
The two eastern bays of the nave aisles had their vaulting wrecked when the spire fell. Presumably if the bosses had been found unbroken they would have been reused in the new vaulting; the present boss in the south aisle is very similar to those of class 2, and has not the very modern look of the four bosses on the high vault round the crossing. The boss in the opposite aisle is very puzzling; it is quite different from the other bosses of the aisles. The design consists of four heads, two with the foreheads to the middle, two with the chins towards the middle; there is some conventional foliage, but not coming from the mouth, nor is there a hole in the centre of the boss. I am inclined to think that this is modern but I should not like to be sure.

It remains to mention two very remarkable bosses in the sacristy; they have an appearance of having been let into their present position after the vaulting had been completed, and they are indeed of a considerably later date than the vaulting; they are possibly late fourteenth century. The western one (Fig. 13) represents three female heads, not radiating from the centre, but all seen the right way up if looked at from the appropriate side; each head has a band across the forehead, part of a headdress; the central figure appears to have some ornamentation on this band; she also has a wimple over the chin, and a veil falls over her shoulders on each side; each end of the veil is held in the mouth of a small beast; the two are lying on their backs heads outward, with their hind legs on

the woman's neck. The eastern boss (Fig. 14) is a grotesque; a figure, with a human upper half, including arms, ends in the hind quarters of a beast with the talons of a bird; the tail ends in the upper part of another creature whose head is certainly human; above the hind quarters of the first creature, and possibly meant to be attached to it, is another human head with a long beard. On the ground are objects that may be meant for bones.



15. Quire.



16. Method of photographing Bosses.

PLATE V.

The bosses in the eastern part of the Lady Chapel date from the end of the thirteenth or beginning of the fourteenth century; they have no particular point to note; most of them have a design of very close set leaves, and all represent foliage.

In the quire the second boss east of the crossing (Fig. 15) is an angel bearing a shield with the arms of St. Richard of Chichester (gules) a cross between four covered cups (silver).¹ This boss probably dates from the end of the fifteenth century or later.

¹ His arms are sometimes given as ermine a pile gules.

The undoubtedly modern bosses (Fig. 12) round the crossing are extremely well carved; they are more or less copied from other bosses, but not slavishly so. At the same time their general appearance and the absence of weathering mark them as typically nineteenth century.

The photographs illustrating this paper were taken in the latter part of the year 1929, and in February, 1930. A long focus lens was used, and a portable electric spot light served to illuminate the bosses (Fig. 16).