

## STONE CROSSES FROM TITSEY, OXTED, AND TANDRIDGE.

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THERE can be very little doubt but that buried beneath the floors of our churches, and under the soil in our churchyards, there lie numbers of these early memorial crosses, and the fact that so many are found from time to time, during the progress of church restoration, makes it certain that this is the case. The two crosses from Oxted, which I shall presently notice, were found in the churchyard where they now lie at a depth of nearly four feet below the surface. The history of those at Titsey, with the exception of Nos. 9 and 10, is a remarkable one. When the old Rectory-house was destroyed by fire in 1842, they were found laid on their faces and made into steps to the approach. There is no doubt that they had formerly been in the ancient churchyard which adjoined to the Rectory, and had been removed when the old church was pulled down and the grave-yard desecrated in 1776. Were they so placed in order to preserve them, or merely to serve a useful purpose? It is not perhaps necessary to inquire—the mind of 1776 was essentially utilitarian—let it suffice that because of, or in spite of, the treatment which they then received, they have been preserved; they lie where they have lain for years, under the shade of the old yew tree; and seem not unworthy to claim a short notice in the pages of our *Collections*.

It will be seen that there are no less than ten (including the two broken ones) from Titsey alone, and

<sup>1</sup> The drawings are by Granville Streatfeild, Esq., Architect, 30, Charlotte Street, Portland Place.

of these I will deal with Nos. 1—5 first. They are, as is evident from their design, much earlier than those marked 6—10, and they compare very closely with those from Oxted and Tandridge; they are all made of the hard local sandstone, whereas the others are of chalk-stone, locally called “burr.” That they have been intended to lie and have lain in the open air is plain from the evidences of weathering which they show, and also from the fact that they are slightly beveled from the centre to let water off. Were they coffin-lids or merely memorial crosses? I think most probably the latter, and from their coffin shape, bulging as they do at the shoulder, and narrowing at the head and foot, that they were placed over the grave, and showed above the ground; they are also too thick to have been coffin-lids. To assign a date to them is not so easy, it can only be arrived at by a close examination of their form, and by comparison with other examples, but there can be no question that they are of very early date—10th century, or early in the 11th. The rude form of the cross and its wedge-like shape, with the arms extending to the edge of the stone, the length of the upper limb of the cross, marked more especially in the example from Oxted (B), are all evidences of antiquity.<sup>1</sup> The local sandstone of which they are made was used by the Romans, being found in the villa at Titsey, and by those who came after them, as evidenced by the very extensive workings in the quarries on Limpsfield Common, but its use seems to have been entirely discontinued by the Early English and even the Norman builders, and the soft chalk-stone substituted for it as being more easily worked. That there was a Saxon church at Titsey is shown by the entry in *Domesday Survey*, “Ibi Ecclesia;” may not these crosses be coeval with the first ecclesiastical building at Titsey?

We cannot say whether they were memorials to priests of the church, or not; the larger ones may

<sup>1</sup> Mr. St. John Hope suggests that Nos. 3, 4, 5, on which the cross does not extend to the outer edge, are probably somewhat later in date than Nos. 1 and 2.

have been so; but in the smaller ones one would like to think that children found a fitting memento, No. 5 being possibly that of a small infant.

No. 1 is the largest, it measures 6 ft. 2 in. in length and is 4 in. in thickness; it compares so remarkably with that marked A from Oxted, both in shape and design, that one may almost say with certainty that the two were the work of the same hand.

No. 2 is smaller, and the cross is very similar to that from Oxted marked B.

Nos. 3, 4 and 5 are those which I should assign to children; it will be noticed that in none of them is the cross extended to the outer edge of the stone, a remark which applies in part to the cross from Tandridge marked C. The branching of the upper limb of the cross in No. 4 deserves attention, and on No. 5 the cross is so rudely cut as scarcely to be in relief at all. It merely remains to note that in the example from Tandridge the stone is much thicker, and the slope from the centre much sharper; it lies to the west of the south porch of the church. The two from Oxted lie in the churchyard at the east end of the south aisle of the nave; the one marked B has been originally longer, and has been broken, the upper limb of the cross measures no less than 1 ft. 10 in.

No. 6 lies under the yew tree in the garden at Titsey, and being of soft stone has suffered somewhat from exposure to the weather; it is a floriated cross with a small cross saltire at the intersection, the ends terminating in trefoils; it is of 13th century date, A.D. 1250 or thereabouts, and perhaps commemorates a priest; but the names of the rectors do not go further back than 1283. This cross has been exactly copied on the alabaster top of the altar-tomb to William Leveson Gower, erected 1862, in the chapel of Titsey Church.

No. 7 is in the same position and broken. It is of 15th century date, is in very shallow relief, and has at the foot the Calvary, which usually though not universally denotes the memorial of an ecclesiastic.

No. 8 is another fragment of the base of a 15th

century cross; it has apparently a Calvary, but it is too much worn to trace the design.

Nos. 9 and 10 were both found in March 1872, in making excavations on the site of the ancient church. They were lying side by side apparently in their original position, and about a foot below the surface of the present ground, at the west end of the north aisle of the nave, within what had at one time been a tower, before the erection of the tower at the west end of the church in the 15th century. The ground had sunk and they were cracked across, as shown in the drawings. They are now placed in the present church within the altar-rails on the north side. They are both of chalk-stone and belong to the early part of the 13th century, No. 9 being somewhat the earlier of the two, and of greater thickness. It represents a cross in the form of a cross flory, the design of which is complete; immediately below is the shaft out of which branch two leaf-like ornaments, and the same are repeated at the foot. It will be noticed that to the right of the cross is a star-like device with eight points; this is doubtless a representation of the sun with its rays, such as we see so often in paintings of the Crucifixion in coloured glass; had the stone not been broken, the moon would doubtless have appeared on the other side, as the two were nearly always depicted. I have not been able to find a similar representation on any other incised stone, nor, as far as I know, does it occur on any brass, and therefore it is an object of interest. It has been objected that the sun ought to have been shown in its more usual position on the dexter side, but that this is by no means invariable can be proved by the following instances. On the second seal of Richard I, 1197-99 (not differing much in date from that of this cross), the sun is on the sinister, the moon on the dexter side (see Wyon's *Great Seals of England*, Pl. VI). The same is the case on the reverse of the seal of Southwick Priory, Hants, on the counter seal of Glastonbury Abbey,<sup>1</sup> on

<sup>1</sup> From examples in possession of the Society of Antiquaries.

the counter seal of Bardney, co. Lincoln (Dugdale, *Monasticon*, Vol. I, Pl. VIII, fig. 3), and of Peterston, in Burnham, co. Norfolk. In Cox's *Churches of Derbyshire*, Vol. I, p. 170, among Bell-founders' marks, two are given where the sun is on the sinister and the moon on the dexter side of a cross. They are those of Henry Oldfield, *temp.* Q. Eliz., and George Oldfield, 1612.

No. 10 has a cross very similar in form to the foregoing, it is a longer stone, and the shaft is different; below the termination of the upper cross is a trefoil head with a band on the stem below, the foot branches and has two short ornaments very near the bottom.

It would be useless perhaps to speculate whom they commemorate, possibly some early Rectors of the church whose names have not come down to us—

“Omnes illacrimabiles  
Urgentur, ignotique longâ  
Nocte, carent quia vate sacro.”

or if laymen may we claim them for Geoffrey de Tychesey, who died about 1204, and for William de Tychesey, living 1225, scions of that good old stock seated at Titsey since the Conquest, of whom we find Alexander, Odo, William son of Odo, John, and Raymond. William de Ticheseia held lands in Kent, 11 Henry II, 1165, as appears by the Pipe Roll of that year, and died in the following year, as is recorded in a subsequent Roll. The family died out in the male line upon the death of Thomas de Tychesey in 1297, who had been Knight of the Shire for Surrey in 1295. Their arms—Gules, a fret countervair<sup>1</sup>—were in glass in the ancient church of which they were the builders, and to which they had been benefactors. Let these nameless stones preserve their memory, and that of the faith in which they died.

<sup>1</sup> These are incorrectly described by Manning (*History of Surrey*, Vol. II, 40), as “Gules, a saltier verry.” He says, speaking of the old Church: “In the east window of the south aisle is Gules, a saltier verry.”

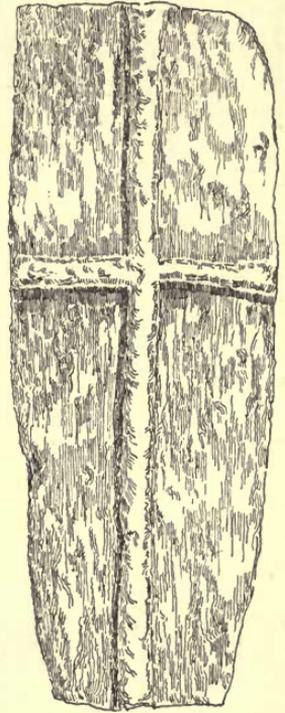
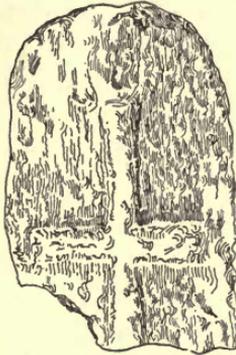
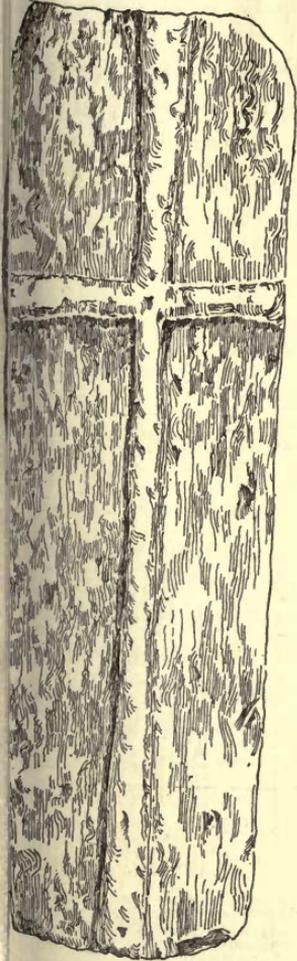
: Ancient Tombstones

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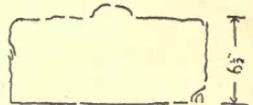
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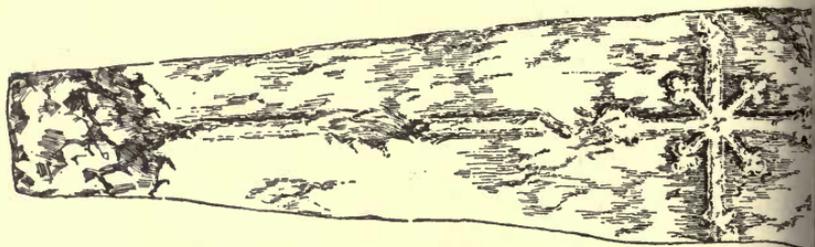


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6.



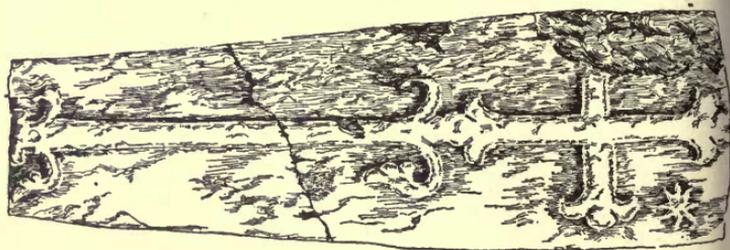
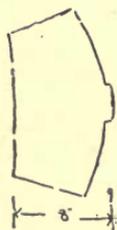
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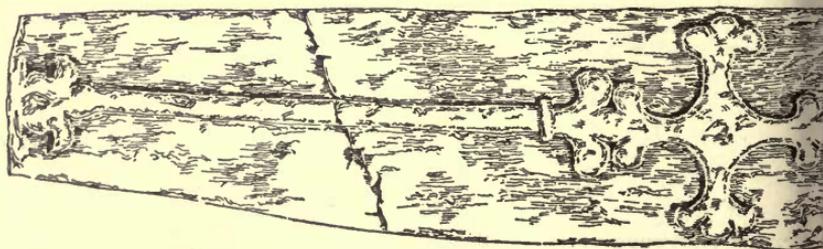
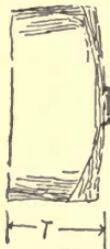
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9.



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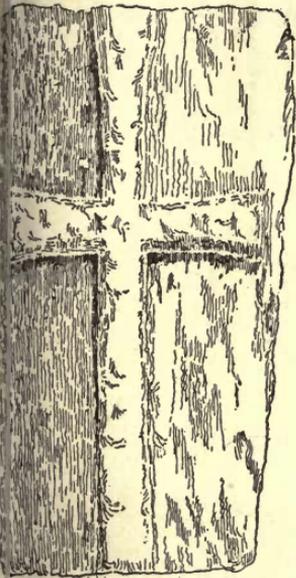


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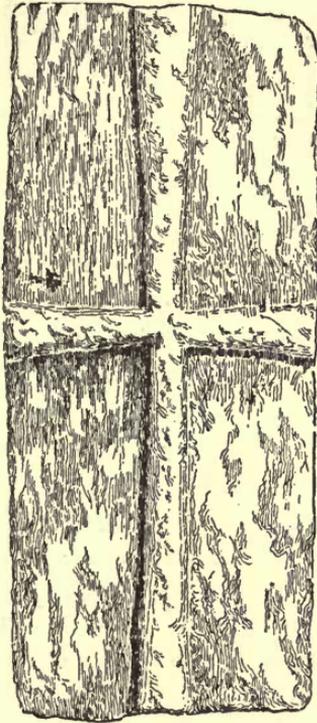
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near Birtsey - Surrey:

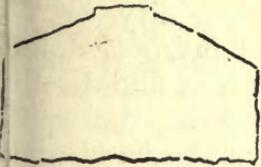
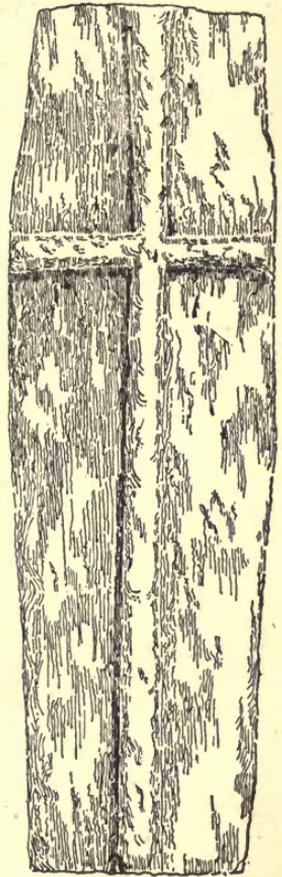
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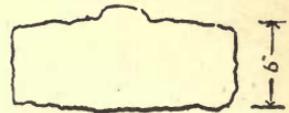
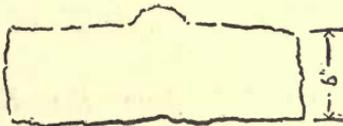
B.



A.



At. Bardsridge:



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: At Oxley: