

STOKE D'ABERNON CHURCH.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES.

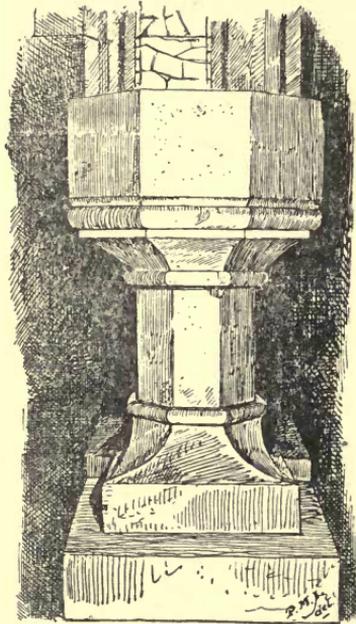
BY

PHILIP MAINWARING JOHNSTON, F.R.I.B.A.

EVERY worker, whether he act upon the principle or no, must admit the wisdom of clearing up after each day's work. Similarly, in regard to the contributions to our Society's *Collections*, it is very desirable that *addenda* and *corrigenda* should be inserted from year to year to supplement or correct the matter in papers that have been published. There is no such thing as finality in archæology.

I make these remarks by way of apology for returning to a subject that might be considered to have been almost exhaustively dealt with in the last volume. Two or three features in Stoke d'Abernon Church call for supplementary notice.

THE FONT (Vol. XX, p. 34).—It has seemed desirable to illustrate this (see Fig. 1). Reference has been made to its comparative smallness and plainness, and also to the elegance of its proportions, and it has been suggested that Sir John Norbury, who built (and probably designed) the chantry chapel, may have designed and presented this font, which no doubt replaced an early one that had fallen into decay—perhaps the original font of the pre-Conquest church. The mouldings are so simple, that, taken by themselves, they would not



Stoke d'Abernon Ch: The Font.

FIG. 1.

be inconsistent with a much earlier date; but I think the tall shape and octagon bowl negative this and make it practically certain that the font is of Sir John's time, *i. e.*, *circa* 1490. It measures 2 ft. 7 in. in height, and 2 ft. 1½ in. in diameter.

SIR JOHN NORBURY'S TOMB.—In referring to this (p. 33), the shallow soffit-panelling, common in the late Perpendicular arches of west country churches, is alluded to as an unusual feature in Surrey. My friend Dr. Hobson has kindly sent me a photograph of the tomb of Thomas Warham in the south wall of Croydon parish church—one of the monuments least injured by the disastrous fire of 1867. Although not strictly analogous, as this was a mere tomb-recess and its sides were canted, there is enough similarity to warrant the comparison, and in point of date (*circa* 1478) the Croydon tomb is fairly close to that of Sir John Norbury. It also is flanked by octagonal pilasters or shafts.

THE PULPIT.—On p. 54 it is stated that, as a result of a suggestion made by myself and warmly supported by the Society, a project was under consideration "for moving the pulpit back as nearly as possible into the old position, and for replacing the standard, sounding-board and iron stays." It is a great pleasure to record that, largely owing to the generosity of Mr. B. A. Bristowe and Mr. J. J. Morrish, the Churchwardens, the late Mr. F. A. Phillips, and others, this piece of genuine restoration was carried into effect in the early part of 1907, under the writer's supervision. Messrs. Higlett and Hammond, of Guildford, who carried out the work, deserve special praise for the patient and skilful manner in which they have pieced together the broken and missing parts of the foot, stem and body, and above all, for their repair and re-mounting of the very finely-carved sounding-board. This, which had lain for forty years in a woeful state of decay and dilapidation in the baptistery, seemed at first sight almost beyond repair, as may be judged by the accompanying photograph



STOKE D'ABERNON CHURCH: THE PULPIT.
Showing the Sounding-board, &c.,
as re-placed.



STOKE D'ABERNON CHURCH: SOUNDING BOARD OF PULPIT AND DETAIL.

(Plate II) which I took before it was touched. Several of the panels were split, broken and worm-eaten, and many of the roses and pendants had fallen off and disappeared.

The elaborately-scrolled stay-irons, still showing the original grey-blue paint, had been lying among forgotten things in the bell-chamber. They were of course brought into requisition again, and having been securely fixed to the angle of the nave walls, the sounding-board was once again attached to them by the original iron "eyes," so that it does not depend solely for support on the carved standard piece against the wall. (See Plate I.)

The two smaller photographs (Plate II) show the ceiling of the sounding-board before it was repaired. In the central panel is a very quaint and very ugly dancing angel, carved in low relief. It is evidently intended for a female figure, and is shown nude to the waist, below which its voluminous skirts are gathered and secured by an elaborate bow. So far as any symbolic meaning is concerned, this curiously pagan "angel" is about as appropriate to its position as are the hideous gorgon figures that bear up the body of the pulpit.

In my former paper I stated that the pulpit, except the sounding-board standard (which is of English oak), was probably of cedar, a wood that came a good deal into favour with the seventeenth century. I think it only right, however, to say that Messrs. Higlett and Hammond, whose opinion should carry weight, consider that the material is a foreign walnut.

Since my former paper has been in print, I have obtained the full inscription of the brass plate to John Prowd, a fifteenth-century rector. It is fixed on the south wall of the chancel, in a somewhat dark and inaccessible position, and runs:—

Hic jacet dñs Johes Prowd Rector isti' ecclie et quat'
Rector ecclie de esthorsley, qui obiit nono die Octobr'
A° dñi MCCCCLXXXVIII° Cujus aĩe p̃priet' d' ame.

"Esthorsley" is, of course, East Horsley, a parish a few miles to the south-west of Stoke d'Abernon.