

MEDIÆVAL STONE HEADS IN SURREY CHURCHES.

BY

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IT has been shown by Prior and Gardener (*Med. Sculpture in England*) that architectural sculpture of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was the work of the actual stonemason, and conditioned by the quality of stone used for the mouldings. The heads on corbels and labels in our churches have therefore great interest as evidence of the proficiency of the English mason. They are still very numerous throughout England, though gradually disappearing by restoration and exposure to weather.

Such heads are seldom mentioned in the architectural description of a church, and it is in the hope of drawing more attention to them that the following notes are presented. I can make no claim to the knowledge of an expert either in sculpture or architecture, and must leave others, with the fabric in view, to assign dates to these carvings. I have made a careful attempt to list only such heads as appear to me genuine work of the Gothic period, but the prevalence of restoration makes it difficult in some cases to be sure.

My general object has been to ascertain and illustrate what English sculpture of really good workmanship still exists in label and corbel heads, an enquiry I have extended to many other counties. I have, therefore, only listed without attempting to examine the numerous heads of the earliest period often much decayed, which have more affinity with Romanesque work, as seen at Romsey and elsewhere. These, which I call primitive, belong to the first introduction of the pointed style, or are the work of unskilled craftsmen. Their

study requires a separate enquiry. I have further limited myself—

(1) to the parish and smaller churches, to the exclusion, *e.g.*, of Southwark Cathedral and the Archbishopal Palace at Croydon.

(2) to heads which have the general character of portraits, whether really so or not, to the exclusion of grotesques, angel corbels, etc. Such heads have a sociological as well as an artistic interest.

Surrey is not rich in these compared with Somerset and some other counties. I have visited 97 churches out of the 108 mentioned by J. E. Morris as being wholly or partly mediæval, and the results are embodied in the provisional list which follows. My general conclusion is that at the most about thirteen heads of the thirteenth to fifteenth century still exist in the county, without reckoning the series of miniature heads at Wotton. Besides these, there are numerous grotesques and primitive heads. It will be understood, therefore, that the list no doubt contains omissions and inaccuracies which I must leave to be corrected by others who have easier access to the various buildings.

LIST OF MEDIÆVAL STONE HEADS.¹

Beddington, St. Mary's.—Date 1390. A very elaborate scheme of decoration was carried out in 1869, which included some good modern sculpture. *Cf.* head on the organist's door. Large corbel heads in the nave are modern, and probably six in the chancel, though two or three of these are good.

Illustrated. Plate I.

Betchworth.—Exterior. North side. Two, much decayed.

Bletchingley.—Date Transitional. Early English to Perpendicular. Portrait head in north-east angle of south aisle perhaps fourteenth century.

Burstow.—Exterior. One, primitive.

¹ A few notes by Mr. Philip M. Johnston, F.S.A., have been incorporated.



MEDIEVAL STONE HEADS
in Beddington and Ewhurst Churches.

Carshalton.—Interior of the old chancel. Two in a very dark corner.

Caterham.—One grotesque in the old Church, disused for over half a century, and now undergoing restoration.

Illustrated in *S.A.C.*, Vol. XV, 55.

Charlwood.—Exterior. North side. Two, Gentleman and Lady, *c.* 1320.

Chipstead.—Exterior. North doorway. Two grotesques. Decaying.

Church Cobham.—Exterior. South side. Eight, very primitive on window labels.

Cranleigh.—Fourteen corbel heads of thirteenth or fourteenth century in the chancel. These appear to be genuine and rather good. The roof is modern.

Croydon, St. John the Baptist.—On the groynes of the south porch, which is fourteenth century, there are four, primitive. In the chancel, north wall, two grotesques. One or two fragmentary heads in the priest's chamber—detached.

Effingham.—Chancel windows. See Major Heales' paper, *S.A.C.*, Vol. IX.

Ewhurst.—Exterior west front. Two label heads, one Early English, the other probably modern.

Illustrated. Plate I.

Guildford, St. Mary's.—Three corbel heads in the aisles. The roof being fifteenth century, according to Morris, these are presumably of the same date, but appear more like earlier work. The Church is mainly twelfth and thirteenth century.

Kingston, Parish Church of All Saints.—Formerly portrait heads of Edward III and his Queen. (Destroyed.)

Lovekyn's Chapel.—Corbels (heads of Edward III and his Queen) from mullions of east window, where they formed very charming brackets for images or candles above the altar; only one now remaining. Illustrated in *S.A.C.*, Vol. VIII.

Lingfield.—Exterior. West front. Five, primitive. One grotesque over keystone. Four on label, in pairs: one grotesque.

Merstham.—Exterior. Label of west doorway. Two, primitive. Interior. Corbel of a female head or mask, loose in the Church.

Merton.—Exterior. Two on label of west door. Said to be Edward III and Queen. Much decayed.

Ockham Parish Church.—Thirteenth century. (The tower is 1080.) Exterior. Four, very primitive on south front (one decayed).

Chancel.—Eight grotesques. Good.

Puttenham.—Heads of (?) Bishop or Abbot. East side of south-west window of chancel. Date *c.* 1480. On west side is a bust of an angel.

Reigate.—South chapel. Labels of the tomb. Two, small but good.

West Window of South Aisle.—Two, obscure but genuine.

Sanderstead.—The Church, much restored, is considered to be Perpendicular; but the two heads on the south porch (exterior) seem to be genuine fourteenth-century work. The female head is or has been very charming.

Interior.—Two on nave arcade, one of them probably of same date. But we may possibly have the work here of some good modern sculptor who worked in the neighbourhood, and to whom are attributed the corbel heads at Beddington and the head over the organist's door.

Illustrated.

Wotton.—Exterior. Doorway in south porch. String of eight miniature heads, on right and left of arch. Some of these small heads are not only typical of various people concerned in, and affected by, the Papal Interdict of 1215; but in several cases as, *e.g.*, Ralph de Camoys, the parish priest, and the Boy-King Henry III and his mother, Isabella of Angoulême, they may well be real portraits. (*Vide* paper in *S.A.C.*, Vol. XXIV, by P. M. Johnston, F.S.A.)



MEDIÆVAL STONE HEADS
in Sanderstead Church.