



Proceedings at Meetings of the Royal Archæological Institute February 5, 1885

The President

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Proceedings at Meetings of the Royal Archaeological Institute.

February 5, 1885.

The PRESIDENT in the Chair.

Admiral TREMLETT communicated a paper "On the Pierres à Bassins in Brittany," in which he suggested that they had been caused by the extraction of quern stones.

Mr. SOMERS CLARKE read a paper "On Sandridge Church, Herts," but dealing more particularly with the very remarkable stone screen dividing the chancel from the nave. It is singular that the ornamental side of this screen, which is practically a solid wall with a central door between two windows, with a third window above, faces east, and Mr. Clarke therefore suggests that the plain western side was hidden from view to a great extent by a wooden screen carrying the rood.

This paper is printed at page 247 of the current number of the *Journal*.

Rev. C. R. MANNING exhibited three medieval patens from Norfolk. The earliest, from Foxley, bears the *manus Dei* in the centre, but is otherwise plain. It is apparently of fourteenth century date. The next, from Gissing, is of ordinary type with the Vernacle, date *circa* 1515, but perhaps a little later,—the hall marks are almost illegible. The third, from Felbrigge, is remarkable for an unusual central device, that of St. Margaret and the dragon, on an enamelled field. Felbrigge church is dedicated to St. Margaret. The date of the paten is *circa* 1520.

Mr. MANNING spoke as to the large number of medieval patens existing in Norfolk; for, whilst no instance of a medieval chalice was known, over twenty patens had already been noticed. It was suggested that patens were spared by the Edwardian commissioners, though they confiscated the chalices.

Antiquities and Works of Art Exhibited.

By Admiral TREMLETT.—Drawings of Pierres à Bassins.

By M. SEIDLER.—Photographs of megalithic remains.

By Mr. SOMERS CLARKE.—Drawing of the stone screen in Sandridge church, Herts.

By Rev. C. R. MANNING.—Medieval patens from Foxley, Gissing and Felbrigge, Norfolk.

March 5, 1885.

The PRESIDENT in the Chair.

The Rev. Precentor VENABLES communicated the following notes on the discovery of a beautiful pilaster of Roman work at Lincoln:—

"I send a photograph and one-fourth size drawing, by Mr. Smedley, of a sculptured stone, discovered in the middle of February last, in digging the foundations of the new School of Art and Science at Lincoln. The locality where the stone was found is at the foot of the hill on which the old Roman city stood, behind the old city jail, between the New road and Monks road, a short distance to the east of the eastern wall of the lower or second Roman area, nearly opposite the site of the eastern Roman gateway of that lower town, known in later times as Clasket gate. It is rather remarkable that other indications of Roman times were so scanty. As far as I can learn there were no Roman foundations or traces of Roman building discovered. Two funeral vases of the coarsest make, one containing burnt bones, both broken by the pick of the workman, are all that I can hear of, besides a few coins of common types.

"The stone, as will be seen from the photographs, is one of much interest, and displays considerable beauty of design. It may be safely said to be the finest work of art of Roman date which has yet been discovered in Lincoln. It consists of a quadrangular pilaster or "cippus," of a rather tapering form, crowned by a projecting cornice carved with a series of inverted acanthus leaves of much delicacy of execution. The two sides are profusely carved with foliage of the acanthus type, displaying great freedom and less conventionality than is often the case. The way in which some of the leaves are made to overlap one another deserves observation. But it is the face of the stone which calls for the most careful attention. It bears a figure—whether male or female is somewhat uncertain—clothed in drapery of much elegance in its folds and general arrangement. Its left hand bears a 'cornucopiæ.' What the dependent right hand carried cannot be determined from the mutilated state of the stone. The features have entirely perished. The head has its back part covered with a kind of hood, or veil.

"The points to be determined with regard to this interesting memorial of the past are its object and character, and the person represented.

"I sent the photograph of the stone to Dr. Collingwood Bruce, who replied—'I am much interested in your newly discovered stone. It is worthy of Athens in its best days. The first question which I asked myself was whether the figure was that of a man or a woman. The flatness of the upper portion of the chest induces me to think it is a man. I send you a photograph of a stone just discovered in South Shields. So far as the chest is concerned and the garment covering it, there seems to be a likeness between them. The Shields figure, we have no doubt, is a man.'

"Another person who has inspected the stone believes that the figure is female, and is led by the cornucopiæ to identify it with Ceres. The same party expresses his opinion that the pilaster was one of a pair supporting a frieze, perhaps that of a doorway, something after the manner of Caryatides.

"Other persons qualified to judge, to whom it has been shewn, regard the memorial as sepulchral.

"I shall be much obliged if the members of the Institute present will favour me with their opinion on the points raised.

"The monument is executed in the coarse Lincoln oolite, which renders the delicacy of the workmanship all the more remarkable.

"The stone is mutilated at the base. Its present dimensions are 3 ft. 2 in. high, by 1 ft. 3 in. broad on face, and 1 ft. in flank. The lewis hole in the upper surface, for raising the stone after the present fashion, deserves notice."

Mr. F. C. J. SPURRELL reported the discovery of a large series of deneholes near Grays in Essex, and exhibited a plan of a few of these curious excavations. Mr. Spurrell promised to report more fully before the end of the session.

Mr. W. T. WATKIN communicated a paper on Roman Inscriptions found in Britain in 1884. This forms Mr. Watkin's ninth annual list, and is printed in the current number of the *Journal*, at page 141.

Mr. J. L. STAHLSCHMIDT read a paper on Church Bells, in which he stated that his object was to show—from the progress that had been made by those specialists who had devoted themselves to the subject—the general principles that had been arrived at as underlying campanological research, or to put it in the plainest language, how to tell, approximately or exactly, the date of a bell. That his remarks would apply only to pre-reformation or "ancient" bells (such being almost as invariably undated as those of post-reformation times are dated), and to bells of the south and centre of England: too little progress having as yet been made in the north for it to be certain whether or not the same rules apply.

After mentioning some abnormally shaped bells, commonly known as "long waisted," and clearly of early fourteenth century date, he described a bell at Chaldon, Surrey, which he considered might fairly be ascribed to the twelfth century, and was probably the oldest church bell now hanging in the south of England. There is a similar bell at a church in Wensleydale.

Passing then to bell inscriptions he pointed out that they were the best guide to dating any bell, that with regard to the nature of the inscriptions, the simpler ones were certainly the earlier; that as regards the character of the lettering—inscriptions in "Lombardics"—sometimes called "Uncials," or "Gothic capitals," obtained down to the commencement of the fifteenth century; that inscriptions in black-letter came in about the last decade of the fourteenth century, the period 1380—1420 being the transition period between the two styles.

Dealing first with Lombardic inscriptions he showed that they came again into use in the earlier half of the sixteenth century, but that the fourteenth century (and earlier) bells could easily be distinguished by their having a stop between each word; and he pointed out a regular series of development of these stops, commencing with two or three vertical circular dots or rings, then a single diamond shaped stop, then a combination of ring and diamond, then a fleur-de-lis, a crown, or a leaf, culminating in a circular elaborate stamp with founder's name upon it, as used by William Founder of London, whose date documentary evidence showed to be 1380 to 1405 approximately.

Shortly after the introduction of black-letter inscriptions came in the general use of foundry stamps, and the lecturer in this connection mentioned the ordinances of the Brazier's Company of London, dated 1416, which laid down the rule that each brazier was to have his mark which was to be placed on his work. Such foundry marks are largely met with on fifteenth and sixteenth century bells, and while many of them have been identified as to their ownership, many others are still puzzles.

The initial crosses on bell inscriptions are also some guide in determining the authorship and consequently the date of bells, but as these passed from hand to hand, sometimes for many generations, much care was needed in theorising from their use.

Dwelling very briefly on bells of the Elizabethan period, the lecturer mentioned one or two curious instances of survival of Catholic inscriptions, and concluded with an appeal for help, especially in the matter of extracts from MS. records, parish accounts and registers, bearing upon the subject: pointing out that not infrequently an apparently trifling entry gave important evidence on doubtful points.

The lecture was illustrated with a well selected series of rubbings of inscriptions and casts of letters, stops, crosses, and founder's stamps.

Mr. W. H. ST. JOHN HOPE, by the kind permission of the Mayor and Corporation of Maidstone, exhibited and described the civic maces of that borough. Mr. Hope has been obliging enough to send the following notes on these maces:—

The Borough of Maidstone possesses two maces—both of silver gilt. The older, and smaller, of these is $22\frac{3}{8}$ inches long and consists of a straight staff, with a flattened button at the foot, and mace-head of somewhat unusual shape. This is relieved by small square panels, and supported by four S shaped scrolls. The mace-head is surmounted by a bold coronet composed of three fleurs-de-lis and three crosses pates placed alternately, and on the top are the royal arms—France modern and England quarterly. The shield was certainly once enamelled, though no traces of colour now remain. The staff is relieved by one knop placed at about three-fifths of its length, and bears two inscriptions recording the re-gilding of the mace in 1825 and again in 1882. These successive re-gildings have done much to obscure and obliterate some of the details. The button at the foot has four S shaped scrolls above it.

This mace probably dates from 1548, in which year the town was first incorporated by royal charter of Edward VI., dated July 4th. It also admirably illustrates the theory put forth by Mr. R. S. Ferguson (see his paper "On the Morpeth Mace," at page 90) that the civic mace is the war-mace turned upside down. The button and scrolls on the Maidstone example being the survival of the flanged head of the war-mace.

The second of the Maidstone maces is 38 inches long, but being of the usual type calls for no special description. The head bears the rose, thistle, fleur-de-lis and harp, each crowned and between the letters C R, and is surmounted by an arched crown. The staff is divided into two parts by a knop and ornamented with a spiral pattern of oak foliage. Under the foot are the borough arms—a fess wavy between three torteaux, and on a chief a lion of England. The staff bears inscriptions recording the re-gilding of the mace in 1801 and 1882.

From the borough records it appears that a great mace was procured

shortly before 1649, towards which one Ambrose Beale paid £30: on the accession of Charles II. a new crown was added at a cost of £24 4s. 5d. This price perhaps included the whole mace-head, which would be obnoxious to the Roundheads from its royal badges.

During the mayoralty of Andrew Broughton in 1649, a little mace was sold for £3 18s. 4½d. and a mace *without the King's arms* bought for £48 3s. 5d., of which £10 was a bequest of an ardent Roundhead named John Bigg.

Antiquities and Works of Art Exhibited.

By Precentor VENABLES.—Photograph and drawing of a fine Roman pilaster found in Lincoln.

By Mr. F. C. J. SPURRELL.—Plan of Deneholes at Grays.

By Mr. J. J. CAREY.—Drawing of a wall painting of "Les tres vifs et les tres morts" in the church of Notre Dame du Cástel, Guernsey. Drawing of a sculptured stone chest, from Guernsey.

By Mr. J. L. STAHLSCHEMIDT.—Casts and rubbings of bell inscriptions.

By Mr. W. H. ST. JOHN HOPE.—The civic maces of the Borough of Maidstone.