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## THE CHURCH OF STONE IN OXNEY.

BY THE REV. E. M. MURIEL, M.A.

THIS Church, dedicated to St. Mary, consists of nave, north and south aisles, chancel, north and south chapels, and a square embattled tower of three stages with a beacon turret at the west end, from the top of which a fine view of the surrounding country is obtained. The entire church is Perpendicular. The best feature internally is the colonnade on each side of the nave, consisting of three good arches, supported on pillars, which are graceful and lofty. The Tudor arch between each chapel and the chancel is very flat; under that on the north side, are the remains of a late Perpendicular screen; and in the windows of the same chapel we may observe specimens of canopy-work in the painted glass, rather spoilt by the insertion of some pieces of modern glass. The south chapel is the oldest part of the church; in the south-west corner of it are the stone steps, now blocked up, which led to the rood-loft. There are some remains of painted glass in the east window of this chapel, one diaper is left, and other portions which probably were on the outside of a figure with flowing robes. In this chapel's south wall, under a niche, is a projecting bowl like a plain piscina, but some doubt whether it had any orifice for a drain. The chancel itself and the pillars supporting it are very massive; and above the arch are two large niches, which I at first thought had contained statues in connection with the rood-loft; but when the chancel roof was raised, under the direction of Mr. Christian, at the expense of the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury, it was found that they were only plain windows. The font is octagonal and quite plain. Under the tower arch is a screen of balustraded work, with the following initials and date carved on the front:—

WP IS CWS 1705.

The whole of the church has been recently restored under the immediate superintendence and greatly to the credit of the Rev. H. P. Edridge, the Vicar, who personally assisted in the work, carefully restoring each part according to the original design.

The earliest register is that of burials; it is complete from 1567 to the present time; that of baptisms begins in 1573. No marriage took place during the years 1714 to 1717.

I will mention a few of the entries made in the Registers, or facts derived therefrom :

- 1625 George Harnett, householder, excommunicate.
- 1628 Mary, wife of Thos. Fowler, excommunicate.
- 1630 Margery Harper, excommunicate.
- 1635 John Tomas, excommunicate.
- 1638 An Irish travelling man, whose name we cannot learn.
- 1658 Buried Elizabeth, wife of Thomas Swift, with her  
unchristened child in the same coffin.
- 1659 May 11 Henry Wood, young man.
- May 21 Henry Wood, old man.

North-east of the south door there is a stone, popularly supposed to be that on which persons stood to do penance, but I differ from the general opinion. Walcott, in his *Sacred Archæology*, says, "The penitents, in haircloth and ashes, stood before the ambon, and from it the Bishop laid hands upon them, after being entreated by his clergy in set forms of address." Now the ambon was an elevated desk or pulpit used for reading the Holy Scriptures, placed in the centre of the nave, either in the middle or on one side; the ambon was in fact the original from which the lectern eagle was derived. I think that this stone was the pedestal of the poor-box (ordered by Edward VI); or, earlier, of a holy water stoup.

A list of those who did penance here is given in the Register :

- George Holden did penance 20 July 1620.
- Dorothy Venell „ „ 18 Sep. 1622.
- Margery Harper „ „ 1627.

Thomas — and Lydia his wife did penance	21 June 1634.
John Tomas	„ „ 14 Dec. 1634.
Thomas Young & Amy his wife „ „	19 June 1636.
John Nunnington & Margeret his wife „ „	19 June 1636.

I may mention that the two latest instances of public penances in England occurred at Bristol in 1812, and Ditton, Cambridgeshire, in 1849.

“Oliver Fidge and three others, of Wittersham Oxney, weare drowned Oct. 21, 1633, in the watry marishes betweene Peasmarsh and Wittersham; Knell dam breaking, and the waters overflowing all the marishes very deepe, even to the channel.

“Testis Thos. Martin tunc Vic. de Stone, cum multis aliis.”

“Mem.: That on June 10, 1720, at an Archiepiscopal Visitation, then holden at Ashford by the most Rev. Father in God, Dr. W. Wake, Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, sixty-four persons and upwards, inhabitants of this Parish, were confirmed by the Rev. Father in God, Dr. Wynn, Lord Bishop of St. Asaph; the Rev. Culpeper Savage, Vicar; and the same year the treble bell was new cast.”

“Mem.: That the gallery at the west end of the Church was erected by the unanimous consent and at the charge of the Parish, in the year of our Lord 1721.\*

“ROBERT BEALE and RICHARD EMERY, Ch. Wardens.”

“The week before Aistor (Easter), 1699, Stone Church was robbed of a good new surplice, and a good new Communion purple table cloth, and ye silver cup and cover, also ye linnen table cloth and napkin.” This was probably one of the weightiest chalices in the county, weighing over thirty-one ounces; one larger is mentioned in the Inventory of Church Goods,† at Holy Cross, Canterbury, which weighed thirty-four ounces and three-quarters. In *Archæologia Cantiana*, XI, p. 415, an inventory of the parish church goods of Stone mentions that there were five bells in the steeple,

\* Now pulled down.

† Inventories of Parish Goods in Kent, 1552. A very interesting Paper, by Canon Scott Robertson, in Vol. VIII, p. 88, of *Archæologia Cantiana*.

and one over the chancel. That may account for the hole which we observe in the beam over the chancel arch, through which the rope for ringing the sanctus bell probably passed. There are six bells in the present peal; the second bell is thus inscribed, "*Vox Agustini sonet in aure Dei.*" The others were cast by W. and P. Mears, in 1786, 1787 (two), 1788, and 1795.

It appears that many of the churches in this neighbourhood were destroyed, or injured by fire. The Vicar of Stone informs me that when this church was restored, in laying down the chancel pavement, pieces of molten lead were found, affording proof that this church also suffered from fire about the seventeenth century. Pieces of the molten lead are still preserved.

The Roman altar, which is in the vicarage garden, was removed from the church and made a horse block, by which means it was much defaced and cracked asunder; but Mr. Gostling, who was Vicar from 1753 to 1777, had it repaired and placed it upright in the vicarage garden. The altar is of stone, with a basin hollowed in the top, and the figure of an ox carved on the four sides; one side is now tolerably perfect, the others are much defaced. The iron ring at the foot of the altar is supposed to have been used for securing thereto the victims for sacrifice.

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#### MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTIONS IN THE CHURCH OF STONE IN OXNEY.

*A Monument in the North Chapel against the East Wall has this inscription:—*

In Memory of John Cooper late of this Parish who died 10 Dec. 1790 aged 56 years, also of Ann his wife who died 11 May 1771 aged 31 years, likewise of Hannah his second wife who died 6 Sept. 1791 aged 44 years. This monument was erected as a tribute of respect by his three nephews.

*On a flat stone.*

Here lyeth the body of Mr. Stephen Tighe son of Mr. Robert Tighe of this parish who departed this life Jan. 7, 1733, in the 50 year of his age, who left issue one daughter.

*On a large blue slab.*

Here lies the body of Sarah daughter of Stephen Tighe Gent. and Martha his wife. She married George Carter of Kennington Esq., by whom she had issue 6 children of which 4 survived her, Sarah, Martha, Ann, and George. She died Jan. 30, 1765, aged 41 years. Also the body of George Carter Esq., who died 27 Feb. 1782 aged 68 years.

*Small marble slab by the side of the last.*

William Son of George and Sarah Carter died the 3 day of October 1748 aged 18 months.

*On a blue slab.*

Here lieth interred y<sup>e</sup> Body of Mr. John Waters, He died Jan. 17, 1838, aged 36 years.

*On a blue slab.*

Here lyeth the body of the wife of John Hall, once Mary Odiarne, deceased the 4 day of December in the year of our Lord 1677.

*[This is in capitals, and there is a dot after every word.]*

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## DIMENSIONS OF STONE CHURCH.

*(Communicated by the Rev. H. P. Edridge.)*

Tower, 14 feet square; 62 feet high.

Nave, with its Aisles, 40 feet square.

Width of Nave, 20 feet.

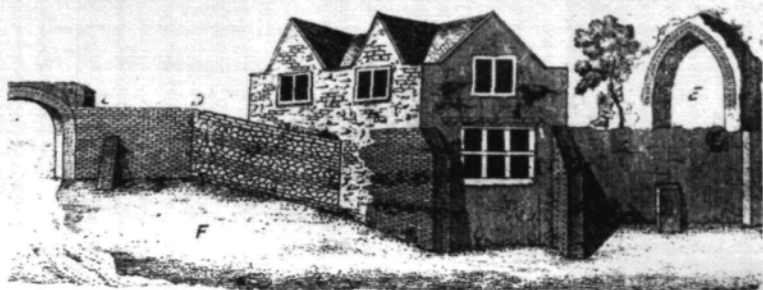
„ of each Aisle, 10 feet.

Chancel, 30 feet long; 20 feet wide.

Chancel chapels, each, 20 feet long, 13 feet wide.

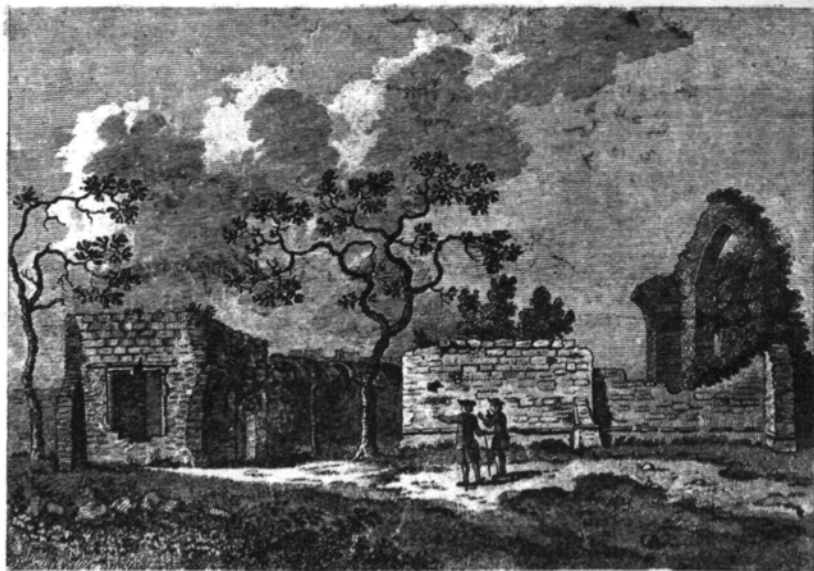
Porch, 11 feet by 10 feet.

Mr. Edridge states that in the north and south walls of the chancel there are traces of mural arcades formerly existing.



**STUKLEY'S VIEW OF THE SITE & RUINS OF ST. PANCRAS (SOUTH SIDE)  
IN A.D. 1722.**

*(THE LETTERS C; D; E; F; ARE EXPLAINED UPON THE PLAN)*



**RUINS OF ST. PANCRAS IN A.D. 1784.  
(SOUTH SIDE)**

*Whitman & Bass. From Litho, London.*