

A LIST OF SCRATCH DIALS ON SUFFOLK CHURCHES.

By Rev. H. A. HARRIS.

ASPAL—on buttress, two circles and dots.

BARNARDISTON—two on S. buttress.

BARNBY—on S. wall—indistinct.

BARNINGHAM—on buttress W. of chancel door.

BATTISFORD—E. of chancel.

BEALINGS (Little)—on W. jamb of door inside porch.

BECCLES—on 3rd buttress from porch.

BELSTEAD—one on W. quoin of tower porch and three others on same porch. On three stones one above the other. Two being faulty.

BILDESTON—on porch W. of a niche, high up.

BELTON—on nave buttress.

BLAKENHAM (Great)—one E. of chancel, three on nave.

BLAKENHAM (Little)—on extreme E. of chancel.

BLUNDESTON—two on nave buttress.

BLYTHBOROUGH—on flying buttress and on N.E. buttress (reversed).

BOXFORD—one on nave and one on chancel.

BOXTED—on nave buttress.

BRANDESTON—two on buttress.

BRENT ELEIGH—on porch.

BRICET—on nave (round stone).

BROCKLEY—on second buttress E. of porch.

BROMESWELL—on E. of doorway.

BUNGAY (Holy Trinity)—on E. end of aisle.

BURES—on W. buttress of tower, high up.

BURGH (St. Peter)—on chancel doorway.

BURGH (St. Andrew)—on buttress W. of chancel door, gnomon hole and one radius.

BURGH CASTLE—two on buttresses.

BUTLEY—on chancel.

BUXHALL—on buttress, indistinct.

CARLTON—on buttress.

CAVENDISH—on E. of porch, near top.

CAVENHAM—two on chancel window.

CONY WESTON—on W. buttress of porch, gnomon hole only.

COPDOCK—on buttress, E. of chancel door, low down, one, very small, on buttress W. of chancel door and one on stone removed when the sun dial over porch was erected in 1936, now in vestry.

CRATFIELD—on nave buttress.

CREETING (St. Peter)—on nave.

CRETINGHAM—double circle on quoin E. of porch another, larger (pseudo).

COTTON—on buttress W. of porch.

COVE (South)—on jamb of S. door, faces W., reversed.

COVE (North)—on E. of porch arch.

COWLING—on nave buttress, reversed.

CULPHO—on tower.

DEBENHAM—two on window W. of chancel door, one reversed, another on buttress at E. end of S. aisle rather high up.

DENHAM—three on W. jamb of chancel door, all poor, two pseudo.

DENNINGTON—on buttress E. of S. door with another, smaller, below it.

DENSTON—two on second and third buttresses E. of porch, very high up. The one nearest porch has iron gnomon pin c. 10 inches.

EASTON—two on buttress.

ELMHAM (St. Peter)—on E. jamb of door.

ELMHAM (St. Margaret)—on W. of porch, poor.

ELMHAM (St. James)—on buttress W. of chancel door and one on chancel door.

ELMHAM (All Saints)—on porch.

ELMHAM (St. Cross)—on jamb of door.

ELMSET—on chancel window.

ELMSWELL—on buttress W. of chancel door, high up, gnomon projects.

EYE—on second buttress E. of porch.

EYKE—on E. of chancel door.

FELSHAM—two on buttress E. of porch.

FINNINGHAM—on buttress W. of chancel door.

FLOWTON—two on nave buttress.

FRAMSDEN—on buttress next chancel door.

FRITTON—one.

FROSTENDEN—on second buttress from porch, low down.

GISLEHAM—one on buttress with smaller one beneath.

GISLINGHAM—one on buttress and two inside church on N. pillar of chancel arch. These functioned by light from S. window.

GLEMSFORD—on buttress E. of chancel door, indistinct.

GROTON—one, very indistinct.

GRUNDISBURGH—on chancel door.

HADLEY—on buttress.

HALESWORTH—on chancel.

HENLEY—on quoin at extreme W. end of nave, c. 8-ft. up.

HELMINGHAM—on extreme E. buttress, dots and radii, very fine.

HEVINGHAM—on buttress.

HORHAM—over chancel door, square stone let into key stone.

HOLBROOK—on doorway.

HOO—on window.

HOXNE—on buttress.

HUNTINGFIELD—two on buttress.

ILKETSHALL (St. John)—on jamb of inner doorway.

ILKETSHALL (St. Margaret)—on chancel window.

IPSWICH (St. Nicholas)—on second buttress E. of porch, very faint.

IXWORTH—on E. side of window E. of S. aisle.

IKEN—on porch.

KEDINGTON—one on chancel buttress and one on doorway inside porch.

KELSALE—on window, small and indistinct.

KENTON—two on either side of S. door under porch and two on doorway, one on quoin extreme W. of nave. Two on second buttress E. of porch. One on quoin of E. chancel wall. Eight dials in all.

KNODISHALL—on doorway.

LAYHAM—on E. side of buttress at S.W. corner of nave, misplaced.

LINDSEY—on chancel doorway.

LINSTEAD PARVA—two on chancel doorway.

LOUND—on chancel buttress.

LOWESTOFT (St. Margaret)—one E. of porch, another on 2nd buttress of tower.

MELLIS—on buttress E. of chancel door, high up.

METFIELD—on buttress.

METTINGHAM—on N. porch, misplaced.

MICKFIELD—Pseudo dials on W. of chancel door and on inner door of tower.

MONEWDEN—one on W. jamb of chancel door and one on porch, very small.

MOULTON—large one on porch and three others.

MONKS ELEIGH—on W. of porch.

MONKS SOHAM—on buttress W. of chancel door.

MUTFORD—two on Galilee porch.

NEDGING—on W. of porch.

NEWTON (Old)—on nave buttress.

ONEHOUSE—one, broken.

ORFORD—on buttress.

OTLEY—on buttress E. of chancel, 36 dots and radii.

OUSDEN—on W. of doorway.

PAKEFIELD—on buttress, dots.

PARHAM—on buttress, square with numerals.

POLSTEAD—on porch, reversed.

REDGRAVE—on buttress E. of chancel door.

REDISHAM (Great) on doorway.

RENDHAM—under chancel S. window.

RENDLESHAM—on window.

RICKINGHALL (Inferior)—on W. of porch, indistinct.

RISBY—on buttress E. of porch, indistinct.

RISHANGLES—on slot window E. of porch.

ROUGHAM—two gnomon holes, on W. of porch and on E.

RUSHMERE—on buttress.

SAPISTON—two on doorway.

SAXTED—on buttress, indistinct.

SIBTON—on E. jamb inside porch, on top stone, circle with radii below.

SOHAM (Earl)—two on buttress W. of chancel door, one on window E. of door.

STONHAM ASPAL—two on buttress W. of chancel porch.

STONHAM EARL—on E. side of porch, probably pseudo.

STANSFIELD—on nave buttress.

STRADISHALL—on buttress.

STERNFIELD—three on porch.

SOMERSHAM—on nave buttress.

SOTTERLY—two on nave, one on chancel and one on doorway.

SWILLAND—on quoin of blocked up chancel window, two on doorway.

STOVEN—on porch and on chancel doorway.

SNAPE—in N.E. corner of interior, reversed.

THEBERTON—over chancel door and on 2nd buttress E. of door.

THELNETHAM—on E. of door inside porch.

THORNHAM PARVA—on W. jamb of N. door, low down, misplaced.

THORPE—two concentric circles on porch.

THRANDESTON—on buttress, E. of porch, faces S.W.

THWATE—over porch, very fine, of early date.

TIMWORTH—on tower.

TOSTOCK—on 2nd buttress E. of porch, indistinct.

TUDDENHAM (St. Martin)—on doorway.

TUNSTALL—on W. of porch.

UBBESTON—on S.W. quoin of nave, two dials.

UFFORD—on porch.

WALPOLE—on W. quoin of porch, indistinct.

WANTISDEN—on doorway.

WASHBROOK—on buttress W. of chancel door.

WHELNETHAM (Little)—on quoin extreme S.E. of nave.

WESTHALL—six or more.

WESTHORPE—on E. side of porch, painted.

WENHAM PARVA—three on buttress.

WETHERDEN—on 2nd and 3rd buttresses.

WETHERINGSET—two on W. jamb of inner porch door.

WICKHAM SKEITH—three on buttress W. of chancel door and one on jamb of chancel door, small.

WISSETT—on doorway.

WISSINGTON—two on W. of doorway.

WITNESHAM—on wall W. of porch, pseudo dial on buttress W. of porch.

WORDWELL—on nave, indistinct.

WORLINGTON—on E. of aisle, reversed.

WOOLPIT—on buttress W. of chancel door.

WATTISFIELD—on quoin of W. angle of tower.

YAXLEY—on buttress E. of porch.

YOXFORD—on aisle.

SCRATCH DIALS.

Within recent years attention has been directed towards the hitherto little considered graffiti or designs, such as Scratch or Mass Dials, incised upon the walls of our Churches.

This awakened interest has resulted in the output of many books and pamphlets dealing with their history and uses and also with lists of Churches possessing them. It is futile therefore to repeat what is common knowledge on this subject but perhaps certain hypotheses about their antecedent relations may be excused, except by those who hold with Ignatius Loyola that "the highest virtue of a Christian is the sacrifice of the intellect" and the greatest sin "listening to the dictates of reason."

Is it a sin to question the grounds upon which a Scratch Dial is in name and fact circular when reason tells us that a circle is superfluous since the sun never describes a full circle and never illumines the major portion of the dial. Indeed there is no necessity at all for the confining circle, as it is the radii that mark the shadow and point out the passage of the hours. The circle being merely ornamental or, as I hope to show, symbolical.

Many Scratch Dials, being perhaps of later date, show no indication of a circle and consist solely of a few uneven lines radiating from the gnomon hole, whilst in other examples these radiating lines are stopped by dots or holes, as guides to the radii, when they were repainted. All Scratch Dials were painted, otherwise the shadow was indefinable on the dull grey stone. The scratches were guides for repainting when the colouring matter was washed away by weather effects.

Reason certainly permits us to deduce that Scratch Dials supply an illustration of the practice commonly employed by early Christians of adopting and adapting pagan devices to their own particular requirements as recommended to them by the policy of St. Gregory, aptly defined as the "migration of symbols."

To call it a coincidence can hardly explain the fact that the circle and lines of the Scratch Dial constitute the most potent and fundamental "signs" of Nature worship, known as the "line of force" and the "circle of comprehension." Later in Britain's Celtic days of Solar worship these signs migrated and were employed to represent the circular orb of the sun whilst the lines betokened the rays or power of the sun, being mystically illustrated by imagery combining some definite relativity to circle and line. As for example a lion's head surrounded by his bristling mane or when the lines are represented by horns, as shown in early paintings of Moses with horns on his head and also as the halo round the head of illustrious persons.

These lines or rays find a familiar symbol in hair, and innumerable Biblical and historical references are made to hair and "The power of a single hair." The sun when it sets loses its rays and becomes bald and weak and is overcome by the powers of darkness. In like manner Samson loses his strength when his hair is cut off and Elisha

when mocked by children as being bald and impotent, destroys them for being Sun worshippers and proves he is not a Sun god but has strength from the true God.

Other instances such as fairy wands, magicians' rods, batons and maces of officers, crown, sceptre and orb of mighty ones, pillars, tree stems and towers have their roots in the line of force and the circle of comprehension.

When we "touch wood" for luck and when "Tommy" salutes his superior officer and marches right foot first we are symbolising Sun-cult rites.

The circle and radii of our Scratch Dials have a further bearing on the transition of symbols into letters as they constitute the god-letters O and I. Sacred letters, betokening divinity, in the names of many gods and goddesses, e.g. Jupiter or Jove, is IO pater or the father of IO. (O and U are interchangeable). Other instances are found in IUno, IO, DIOnysius, etc. An illuminating illustration is found in the name of IOseph. For Jacob in blessing Joseph (Genesis xlix, v. 22) says that "Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well." Here the bough is the early sign writing for the line of force or I and the circular Well mouth for the O, indicating the circle of comprehension or O. They are prior to Hebrew letters and points, prior even to Solar worship, as from the remainder of the Blessing we gather that they belong to the earlier period of Nature worship before they migrated and were adopted by Solar cults.

Occasionally we find on church walls circles and lines which obviously never functioned as time-indicators although bearing some resemblance to Scratch Dials and consequently known as Pseudo-dials.

These may be the work of a boy with a pair of compasses but if on early buildings they may be sacred O and I signs that have not been converted into dials.

It is difficult for us with our advanced education and mentality to put back our intellectual faculties a thousand years and more, so as to appreciate the clouded perception and hebetude of the folk in those days or their servile reliance on charms, amulets and the power of imitative rites, salvation by similars, sympathetic magic, plant signatures, etc.

The Bible O.T., which is a wonderful treasury of folk-lore, contains many illustrations of belief in the power of symbolic rites and signs. As in the case when the Israelites were punished with fiery serpents and many died, Moses set up a brazen serpent on a pole and those that looked on it lived. Here we may notice that the brazen serpent was set up on a pole—a symbol of Solar power. That it was an imitative rite—serpent curing serpent bite, and that it was "looking" on it that brought them healing.

Is it to be wondered at that the early Christians who were super-saturated with these beliefs, should "set up" circles and lines on their churches that they might "look at" them in order to obtain the advocacy they symbolised. To this day some Christians point with extended fingers to avert the evil eye. The Christian servant-girl will

stand the poker up in front of a sulky fire to make it draw and many other Christians hang up a horse shoe for luck.

All these modern Christians are practising Solar rites and invoking the power of the Sun.

In Britain the dominant religion for centuries B.C. was Solar tinged with Buddhism. The Celtic Buddha being Cernunnos, traditionally surviving as Herne or Kerne-the-hunter. Their Temples were fashioned on the O and I symbols and consisted of circles outlined by monoliths or, where stone was not procurable, the stems of trees appear to have been substituted.

Early temples and churches were not buildings but sacred sites open to the sky for, as the word Temple or Temenos shows, it was a site cut off and enclosed by a barrier. They could not have been buildings as the Valley of the Nile was a Temple.

That the early Christians retained the circular shape in their churches is evidenced also by verbal proof, for in A.S. the rendering of Church is "Circe" which obviously is derived from A.S. Circol, a circle, and it is a matter of intonation as to whether you pronounce "circe" with the C hard and get Kirk or soft and get Chirch.

With such an impressive exuberance of the ubiquitous O and I symbol, dominating his mental and physical outlook, it is natural that the signs find expression in and upon all demonstrations of his activities, including church walls. Displayed crudely as circles and lines or elaborated into Scratch Dials—to which they lent themselves so readily and usefully—or other utilitarian or doctrinal purpose.

Other parallel examples are not wanting, as for instance where the O symbol in the Ephemerides or Almanacs, denoted the Feast of Brigit, chief of Britain's Sun gods, a Feast that fell early in February and celebrated the genesis and reviving warmth and power of the Sun, was converted into Septuagesima Sun(Day).

Christian almanacs retained the O symbol but caused it to migrate from a sun sign to a Roman numeral signifying 70. This Roman numeral is not so familiar as other letter-numbers such as v for 5, x for 10, C for 100, etc.

Thus without alteration, friction or clash of creeds Brigits sun day migrated to the Christian Septuagesima Sunday.

The popular explanation that the Sunday is called Septuagesima because it is 70 days before Easter is arithmetically and radically incorrect.

Archæologists never ignore folk-memory, and on many occasions in Victorian days I was told by village people—and parsons also—that Scratch Dials were heathen abominations, and in one or two instances was informed that for this reason many had been erased.

Such an extraordinary accusation to be brought against these seemingly guileless Scratch Dials, not only by ignorant peasants but also intellectual parsons, invited the investigations contained in this paper. The result of the analysis vindicating, if not justifying, both the folk-memory of the peasant and the intellect of the parson.