

Church of St Mary, Stoughton, W.Sussex.

H.Taylor brings the attention of the important features of this church to the reader in his volumes. No doubt that in his time there was still a tendency to attribute mature late Anglo-Saxon work to the Normans. The manor was a wealthy one, recorded in Domesday Book as having been held in the time of King Edward by Earl Godwin. Taylor goes on to say that; **it is therefore not surprising if some of the features of its Anglo-Saxon church should show the influence of the Norman traditions which were being followed before the Conquest, not only by Edward in his great Abbey at Westminster, but by others, perhaps even including Godwin's son Harold in his abbey at Waltham.**

I can do no better than let Taylor give you a general picture of the church. **The church has a tall aisleless nave and chancel, with transepts which are placed near to the east of the nave, and which leave its quoins standing free in the angles between the transepts and the chancel. The fabric is flint and rubble, parts are plastered, some walls bare. Massive side-alternate quoining is provided not only on all salient angles but also on all re-entrants, a feature which appears in other pre-Conquest churches in Sussex, notably at Boarhunt and to a certain extent Bosham. An interesting and peculiar feature is the use of the south transept to form a medieval belfry.**

All photos these pages are described viewed clockwise from top left.

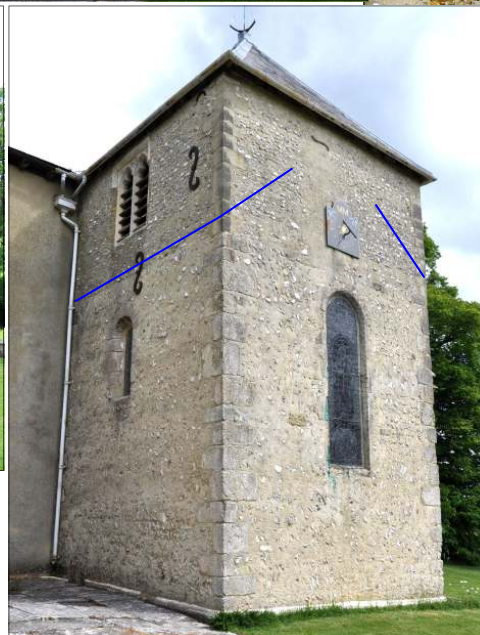
1. A general view from the SW, the 'raised' transept standing to the right hand.



2. Looking at the SE quoin of the nave, with the S transept to the left and the chancel running out to the right. Note the re-entrants that Taylor spoke of. These are not, for instance, to be found in Breamore church (Hants).

3. The S transept from the SW (blue lines indicate original A-Saxon wall heights).

4. The church seen from the north, the chancel running out to the left.



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- 5. The double splayed west window in the S transept.
- 6. Its sister, the west window in the N transept.



7. The west face of the wonderful chancel arch. H.Taylor discusses this work in detail, but there is little space here to cover his text in fine detail. He does however point out that there are similarities to that at Bosham, but the capitals and imposts are quite different. The arch has a soffit roll on its inner order, and on the outer order it has an angle-roll which is outlined by a half-round hollow (and this hollow moulding akin to Stow, Lincs). Taylor mentions the similarity to Bosham extends to the number of voussoirs and the width of the arch. Of interest are the volutes belonging to the capitals which might be looked upon as embryonic volutes. Perhaps of greater interest I feel is the strong similarity to the east arch at Netheravon church (see next page for details).



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8. Base of north jamb of chancel arch, treated with 3 superimposed rings, each decreasing in diameter from the base.

9. Its impost, but with some repairs to the left hand capital. Compare this with the next picture.

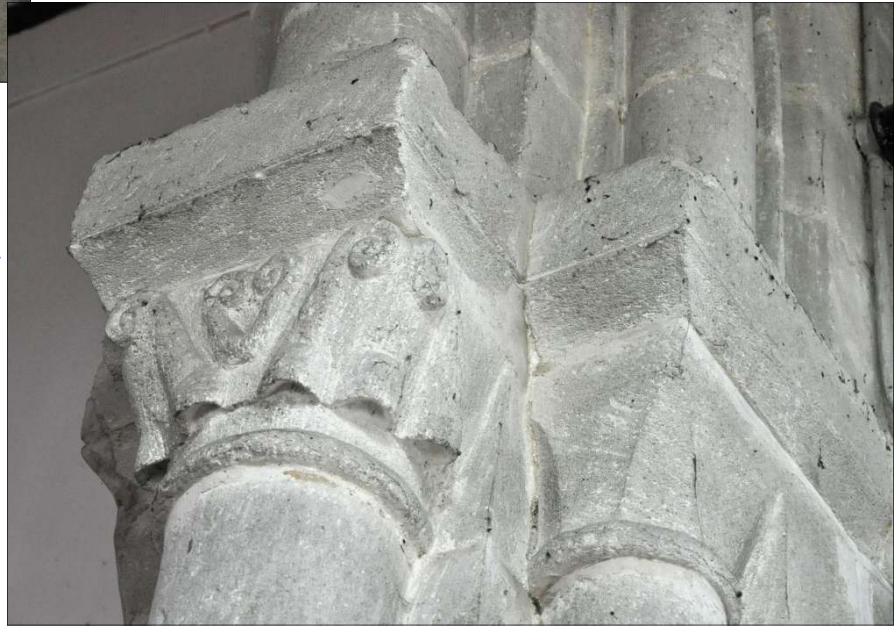


10. The same capital but viewed from the chancel.

11. Its sister (the carving here not identical but similar), the south capital, seen from the chancel.

H.Taylor's observation follows:- The angle-shafts have capitals with simple cubical tops, which are reduced to meet the circular shafts by the elementary expedient of chamfering each face and then chamfering each angle, an expedient which has many parallels in Anglo-Saxon work, as at Kirkdale or Kirk Hammerton. The soffit-shafts have capitals shaped like a bishops crozier, or a cornucopia, two of which are placed at each angle, slanting out as the capital widens, with their crooks turned outward. The capitals support quirked and chamfered imposts which are recessed to conform with the recessed form of the jambs and are returned along the full width of the wall towards the nave as a string-course. Taylor goes on to say: The church is on an unusually large and ambitious scale, with a nave 57 ft long by 26 ft wide, a chancel 25 ft by 19 ft, and transepts 12 ft wide from east to west by 16 ft deep. Its walls are 2 ft 5 in. thick, and nearly 30 ft high. The chancel-arch is 11 ft wide and about 20 ft high. The double splayed windows of the transepts have apertures 1 ft wide and 4 ft tall, splayed internally to become about 2 ft wide and 6 ft tall. The apertures are placed nearer the outer face of the wall than the inner; and the exterior splays are correspondingly smaller. The sills of these windows, at the glass, are about 12 ft above the floor.

I would like to draw your attention to the east arch at Netheravon church in Wiltshire. There are remarkable similarities between both archways. It is the style and treatment that are so alike, and especially the identical treatment of the volute (type) capitals and the angle shafts. Again the presence of concentric rings at the base (although at Netheravon these are heavily disguised). At Netheravon the carved embellishment is missing and the refinement of the half-round hollow moulding is not present, but despite that I consider it very likely that both arches are the work of the same masons and possibly Stoughton being tackled soon after Netheravon.



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12. The double-splayed window in the south transept.

13. Its sister in the north transept.

Dimensions (taken in common with other files on this site).

Archways.

H1 is the height of the opening.

H2 is the height to the underside of the impost.

W is the width between jambs.

T is the thickness of the walling at the jambs (or walling).

Chancel arch.

H1 6.03 metres. (19.78 ft).

H2 3.996 metres. (13.11 ft).

W. 3.725 metres. (12.22 ft).

Nave.

L. 15.307 metres. (50.22 ft)

W. 7.309 metres. (23.98 ft).

Chancel.

L. 7.335 metres. (24.07 ft)

W. 5.47 metres. (17.95 ft).

N transept.

Depth. 5.019 metres. (16.46 ft).

W. 3.954 metres. (12.97 ft).

Dimensions taken using laser equipment, accurate to +/- 1.5mm in 10 metres.

Dimensions under 1.8 metres taken using steel rule.

Conversions. 1 metre = 39.372 inches/3.281 feet.

