

Bishopstone, Sussex

Βιρκοπετουν

Church of St Andrew

Grid ref .....TQ 472 010

Church fabric

Coffin lid

Sundial

Date

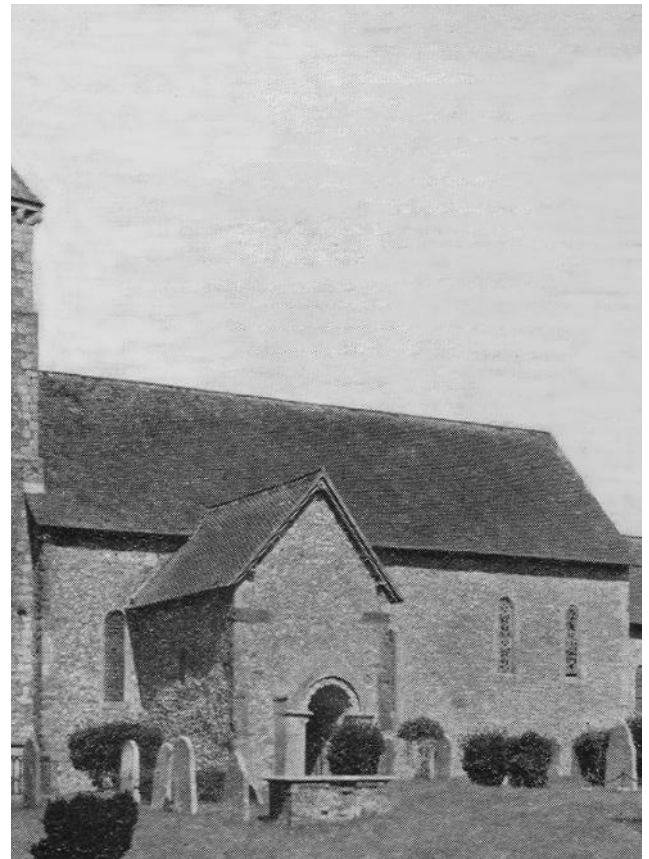
South porch and nave – period A or B

*Taylor*

Church fabric

The Saxon nave can be recognised by the relative slenderness of its walls (under 2'6" in thickness), its high proportions, and the large stones which form the quoins to its western angles and one or two survivals at the east end. It may be as early as the beginning of the C9 and is not later than the C10. The Saxon porch is a remarkable feature. It was the custom in pre-Conquest churches to use the porches as side chapels and this usage is confirmed here by the position of the rebuilt S door which is placed towards the W to allow of an altar against its E wall. The entrance door is later but the porch retains its megalithic quoins.

After the completion of the tower the Normans rebuilt the chancel (now the choir) and contrary to their usual custom they made it the same width as



the nave. This can be explained on the assumption (a) that they rebuilt on earlier lines, a hypothesis supported by the fact that the walls are no thicker than those of the nave, or (b) that they already had in mind a further eastern extension.

The Normans added a gabled eastern projecting doorway to the Saxon porch and rebuilt the S door to the nave.

Sundial

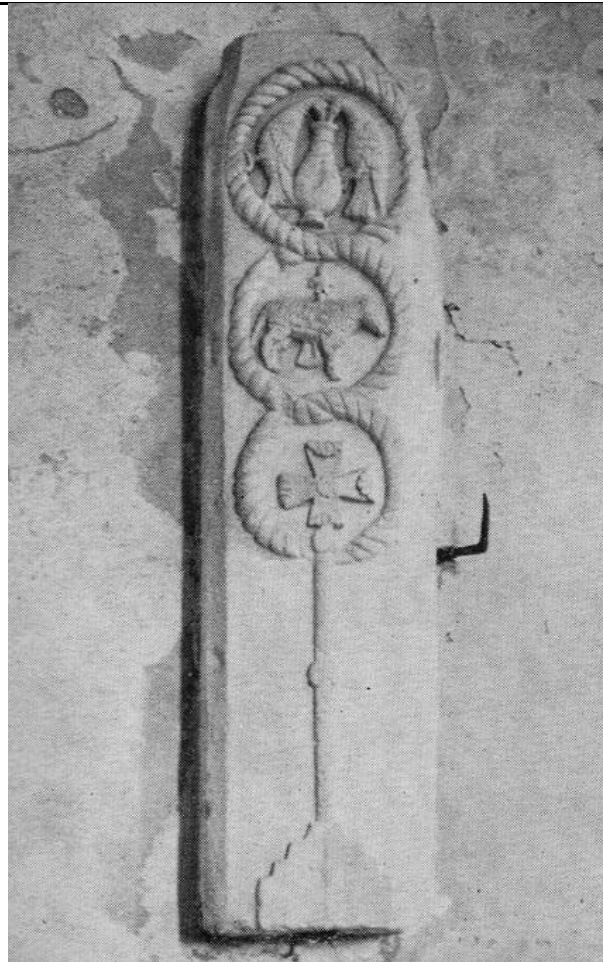
The porch possesses a fine Saxon sundial in its gable, inscribed with the name EADRIC, possibly its donor, which gives it exceptional interest. The dial shows a style-hole and thirteen lines, five with cross bars longer than the rest. These, according to Dr A. R. Green, mark the four Saxon tides of the day, and each tide is divided into three parts, the equivalent of six o'clock to six o'clock in Roman time.

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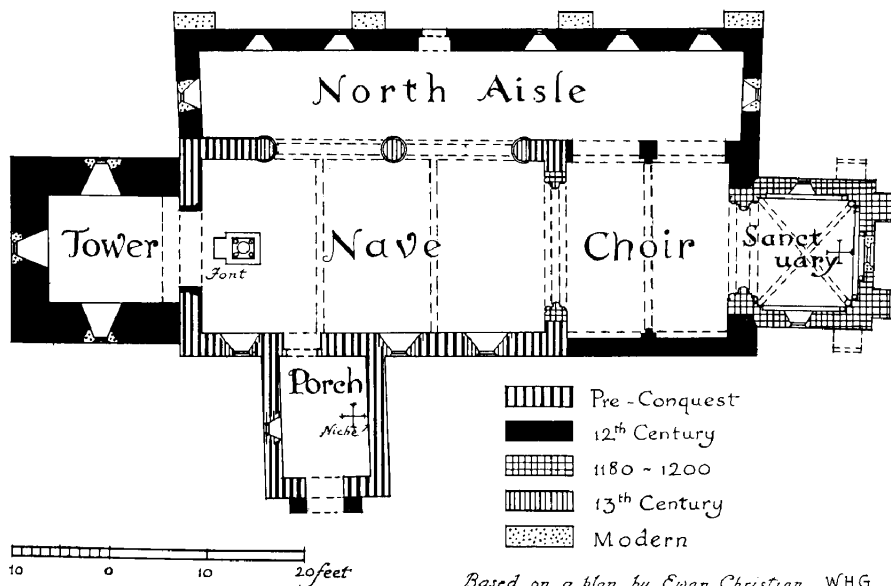
Coffin-slab

Affixed to the S wall of the tower is a well-carved coffin-slab with very interesting C12 carving. The head of a calvary, the arms of which are enriched with foliage, is enclosed within the lowest of three circles formed by the interlacements of a rope. The middle circle contains the *Agnus Dei* and the uppermost one a tall pitcher from which two doves (one on each side) are drinking. This symbol is very common in Early Christian art and the whole design may have been copied from an ivory. The stone from which the coffin-lid is made is of local origin.

*from the ch. guide, ed. by Walter H. Godfrey, C.B.E., P.S.A., for the Sussex Archæolog. Soc., Barbican House, Lewes, and issued by the Pishopstone PCC. Sussex chs. No. 9 (5th imp. 1971) printed at the Oxford U.P., Oxford, England.*



PARISH CHURCH of ST ANDREW  
BISHOPSTONE



*Based on a plan by Ewan Christian. W.H.G*

HISTORICAL PLAN OF CHURCH