



Warnford, Hampshire

Ἰερναξορῶ

Church of Our Lady

Church fabric

Sundial

Grid ref SU 622 227

Date

Part of W wall of nave, period uncertain. Original dedication unknown.

Taylor

Notes

Earliest church built by St Wilfred towards the end of C7. Anglo-Saxon sundial built into wall over S doorway said to be the only remaining fragment of this original church, but almost definitely C11 (c.f. BARNACK, Northamptonshire, etc. Inscription is not part of sundial). Other scratch dials on fabric are not Saxon.

For many years it was not known to whom the church was dedicated, and this is stated in all diocesan lists. But in 1959 the dedication was traced through a skilful piece of historical research by the Hampshire County Archivist, Mrs Cottrill. She found a will dated 1544 by a Warnford man who left instructions that he should "be buried in the body of the Parish Church of Our Lady of Warneford".

The earliest church was probably built by St Wilfred of Sussex who, according to the Venerable Bede, came on a preaching tour up the Meon

Valley towards the end of the C7. His church may well have been built only of timber and plaster, but there was a stone Saxon church on the present site, smaller than the church of today, and ending in a semi-circular apse just E of the chancel screen. Nothing remains of this Saxon church except a stone sundial built into the porch above the doorway.

The tower was built against the end of the Saxon church, and when that was pulled down the present church was built against the Norman tower. The builder of this was Adam de Port whose family held the Manor of Warnford for 200 years after the Norman Conquest. His work is recorded on a tablet in the S porch above the doorway and below the Saxon sundial. The Latin may be translated: "Brethren pray for the earlier and later builders of this temple. Wilfred founded it; good Adam restored it".

If you walk back by the north side of the church you will find another inscription which may be translated:-

"Good folk in your devotions every day For Adam Port who thus restored me, pray."

Notes from church guide book

