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Gloucestershire Fonts Part 5

by A. C. Fryer
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GLOUCESTERSHIRE FONTS.

PART V.

(c) NORMAN.

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THIS paper continues the subject of Norman fonts, and we will consider sixteen bowls belonging to this period. One is rectangular and the remainder are circular in form.

The capitals of early work are plain cubical masses with the lower angles rounded off, forming a sort of rude cushion-shape, like the capitals found on the north transept of Winchester Cathedral (1079-98). Some Norman fonts take this shape, and such an example may be seen in Stoke Gifford Church. The vicar and churchwardens in some benighted age thought good to partially build this font into the wall of the north aisle. It seems probable that this was done in the eighteenth century, when the nave arcade was taken down and columns substituted, which are more in harmony with an Egyptian temple than a Gothic church.

Although the tub-shaped font was probably one of the earliest in design, yet the form was governed by no principle beyond the size of the bowl being adequate for the rite of immersion of infants and the presence of a drain. They varied largely in art, ability, and craftsmanship, and as refinement gradually spread over the country they increased in beauty and adornment. Progressive beauty and architectural science made great progress in some districts, whilst in other parts, where there was a lack of local ability, the design of form and detail of ornamentation showed little originality, and were merely copies of earlier forms. The

unmounted tub-shaped fonts of Norman date¹ are remembrances in stone of those wooden fonts which were so freely used in Anglo-Saxon times.² Tangmere Church, Sussex, possesses an early type of such a tub-shaped font narrowing towards the base, with a bold moulding at the top and bottom.³ The sides are carved to indicate the staves of a barrel, similar to the wooden font at St. Michael's Church, Efenechtyd, Denbighshire.⁴ The tub-shaped font is not confined to an early period, and is found throughout the Middle Ages adorned in various designs and degrees of art.

Among Gloucestershire fonts of the Norman period we find eight plain tub-shaped bowls of unusually massive construction. These fonts are at Bledington, Coln St. Dennis, Coln Rogers, Hasfield, Notgrove, Upton St. Leonard,⁵ Willersey and Winson. They vary in size, and those at Notgrove and Willersey are about 2 ft. in height, while the one at Bledington is 2 in. higher; those at Hasfield and Winson are only about 1 ft. 5 in. The Upton St. Leonard font possesses the greatest circumference, having a girth of 8 ft. 6 in. round the top and 7 ft. 7 in. round the bottom. The thickness of the rim varies from 5½ in. at Notgrove to

¹ Early examples of the tub are at St. Martin's, Canterbury; Bucknell, Shropshire; Chesterblade, Somersetshire; Llandewi, Glamorganshire; Boarhunt, Hampshire; Wolfhampton, Warwickshire; Avebury, Wiltshire; Alplington, Devon; and Avington, Berkshire.

² *Trans. B. and G. Arch. Soc.*, vol. xxxii., p. 301. The use of wood was discouraged, and in Western Christendom it was considered uncanonical, yet a Provincial Council of Scotland, held in 1225, decreed that the font should be of either stone or wood (Wilkins, *Council*, p. 623).

³ The Tangmere font is illustrated in Bond's *Fountains and Font Covers*, p. 30, and in Wall's *Porches and Fountains*, p. 290.

⁴ The Efenechtyd font is illustrated in Wall's *Porches and Fountains*, p. 190. It is of oak and roughly shaped externally into fourteen facets, below which is a course of deeply-severed, protruding bosses. The height is 7½ in.; the facets average 6½ in., being irregular; the diameter at the top is 2 ft. 2 in.; the bowl is 1 ft. 6 in. in diameter and 1 ft. deep. This font is lined with lead, but possesses no drain.

⁵ The Upton St. Leonard font is illustrated in *Trans. B. and G. Arch. Soc.*, vol. xxxiv.

2½ in. at Coln St. Dennis and Upton St. Leonard.¹ These fonts are all quite plain, with the exception of the one at Notgrove, which possesses a deep band of cable ornament round the top. Several of the fonts are suitably mounted on plinths, but the one at Coln St. Dennis has at some later date been chamfered into eight rough scallops, so as to fit on an octagonal pillar. The font at Winson is mounted on a modern pedestal, consisting of four attached pillars with circular bases and capitals, while the one at Willersey has been placed on a circular pillar which is far too slender in appearance for such a large and massive bowl. For fifty-nine years (1841-1900) the font at Willersey was turned out of the church to make way for a brand new font, the gift of the Rev. Dr. Warneford, Rector of Bourton-on-the-Hill. It was not until 1900 that it was brought back from the rectory garden by Professor Hewins during the rectorship of the Rev. C. O. Bartlett, and restored to its proper use.

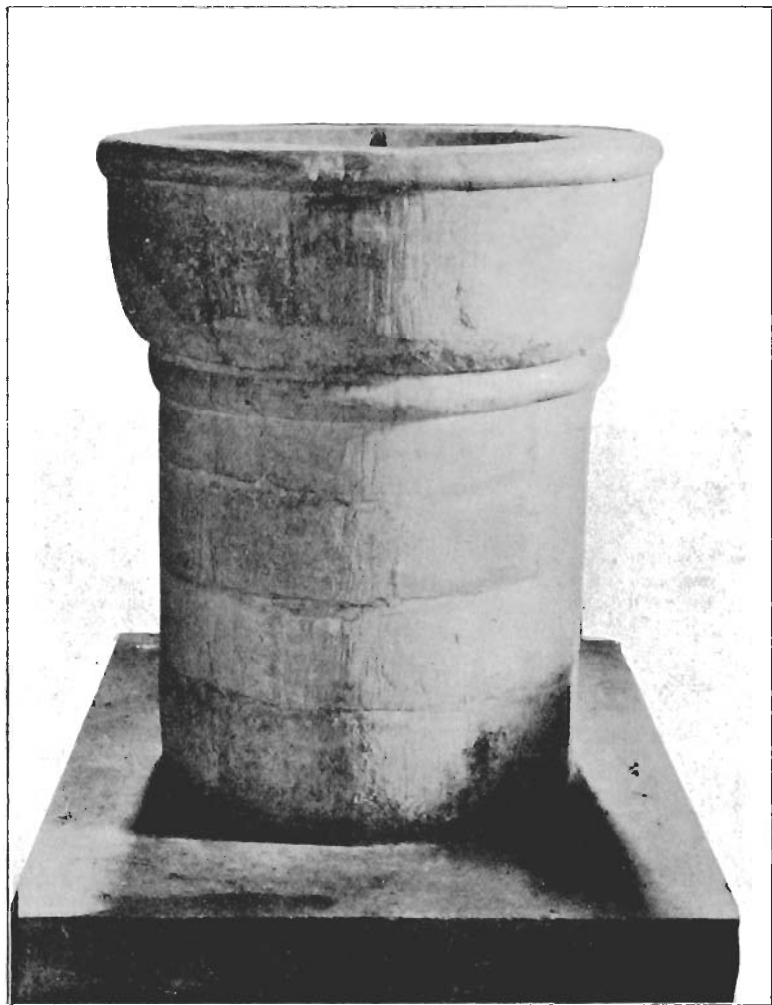
In the previous paper on "Gloucestershire Fonts"² it was stated that "the font at Upton St. Leonard was discovered at Barnwood in the early years of the nineteenth century doing duty in a farmyard, and now it stands on a circular plinth in the churchyard near to the south door of the church." Since this was written the rector and churchwardens have seen their way to replace it in the church.

Within the Church of St. Swithin, at Quinton, is a circular font with plain bands at the top and near the bottom of the bowl, standing on a piece of igneous rock which has been carved into twenty scallops, forming a most effective border.

The ancient church at Stoke Orchard, near Bishop's Cleeve, possesses a fine cylindrical font which is decorated

¹ A font, somewhat similar in size and appearance to these tub-shaped bowls, may be seen in the church at Llandewi, Glamorganshire. The dimensions are: Height=2 ft. 10 in.; depth (interior)=1 ft. 1 in.; diameter=1 ft. 11 in.; circumference (top)=7 ft. 8 in.; circumference (bottom)=5 ft. 1 in. It is illustrated in *The Jour. Brit. Arch. Ass.*, vol. v. (new series), p. 320.

² *Trans. B. and G. Arch. Soc.*, vol. xxxiv., p. 198.



BULLEY.

with interlacing arcades of plain arches and pillars, having unadorned capitals and bases. A somewhat similar font may be seen in the Church of St. Lawrence, Sandridge, Hertfordshire, which has, however, capitals and bases so well carved that there is no difficulty in placing its date in the latter part of the twelfth century.¹ The arches sculptured on the fonts at both Stoke Orchard and Sandridge² do not, as is usually the case, lie over each other in crossing, but are quite flat. This peculiarity is not frequently met with.

The font at Chedworth is another cylindrical bowl, but not so well formed as the one at Stoke Orchard, as the circumference round the top is six inches greater than at the bottom. It has been made out of a block of local Cotswold stone, and unfortunately is painted a yellow colour. It is ornamented like the Stoke Orchard font with interlacing arcades of plain round-headed arches. The unadorned pillars possess bases but no capitals.

At the bottom of the Norman font at Cowley four chevrons are carved at equal distances, while a band of ornamentation $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. in depth encircles the top of the bowl. This band is unique in design, and consists of a series of triangles. Each triangle contains two rudely-shaped lozenges fastened together near the apex of the triangle. The design is curious and not altogether unpleasing, but it does not appear to have been repeated elsewhere. It was probably found somewhat difficult to insert two lozenges in an equilateral triangle in a symmetrical manner.

The circular Norman bowls at Brockworth, Bulley, Marston Sicca, and Owlpen are all unadorned, with the exception of a simple battlemented pattern round the base of the last-named bowl. This font was used as a water-trough for a long period, but it has been restored recently and is now

¹ The font at Sandridge is illustrated in Paley's *Baptismal Fonts*.

² The font at Sandridge is adorned with eighteen arches, and the one at Stoke Orchard with sixteen. The height of the two fonts differs only by two inches, and the one at Stoke Orchard is slightly the smaller.

placed in a baptistery, mounted on a new circular pedestal, plinth, and step.

The circular bowl at Lasborough stands on its original circular pillar, having a roll at the top and bottom. For many years the font was thrown out of the church, and in 1903 the Rector (Rev. D. Kitcat) gave it to the Rev. A. W. Douglas, Rector of Witcombe. In 1908 a short account of Witcombe Church was published in the *Gloucester Journal*, mentioning the font. The Rev. D. Kitcat's successor at Lasborough read this account, and drew the attention of the Patron (Colonel Holford) to the transfer, and after considerable correspondence the font was returned and again placed in Lasborough Church.¹ A replica of the font was made of pea-grit stone by Messrs. Martin, of Cheltenham, and presented to Witcombe Church by Colonel Holford, which was dedicated on the 8th August, 1909.

¹ Lasborough Church was rebuilt in 1861.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE FONTS.

(c) NORMAN.

Rectangular Bowls.

C=Circumference. H=Height. D=Depth. R=Rim. Diam.=Diameter. Ext.=Exterior. Int.=Interior.

	BOWL.	PEDESTAL.	REFERENCES.	REMARKS.
STOKE GIFFORD (St. Michael).	Plain cushion capital with one scallop on each face (painted). D. Ext.=1 ft. $4\frac{1}{2}$ in., D. Int.= $8\frac{3}{4}$ in., Int. (top)=1 ft. 7 in. by 1 ft. 8 in., (bottom)=1 ft. $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. by 1 ft. $4\frac{1}{2}$ in., R= $2\frac{1}{4}$ in.	Cylinder: C=5 ft. 5 in. Only a portion of pedestal is now visible, as the remaining portion is built into the wall. The shaft stands on one circular-moulded step (painted green). D= $9\frac{1}{2}$ in.	This font is partially built into the north wall of north aisle under a window. This was probably done in the eighteenth century, when drastic alterations were made in the church, viz. the whole of the north arcade was removed and Egyptian columns erected in its place.

	BOWL.	PEDESTAL.	REFERENCES.	REMARKS.
		<i>Cylindrical Bowls.</i>		
BLEADINGTON (St. Leonard).	Plain tub-shaped. D. Ext.=2 ft. 2½ in., D. Int.=1 ft. 4 in., Diam. =2 ft. 3 in. R=3¼ in., C (top)=8 ft. 4 in., C (bottom)=7 ft. 6 in.	Modern octagonal base standing on an octa- gonal step.	<i>Bristol and Glouc. Trans.</i> , vii. 82.	This fine tub-shaped bowl was probably placed in the church at the date of the consecration of the original Norman church in the twelfth century.
BROCKWORTH (St. George).	Plain circular bowl. D. Ext.=1 ft. 7 in., D. Int. =1 ft. 2 in., Diam.= 1 ft. 11¼ in., R=3½ in., C (top)=7 ft. 10½ in., C (bottom)=7 ft. 3 in. Bowl chamfered down to C=6 ft. 7½ in., with a roll at top and bottom of bowl.	The bowl stands on a circular plinth. D= .9 in., C=7 ft. 3½ in. Each face of the octa- gonal step: 1 ft. 7 in. by 1 ft. 1½ in.	<i>Bristol and Glouc. Trans.</i> , vii. 166.	The bowl was made for the original Norman church. It is now painted yellow.

BULLEY
(St. Michael).

Plain circular bowl with roll at top and bottom. D. Ext.=1 ft. 2½ in., D. Int.=10½ in., Diam.=2 ft. 1 in., R=4¾ in., C (top)=8 ft. 9 in., C (bottom)=6 ft. 11½ in.

Heavy cylindrical shaft: H=2 ft. 1½ in., C=6 ft. 11½ in., standing on modern rectangular plinth.

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The pedestal of this font is too heavy in appearance.

CHEDWORTH
(St. Andrew).

Cylinder, ornamented with 16 pillars carved in low relief having bases but no capitals, with plain interlacing, round-headed arches. Above is plain narrow band (1¾ in.) and a roll (1 in.). D. Ext.=1 ft. 11 in., D. Int.=1 ft. 2 in., Diam.=1 ft. 10 in., R=4½ in., C (top)=7 ft. 10½ in., C (bottom)=7 ft. 4¾ in.

The bowl stands on a modern chamfered plinth and a modern step.

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The font is made of local Cotswold stone, and except a small portion has been painted yellow. The rim has been repaired where the lock and staples were inserted.

Cylindrical Bowls (continued).

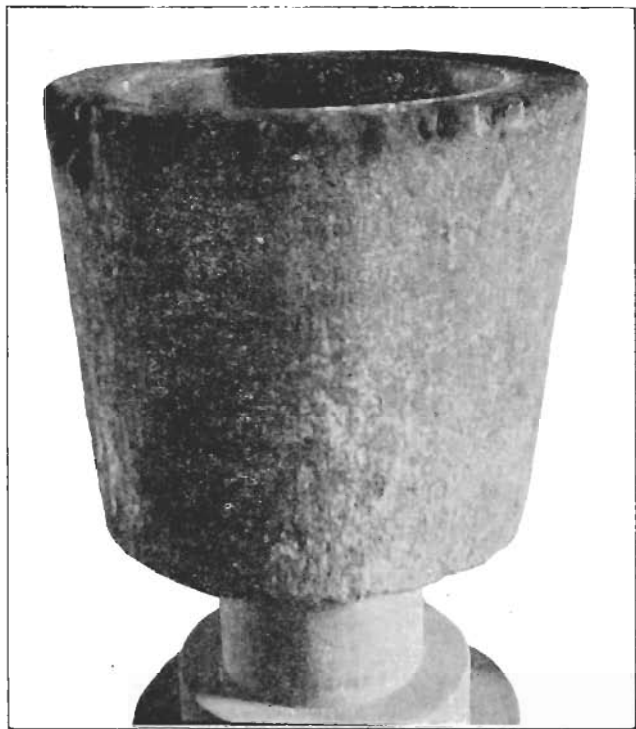
	BOWL.	PEDESTAL.	REFERENCES.	REMARKS.
COLN ROGERS (St. Andrew).	Plain tub-shaped. D. Ext.=2 ft. 0 $\frac{1}{2}$ in., D. Int.=1 ft. 1 in., Diam.=2 ft. 1 in., R=3 in., C (top)=8 ft. 0 $\frac{1}{2}$ in., C (bottom)=6 ft. 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.	The plinth is of a later date and is an octagon composed of eight scallops. At a still later date corners have been added, giving it the appearance of a rectangular base.	The bowl is made of local Cotswold stone.
COLN ST. DENNIS (St. James).	Plain tub-shaped, but at a later date the lower portion was chamfered into eight roughly-shaped scallops to fit on an octagonal pedestal. D. Ext.=1 ft. 6 in., D. Int.=1 ft. 0 $\frac{1}{2}$ in., Diam.=1 ft. 9 in., R=2 $\frac{1}{2}$ in., C (top)=6 ft. 9 in.	Octagonal pillar with moulded top (2 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.) and moulded base (7 in.). Each face=10 in. by 6 in.	The bowl is made of local Cotswold stone.



STOKE GIFFORD,



MARSTON SICCA.



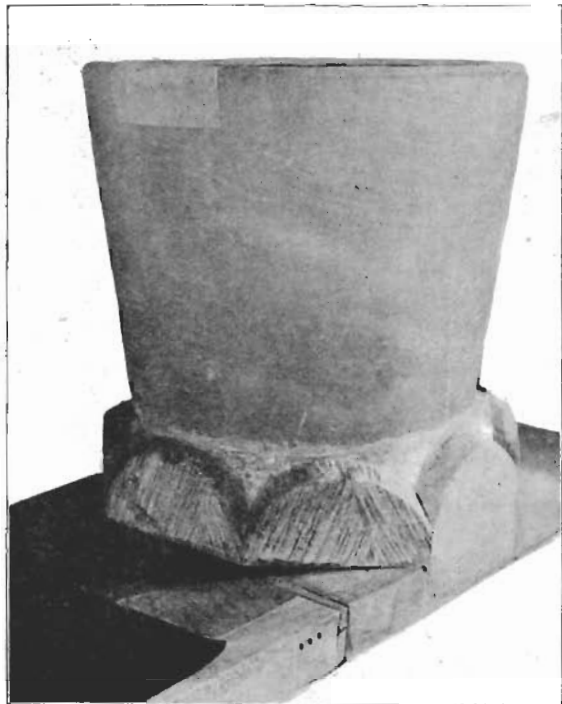
WILLERSEY.



BLINGTON.



NOTGROVE.



COLN ROGERS.



BROCKWORTH.



HASFIELD.



COLN ST. DENNIS.



STOKE ORCHARD.



CHEDWORTH.



QUINTON.



WINSON.



OWLPEN.



LASBOROUGH.



COWLEY.

COWLEY
(St. Mary).

Circular bowl with band of ornamentation ($4\frac{1}{2}$ in.). D. Ext.=1 ft. 2 in., D. Int.=8 in., R= $2\frac{1}{4}$ in., Diam.=1 ft. $11\frac{1}{2}$ in., C (top)=7 ft. 4 in., C (bottom)=3 ft. 2 in. At the bottom of bowl are four chevrons (5 in.) placed opposite each other.

Modern octagonal pillar with moulded base (1 ft. 11 in.) with modern rectangular plinth and step.

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The band of ornamentation round the top of the bowl is unique in design, and consists of a series of triangles. Each triangle contains two rudely-shaped lozenges fastened together near the apex of the triangle.

HASFIELD
(St. Peter).

Plain tub-shaped. D. Ext.=1 ft. 5 in., D. Int.=1 ft. $0\frac{3}{4}$ in., R= $3\frac{3}{4}$ in., Diam.=1 ft. $8\frac{3}{4}$ in., C (top)=7 ft. 5 in., C (bottom)=5 ft. 8 in.

Rectangular plinth (1 ft. 11 in. by 8 in.) with chamfered edge and front two corners chamfered off.

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The deep plinth is an effective way for mounting these tub-shaped fonts.

Cylindrical Bowls (continued).

	BOWL.	PEDESTAL.	REFERENCES.	REMARKS.
LASBOROUGH (St. Mary).	Plain circular bowl. D. Ext.=1 ft. 3 in., D. Int. =9½ in., Diam.=1 ft. 9 in., R=3½ in., C (top) =7 ft. 3 in., C (bottom) =4 ft. 9 in.	Circular pillar with roll at top and bottom. H=1 ft. 4 in., C=4 ft. 9 in., stands on rect- angular chamfered plinth=1 ft. 9¼ in. by 4 in.	For many years this font had been thrown out of the church, and in 1903 the Rector of Lasborough gave the font to the Rector of Witcombe. In 1909 the font was again re- moved from Witcombe Church to Lasborough Church, and Colonel Holford presented a replica of the font to Witcombe, which was dedicated on 8th Aug., 1909.

<p>MARSTON SICCA (St. James the Great).</p>	<p>Plain circular bowl. D. Ext.=1 ft. 4 in., D. Int.=10 in., Diam.=1 ft. 8 in., R=3$\frac{3}{4}$ in., C=7 ft. 2$\frac{1}{4}$ in.</p>	<p>The original pedestal is lost and the bowl now stands on an octagonal shaft, adorned with plain niches. Each face=1 ft. 10 in. by 8 in.</p>	<p>....</p>	<p>The bowl is at present painted.</p>
<p>NOTGROVE (St. Bartholomew).</p>	<p>Tub-shaped, with plain band at top and cable ornament (3$\frac{3}{4}$ in.). D. Ext.=2 ft. 0$\frac{1}{4}$ in., D. Int.=11$\frac{1}{2}$ in., R=5$\frac{1}{4}$ in., C (top)=7 ft. 10 in., C (bottom)=6 ft. 5$\frac{1}{2}$ in.</p>	<p>Octagonal base (each face=11$\frac{1}{2}$ in. by 7 in.) stands on rectangular plinth (2 ft. 6 in. by 5 in.) placed on a modern step.</p>	<p><i>Bristol and Glouc. Trans.</i>, vii. 22.</p>	<p>This is one of the best tub-shaped bowls in the county.</p>
<p>QUINTON (St. Swithin).</p>	<p>Circular bowl with a plain band round top and another near the bottom. Bowl rests on a border of 20 scallops. D. Ext.=1 ft. 8 in., D. Int.=1 ft., Diam.=2 ft. 8$\frac{1}{2}$ in., R=3$\frac{1}{2}$ to 4$\frac{1}{4}$ in., C (top)=8 ft. 8 in., C (bottom)=8 ft. 2 in.</p>	<p>Circular : H=1 ft. 0$\frac{1}{2}$ in. A roll (2 in.) divides it into two portions. The upper part has C=5 ft. 8$\frac{1}{2}$ in., and the lower has C=6 ft. 7 in. Circular base, H=6 in., C=9 ft. 6 in. Circular step, H=4$\frac{1}{2}$ in., C=14 ft. 8 in.</p>	<p>....</p>	<p>The scalloped border on which the bowl rests is a red igneous stone.</p>

Cylindrical Bowls (continued).

	BOWL.	PEDESTAL.	REFERENCES.	REMARKS.
STOKE ORCHARD (Chapel of Ease to Bishop's Cleeve).	Cylinder, ornamented with 16 pillars, carved in low relief, having plain capitals and bases with interlacing round-headed arches. Above is a narrow band ($1\frac{1}{4}$ in.), D. Ext.=1 ft. $11\frac{1}{2}$ in., D. Int.=10 in., Diam.= 1 ft. $8\frac{3}{4}$ in., R= $2\frac{3}{4}$ in., C =6 ft. $11\frac{1}{2}$ in.	The bowl stands on a circular plinth, H=8 in., C=8 ft. 1 in. Circular step, H= $5\frac{1}{2}$ in., C=12 ft. $9\frac{1}{2}$ in.	<i>Bristol and Glouc.</i> <i>Trans.</i> , xiv. 202

WILLERSEY
(St. Peter).

Plain tub-shaped bowl.
D. Ext.=2 ft. 0 $\frac{3}{4}$ in., D.
Int.=11 in., R=4 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.,
Diam.=1 ft. 8 in., C
(top)=7 ft. 1 in., C
(bottom)=6 ft. 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.

Modern pillar, H=4 in.
with circular modern
base and plinth.

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For 59 years (1841 to 1900) the font was turned out of the church to make way for a brand new font. This was the gift of the Rev. Dr. Warneford, Rector of Bourton-on-the-Hill. The old font was brought back from the rectory garden in 1900 by Prof. Hewin during the rectorship of the Rev. C. O. Bartlett and restored to its proper use.

WINSON
(St. Michael).

Plain tub-shaped bowl.
D. Ext.=1 ft. 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ in., D.
Int.=1 ft. 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ in., Diam.
=1 ft. 11 in., R=3 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.,
C (top)=7 ft. 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ in., C
(bottom)=7 ft. 3 in.

Modern pillar, consist-
ing of four attached
circular shafts with
circular capitals and
bases, standing in
modern rectangular
plinth and modern
step.

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