

The St. Michael chalice of 1684

A short historical article this month. In “A History of the County of Stafford: Volume 14, Lichfield” we read the following in the section devoted to St. Michael’s church in Lichfield.

....a silver-gilt chalice and paten of 1684 were acquired. They were sold (by the Church Wardens) with a pewter flagon and plates in 1852 to a Birmingham firm in part payment for a new set of plate. The chalice and paten of 1684 were bought the same year by St. Clement’s, Oxford.

Clearly this was later regretted and we read.

... attempts in 1892 and 1923 to recover them for St. Michael’s were unsuccessful.

And there I might have left the matter, perhaps as a sort of parable on the foolishness of Church Wardens, and the futility of the pursuit of modernity, but for the all-seeing eye of Google. A quick search of “chalice / St Clements / Oxford” let me to “An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in the City of Oxford” from 1929 in which I found the rather poor photograph of the 1684 chalice shown below. It is rather fuzzy, but I think the motif is clear enough – the winged archangel trampling over the devil at his feet. I can’t read the caption, so if any reader can enlighten me on this I would be grateful. The question arises as to where the chalice and its associated paten are now. To find the answer to this would I am afraid take more than a quick Google search. Perhaps one day....

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