

UPTON WARREN

A Numerical Puzzle.

5 miles from Droitwich, just beyond Webb's Garden Centre and west of A38.
Map Reference: O.S. map 150 (1: 50,000); 930675.



The Reverend Hooper, for 52 years Rector of the Church of St Michael until his death aged 78 in 1888, was a numerologist and a great exponent of symbolism. His marble cross, atop 3 granite steps, is situated beside the south wall of the church. Facing the path are carved the Christian symbol of a fish and the Latin '*carpe diem*', (enjoy the moment). The crostic, however, which puzzles everyone, is at the back of the cross. I am indebted to Mike Wall for passing on an article by Vivian Bird which provides an explanation. Apparently the Rev. Hooper, in an obscure book, explained that the middle letter of the Greek word for fish, '*has the numerical value of 9, or the square of 3, the number of the Trinity, thus stamping the superlative of the Trinity on the central point of the Cross ... 18 is the number of the Beast*'. He went on to say that since 6 additions on the pedestal (3 down, 2 diagonal and the 3 sixes across) add up to 18, he believed that '*the Cross, or the Kingdom of Christ, tramples on the darker pedestal of his adversary the Devil*'. With logic such as this and the fanaticism to design his own headstone, one wonders if his parishioners found the Rev. Hooper's sermons as obscure as all this might suggest!

