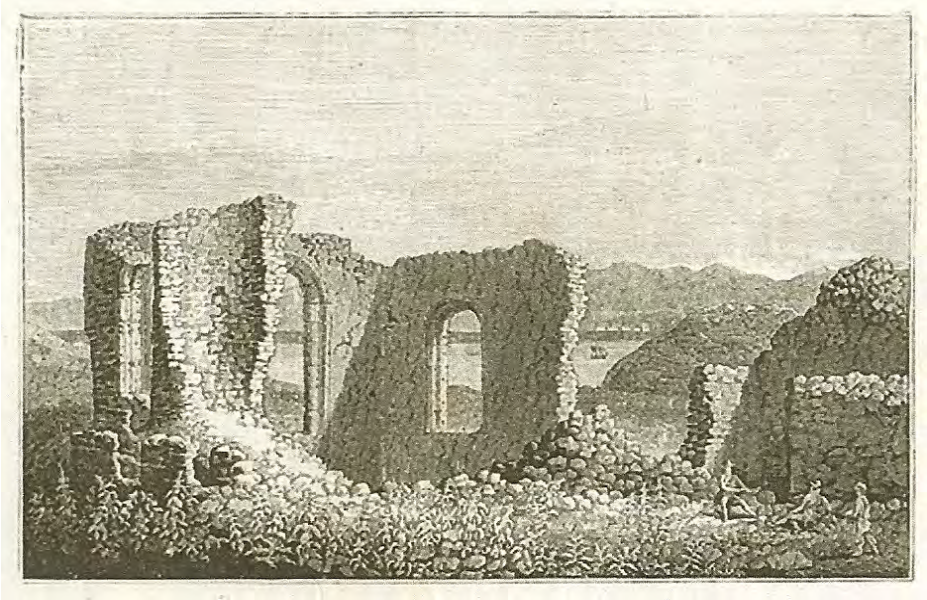
Saint Dwynwen's Church, Ynys Llanddwyn



Church from West: *Beauties of Cambria*, H.Hughes 1823

Introduction

Removal of turf, fallen stone and sand from Saint Dwynwen's Church and its churchyard was undertaken by Grosvenor Construction in August and September 2012. The arch and hood-mould of the east window of the chancel, which had fallen in the mid-1950s, was reassembled from the fallen stones with the replacement of those stones either missing or damaged in the fall. In addition, parts of the adjoining stonework and south east corner were rebuilt using stones recovered from the clearance of the church in order to provide structural stability. The final part of the programme consisted of repointing and recapping of the tops of the walls, and the installation of geotextile membrane and cockle shells within the church. The focus of this report is on the excavations and on certain features unearthed by the process of removing turf, modern debris and wind-blown sand, and was partially dependant on trial excavations in the chancel and north transept carried out by SLR Global Environmental Solutions in January 2012. Previous work had been completed in 1995 and consisted of partial rebuilding of the east wall of the chancel and north wall of the nave and comprehensive repointing of the walls at that time visible with cementitious mortar.

The 2012 project formed part of the Mona Antiqua Heritage Tourism Project funded by Cadw (Heritage Tourism Project), the European Regional Development Fund, Welsh Government Mon a Menai scheme and by Anglesey County Council. The intention was to improve the appearance and presentation as part of the enhancement, understanding and appreciation of their historic significance by visitors to the island.

Methodology

The guidelines for the contract were provided by Menter Mon in the form of tender instructions and information, briefly outlining the historical background of the church and Ynys Llanddwyn and giving a description both of the proposed work to the church and to Merddyn Cil. (The proposed work on Merddyn Cil will now take place after the completion of the conservation of the church.) Trial excavations in the centre of the chancel and across the north wall of the north transept had been carried out by SLR Global Environmental Solutions in 2011 on behalf of Menter Mon. The findings of these excavations contributed towards the programme of subsequent clearance, undertaken by Grosvenor Construction with the assistance of volunteers and staff of the Countryside Council for Wales. It also included a photographic interpretation of the elevations of nave and aerial views of the church. Many of the details of the church were either obscured or entirely concealed by turf, wind-blown sand and comparatively modern falls of stone.

The east gable of the church had been partially rebuilt in 1991 but the opportunity for reinstatement of the east window, apart from its internal springers, had not been taken. Most, if not all, of the arch and hood mould stones had been placed in the chancel and could be identified from black and white photographs taken before the collapse of the arch in the mid-1950s. These could be replaced in their original positions in the east wall with the addition of a single internal voussoir and three sections of the hood mould, the missing stones having either fractured in the collapse or been mislaid since the 1950s. An upright stone beneath the south springer of the window was also replaced since it did not provide a reliable support. This stone was part of the earlier rebuild which had been laid as random rubble in cementitious mortar with metal ties and clips. This was partly dismantled to a firm base and built back up in rough coursing with the addition of quoins to the south corner of the chancel using stone blocks found in clearance of the church. Sufficient stone was then applied over the top of the arch to secure it in place. Templates were traced from the voussoirs and recreated in a timber former which, with some minor adjustments, provided the profile for the window.

Stripping of turf and clearly modern deposits from the interior and immediate perimeter of the church was regarded as the first stage, followed by clearance of turf and topsoil from the encircling churchyard and the erection of scaffolding for centring of the east window and the rebuild of its arch and adjoining masonry. The final stage consisted of repointing newly exposed stonework and soft-bedding wall tops for the final presentation of the church. The clearance was largely by machine, turf, topsoil and discarded stone being removed to the nearest of the 18th.century enclosures to the north east of the site to await transport to the mainland. Dressed sandstone was screened for potential reuse in rebuilding of parts of the east gable and any moulded components, such as door and window jambs, were reserved for recording and possible display. Turf and topsoil were stripped from the interior of the church beginning at the east end of the chancel and extended west to the

crossing and transepts, and nave, exiting over the area of the porch which provided a convenient gap in the walls. The porch was partly excavated by hand because of its confined space and the prospect of features surviving below the modern ground surface.

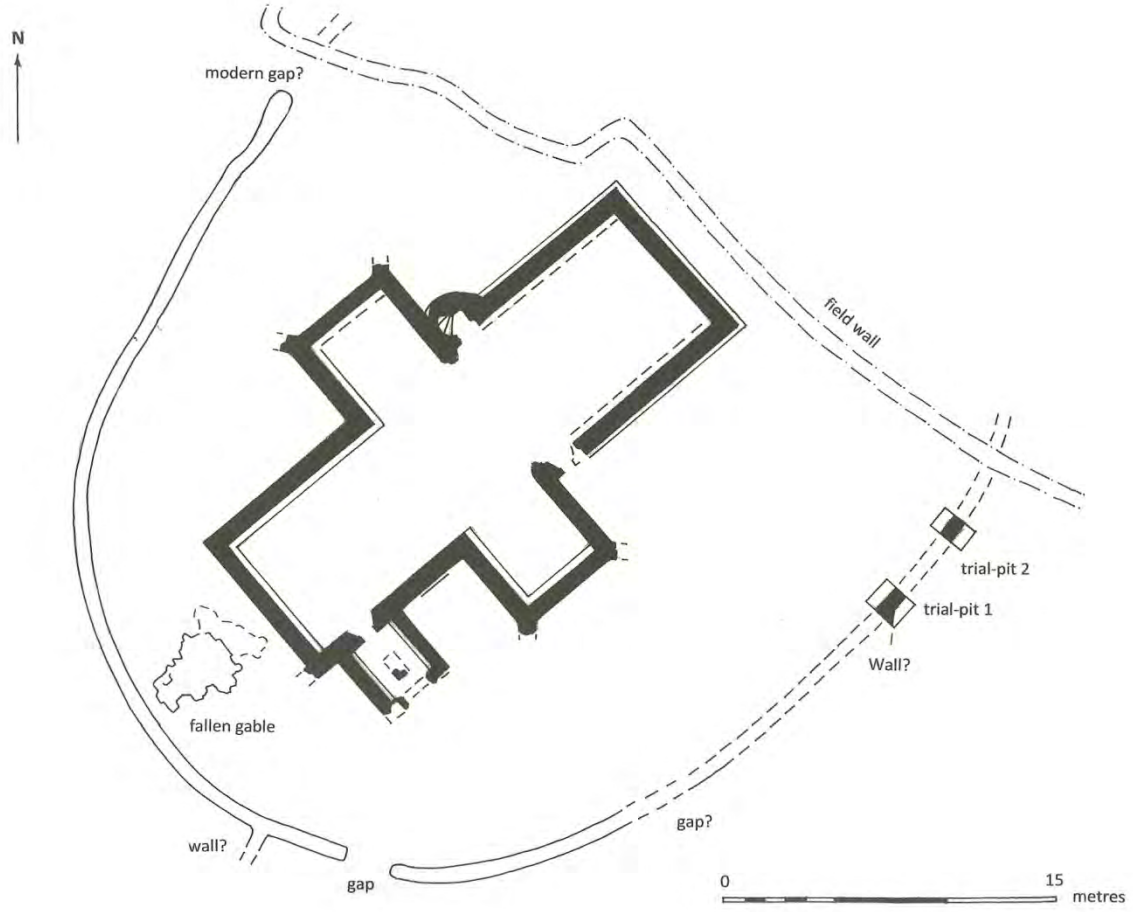


Fig.1: Plan of Church and Churchyard

Stripping of turf from the exterior was initially confined to a distance of one metre away from the base of the church walls except where there was a combination of fallen stone and sand in the angles of the transepts with the chancel and between the south transept and the porch. This was then extended in an anticlockwise direction to the remainder of the enclosure, grading the desired level to expose the internal face of the churchyard wall without disturbing the potential for underlying archaeology. One new feature was revealed, part of the west gable of the nave having fallen and been embedded en masse complete with patches of its internal wall plaster. Disarticulated human bone was noted in only two places, in both cases against the west walls of the transepts possibly indicating redeposition, and left undisturbed.

The intention was to maintain a consistent level throughout the interior of the church, removing only turf, topsoil and fallen stone to prepare a base for a geotextile membrane,

hardcore and cockle shells. The comparatively high floor at the west end of the nave meant, however, that there was a 0.4m. fall from this point to the west end of the chancel and a 0.6m. fall - based on the SLR trial excavation - to the far end of the chancel. Establishing a horizontal level throughout the church would have meant raising the ground at the east end of the chancel, partly obscuring newly rediscovered features such as the chancel arch bases and the bottom of the stair, and contradicting the original fall of the floor from nave to chancel. Sand cleared from the lower, east end of the nave was therefore raked back to give a more gradual west to east slope for the base, reflecting the profile of the original floor.

Finds consisted of comparatively modern fragments of pottery, bottle glass and clay-pipe stems, as well as fragments of roof-slates and two unidentified lead objects, which were collected from both within the fallen stone and from the turf, topsoil and upper part of the wind-blown sand. A variety of dressed stone (Figs. 5-7) was recovered from within the debris, especially from that overlying the south arch of the chancel and east wall of the south transept, and from the infill of the porch, a variety of dressed stone was recovered. This included roughly oblong blocks, which were earmarked for reuse in the rebuilding of the south east corner of the chancel, and parts of rebated and splayed door jambs. In addition, there was a triangular block of stone which may have formed the apex of a roof gable, perhaps supporting a cross, and a fragment of finely carved mudstone. Two more pieces were recovered from the spoil-heap, but at this stage it is uncertain whether this was part of a statue, but the carving resembles folds of a robe.

Description

The church is at NGR SH 38691 62759 near the centre of Ynys Llanddwyn, a tidal island of rocky outcrops and small, sandy coves extending 1km. out into Caernarfon Bay. It is shielded on its west and, to a lesser extent, its east side by these outcrops and by undulating sand. The drift consists of glacial tills over pillow lava and jasper formations and the general trend is a gradual fall from south to north where eight roughly rectangular fields occupy the lower ground. The nearest of these early 19th.century fields has cut through the churchyard wall so that it now has a roughly D-shaped form. The axis of the church is from south west to north east, an unusual alignment which may reflect the direction of the prevailing wind rather than a bias towards a pre-existing structure or geology, although bedrock was exposed at the thresholds of the south doorway into the chancel and outer door into the porch. It is one of several archaeological features and buildings on the island, including at least four wells or springs – the location and identification of which are briefly discussed in Appendix 1 - an L-shaped earthwork described in some sources as ‘Llanddwyn Abbey’ - probably a house associated with Bangor Cathedral - a range of 19th.century cottages, a boat house and a lighthouse, as well as modern stone crosses and structures associated with its maritime role. A stone causeway links the south west end of the island with Ynys y Cranc, but a similar connection to the mainland, built at the end of the 19th.century, has been washed away by the sea.

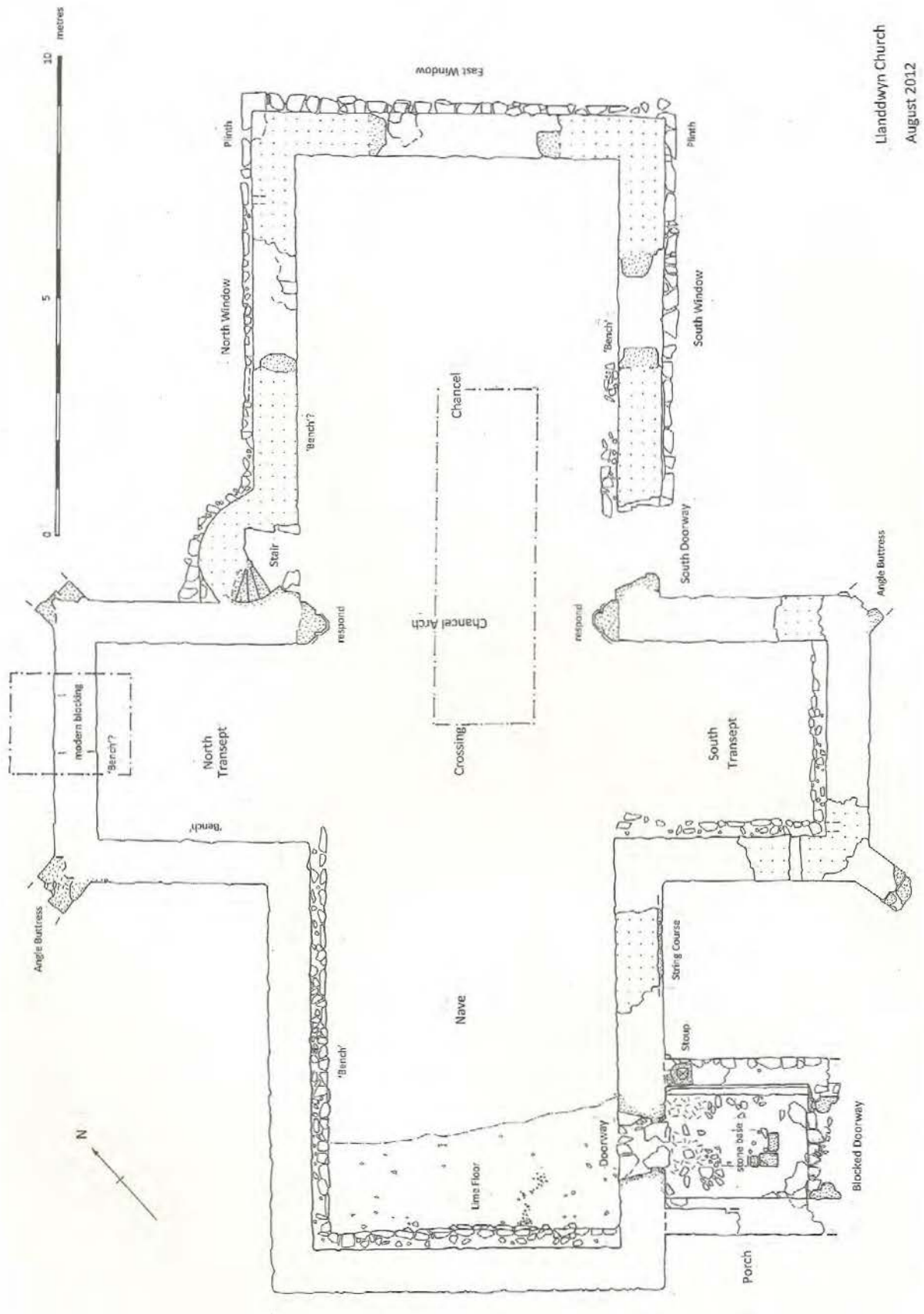


Fig.2: Plan of Church

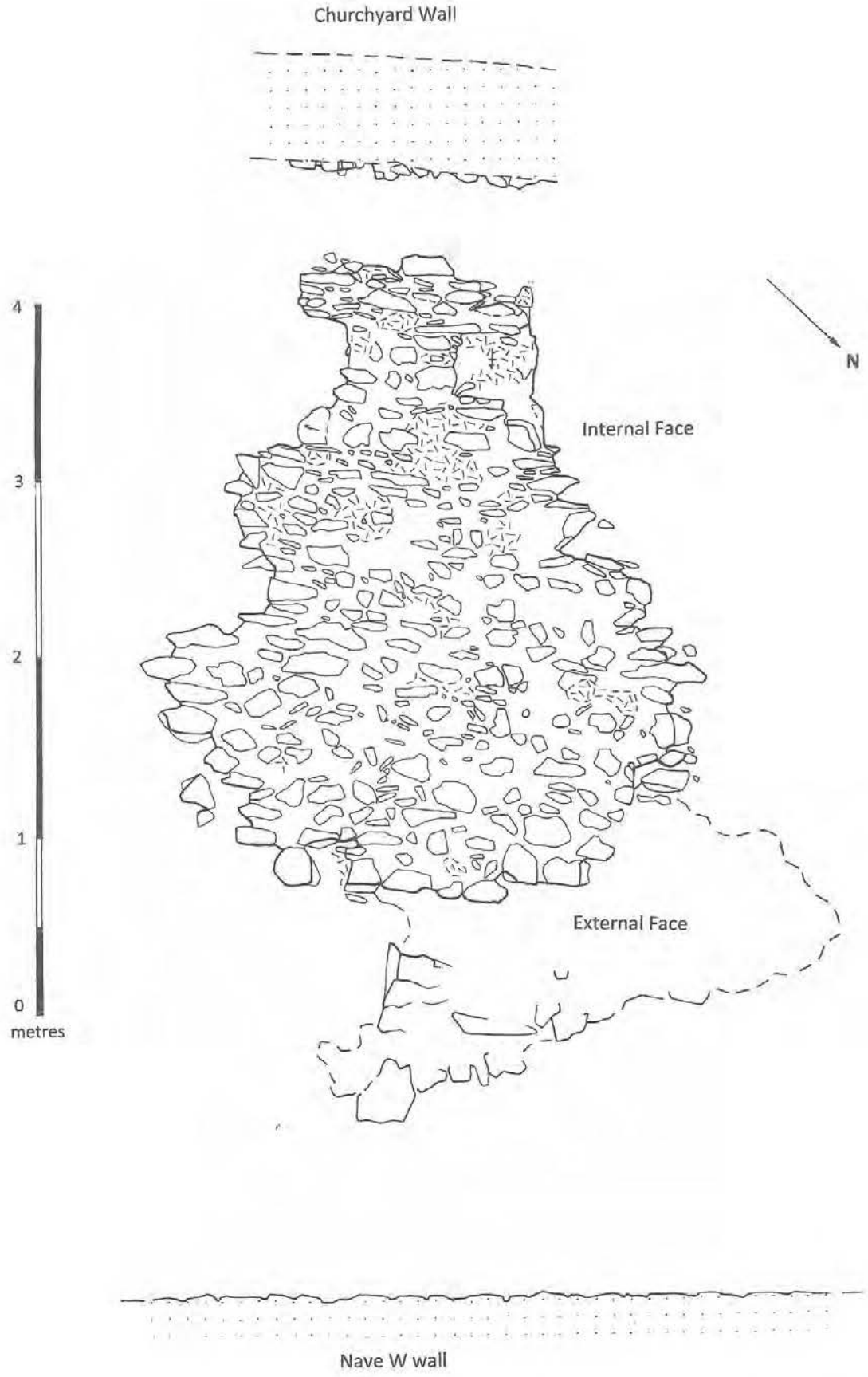


Fig.3: Churchyard: Fallen W Wall of Nave

The church is dedicated to Dwynwen, traditionally one of the daughters of the Irish-Welsh Brychan Brycheiniog who reigned in what became Brycheiniog (Breconshire) in the mid 5th.century. The association with Dwynwen dates from at least the 14th. century, most notably in a poem 'Prayer to Saint Dwynwen' or *Galw ar Ddwynen*, in which Dafydd ap Gwilym (*fl.* 1340-1370) describes the church choir filled with candles. The church was a place of pilgrimage, confirmed in cywyddau written by Hywel ap Rheinallt and 'Syr' Dafydd ap Trefor in the last quarter of the 15th. century. Both refer to her church, her statue and to gifts of gold or silver offerings, including 'crooked coins', for her coffer and to her nearby holy well. According to William of Worcester, in his *Itinerarium* of 1478, Dwynwen was buried in her chapel.

The RCAHMW date the chancel and transepts to the early 16th.century and assumes the nave to be earlier in construction, although no date is suggested; the recent exposure of relatively simple chamfered jambs to the inner doorway of the porch, in contrast to the more elaborate mouldings of the outer doorway (Fig.5), may assist dating. The mouldings of the chancel arch match those in the same position at Clynnog and Llaneilian, both dated by the RCAHMW to the late 15th. century. Clynnog held lands in Menai, including the township of Clynnog Fechan and half Dwyran, known as Dwyran Beuno and Tre'r-dryw, as well as the churches of Llangeinwen and Llangaffo. The former *clas* of Clynnog Fawr had become a collegiate church served by secular canons and was especially endowed with lands and churches, although by 1535 the land may have been sold to pay for the rebuilding of the church. (Carr, p.274)

Llanddwyn is not mentioned in the Norwich taxation of 1284 of the 1291 taxation, although it is listed in the extent of the Bishop of Bangor in 1306 where seven individuals owned eight messuages *sine terra* (without land). Davidson suggests this may have been because of the encroachment of sand, a factor attributed to the decline of the planted town of Newborough. (Soulsby, p.195) Whatever the threat to agriculture posed by wind-blown sand there is little doubt that Llanddwyn church was a valuable benefice, its income coming almost entirely from pilgrims. In 1379 the rector contributed ten shillings to the clerical poll-tax, the same sum as the archdeacon, the provost of Caergybi and the prior of Penmon. (Carr, p. 277) According to Browne-Willis, in his history of Bangor Cathedral, Richard Kyffin, dean of Bangor (c1480-1502) – 'the black dean' - built a house on the island; the rectangular earthworks to the south west of the church may represent this prebendary rather than the so-called 'Llanddwyn Abbey' shown on 19th. century Ordnance Survey maps. He also notes that, with the exception of this building 'and some parts of the church and a warren house' all the rest of the parish was 'swallowed up by the sea.' If this was the case, and the church was severely damaged – by sea or sand – it is may have been necessary to rebuild the chancel, which appears to date from about 1500, and possibly also rebuild, or add, the transepts. This work was aparently carried out by Kyffin using offerings to the church, although Dodd attributes work on Bangor and Clynnog, which Davidson has compared to

Llanddwyn, to Bishop Thomas Skevington and Kyffin's successor as archdeacon of Anglesey, William Glynne.

In the 1535 Valor Ecclesiasticus it was worth 20 marks (£13 6s. 8d.) and the breakdown in the tithes shows that the 'offerynges of charitable peple to the Saynt' accounted for approximately 90% of the revenue. The wealth of the church, and its cult of Saint Dwynwen, may have led to its being targeted during the Reformation, Angharad Llwyd (1780-1866) stating that the church was 'despoiled of all timber and lead, which neighbouring families converted to domestic use.' According to the Rev. Henry Rowlands (1655-1723), in his *Antiquitates* Parochiales of 1710, the roofs and timbers had gone and only the chancel still stood to an appreciable height, although much of his account is taken up with scorn for 'devout women of the lower orders who, in the madness of their superstition used to flock hither from distant places in a surprising number'. Longville Jones (*Mona Medieva*, Arch.Camb. 1846) states that away from the east end of the church the 'other portions of the edifice (were) lying as a mass of ruins'. None of the 'doorways, shafts, capitals and tombs' were to be seen and what did not lie in ruins was 'built up in the walls of the pilot's cottages.'

By the middle of the 17th. century, according to William Williams, the only part of the church which remained roofed was the porch, in which two candles should be burned on the feast of Saint Mark in recompense for the loss of a team of oxen that were lost on that day at Bodeon. (This would be on the 25th.April, the saint's day for Beuno being the 21st. of the same month and Saint Dwynwen's on the 25th. Of January). Williams adds that the porch was kept in repair by the proprietor of Bodeon, and that the practice of burning candles continued to about 1720. (Davidson) The 1742 illustration of the church from the east by the Buck brothers shows a roof on the porch, although with a very large two or four-centred south window in place of the original doorway. This seems to confirm the blocking of the doorway described in more detail below. In many respects, however, the print appears to be simplistic and unreliable in several respects. Besides the impossibility of the sea being visible as it is, the south window of the chancel is drawn in the wrong position, and the remains of a small building, which may represent Dean Kyffin's house (Arch.Camb.1879) or some other structure, has migrated to a position close to the churchyard wall. In addition, the very low plinth at the base of the east and south walls of the chancel is also applied to the east wall of the south transept, although the 2012 project found no trace of one; ruined buttresses in the print are aligned with the north south walls rather than forming angle buttresses.

In other respects, the 1742 print compares reasonably well with a view of the ruins from the north by Moses Griffith (1747-1819). Both show the shallow pitch of the roofless chancel with copings, its east window devoid of tracery, the stair tower near complete, and the west gable of the nave, although the Buck print adds a bell-cote to this gable, and gives it a steeper pitch like the south transept roof. This steep pitch was confirmed by delineation

of part of the fallen gable in clearance of the churchyard to the west of the nave. It also puts fragments of tracery in both the south and north windows of the chancel, although trefoil headed lights would have been unusual for the period, being more typical of an earlier style, such as the 14th. century nave windows at Bangor. Davidson estimates from its width that the four centred east window possessed five lights. He draws attention to pronounced quoins shown in the print at the end of the south wall of the chancel where it was joined by the south transept, arguing that the chancel was built separately. The square or segmental heads of the windows shown with triplets of round-headed lights by the Bucks in the south transept contrast with the two-centred south window in the south wall and the four-centred window in the east wall of the chancel. Presumably this fenestration was reciprocated in its twin north transept, were both of three lights, probably with simple round heads.

A very different viewpoint is taken in a later print, in 'The Beauties of Cambria', dated 1823. This shows the church from the west; the wall copings and fragments of tracery in the 18th.century illustrations are gone, and both the stonework over the north window and the west end of the chancel have collapsed. The hollow interior of the ruined stair tower is visible, as is the gable wall and part of the east wall of the south transept, and the east end of the south wall of the nave. A heap of rubble seems to occupy the area of the crossing and the north transept has been reduced to its lower courses. This print compares favourably in detail with a view of the church from the north in 1844 (Arch.Camb.1846) which shows most of the quoins of the south corner of the east gable to be missing. A similar viewpoint was chosen by Haslam (Arch.Camb.1879), by which time the upper part of the gable wall of the south transept has gone and any structures around the crossing have been reduced to tumble and low walls.

The cruciform plan of the church is unusual for Anglesey where the great majority of the churches have comparatively simple single or two-cell forms of nave and chancel, often with a continuous roof-line and sometimes with projecting chapels and porches. Ralegh Radford has attempted to equate the status of churches to their plans, arguing that mother churches had cruciform plans, parish churches two-cell plans and non-parochial chapels had only one chamber (Radford, 1963). Many mother churches, of course, did not have cruciform plans and there is little evidence that some cruciform churches, including Llanddwyn, were ever of superior status. Nor does this theory take into account the kind of complex, progressive growth such as that at Penmon and Ynys Seiriol or the reverse simplification of plans shown at Meifod, Capel Maelog and Llandrinio (Petts, p.68). Nevertheless, it is also apparent that architectural complexity was a function of the wealth of the church, generated by land holdings or patronage, and at Llanddwyn the relatively late development of the church may be related to the patronage of Bangor Cathedral. In size, it is intermediate to smaller examples at Llanallgo and Llanfechell, and the larger cruciform church of Holyhead. The chancel is 9.6m. long and 6.6m. wide - approximately the same as that at Clynnog Fawr - and disproportionately larger than the nave, which is 8.5m. long and 6.4m. wide. The transepts are almost exactly equal in area and, so far as it is possible to tell, alike in detail, although

the less fragmentary south transept has four beam or putlog holes through its south and west walls close to their junction. The holes are neither horizontally nor precisely vertical in alignment and their role is unclear.

A second feature is a stone bench 0.30 to 0.40m. high and wide apparently at the base of all the internal walls – only those of the nave could be completely cleared of later deposits - with the exception of the east walls of the transepts and chancel - which may relate to the positions of altars - and the south wall of the nave. Trial trench 2 excavated by SLR in 2011 failed to find the bench at the base of the north wall of the north transept although, after clearance of topsoil in 2012, there appeared to be clear signs of its continuing around from the base of the west wall. The deepest part of the trench was only 0.3 metres wide and it may be that the bench was misinterpreted as a slabbed floor context 206, which was left undisturbed. Where stone had fallen from the bench against the north wall of the nave it sealed, and clearly postdated, the plastered lower face of the wall. In the north west corner of the nave the bench was 0.35m. high which gradually increased to 0.50m. in the south west corner. This reflects a gradual fall in the level of the lime floor from north to south, necessitating an underpinning of rubble for a length of 1.4m. from the south wall with a distinct, soot-like stain – possibly rotted wood – intermediate to the lower rubble and upper stone.

The bench was bonded with clay, which perhaps suggests it was intended to exclude damp, although the topsoil and subsoil of the churchyard are predominately free-draining sand and this does not seem to have presented a particular problem. A third role may have been to add internal support to the walls, although with the exception of the porch they are a consistent 0.9m. thick with angle buttresses to the north and south transepts and a straight buttress to the west end of the south wall of the nave. There were also narrow benches on each of the flanking walls of the porch where the walls were 0.75m. thick, but these appear to have been integral to its construction. Fixed stone benches occur in several other Anglesey churches, such as at Llanbeulan, where they were continuous to the long walls of the nave, as well as in a far more fragmentary form at Llangwyfan and Llanfihangel Ysgeifiog, and much further afield at Llanrhychwyn, Caernarfonshire, and Llanelen and Rhosili, Glamorgan. None of them compare to those at Llanddwyn where, in total, there may have been 43 metres of stone benching - it was not possible to be absolutely certain that the alignments of stones at the base of the long walls of the chancel were stone benches. The significance of so much stone benching is unclear, but it is possible that it was related to the role of the church in pilgrimage to the island.

The walls are composed of Pre-Cambrian schist, which is freely obtained on the island, with dressings of pale yellow/brown or cream and red sandstone, sometimes with pebble inclusions, the source of which has not yet been identified. Areas of plaster have survived both within the church and as fragments of a coarse rendering, which may have been limewashed, of the exterior. Until the 2012 project little dressed stone could be seen apart

from the frames of the east and south windows and, to a lesser extent, the north window of the chancel. There was also an eroded fragment of the west arch of a window in the south wall of the south transept and a short length of a moulded string-course visible in between the south transept and the site of the porch. The string-course may have originally continued around the other walls of the nave, but these have been reduced to a height below the level of the length in the south wall. There is no trace of a string-course in either the upstanding remains of the chancel or transepts.

The volume of dressed sandstone was expanded considerably by the clearance of debris from the stair, south doorway and transepts, revealing the sandstone bases of the responds for the chancel arch, and four of the lower steps and newel of the stair, although both the threshold and the frame of the doorway are lost. The west jamb of the south doorway was also revealed, the position of the east jamb being marked only by lime mortar attached to the bedrock. The lowest stones of angle buttresses to the transepts were uncovered by stripping of turf and clearance of topsoil, all four being tied into their respective walls, but the surprise was quite how much dressed stone had survived the fall – or demolition – of the porch. Both the lower jambs of the doorways were intact, even if the side walls, which abutted the south wall of the nave, had been reduced to no more than a metre above the interior, as well as part of a holy water stoup (Fig.6) in the east wall close to the inner doorway. The stoup is facetted, but there is no drain-hole and both its face and the lower part have broken off. The outer doorway had been blocked with red sandstone, which predominates in the east half of the church, and at the centre of the porch red sandstone had again been reused to create a mortared altar or base 1.0m. long, north to south, and 0.7m. wide, but of which only three blocks and pieces of slate remained. This feature accords with the Post-Medieval use of the porch noted above. Three fragments of finely carved mudstone, two of which appear to include the folds of a robe, were recovered from the porch and spoil-heap.

Plaster survives, to varying degrees, on all of the remaining walls, as well as on the exterior of the south wall of the chancel and the south transept. Few other features were observed except for beam sockets or putlog holes in the south transept and on both sides of the north wall of the nave. In the south transept there are two pairs of holes in the south west corner, partly rendered over or blocked with stone: one pair roughly in vertical line and 1.0m. apart towards the south end of the west wall and a pair about the same distance apart, but not aligned or at the same level as those in the west wall, close to the west end of the south wall. At the east end of the interior of the north wall of the chancel there are two holes which may have originally been reciprocated in the south wall, although there are none visible in a photograph predating the fall of the east window, and this end of the south wall was rebuilt in 1991. The role of these beam sockets is not self-evident, but the upper one penetrates the thickness of the wall. 1.8 m. below this on the opposite side of the wall there is another hole and in between them a slot which may have wrapped around the exterior, north east corner of the chancel. At the west end of the wall, close to the stair

tower, there is a pair of sockets or putlog holes 0.8m. apart. Neither pair of holes is precisely vertical to one another. SLR states that there are only three such holes and describes them as beam or scaffold slots.

In the churchyard, stone debris congregated in two areas: north of the north transept, as an uneven spread of loose stones, and en masse as the fallen west gable of the nave between the nave and the churchyard wall. This now forms a distinct feature 5 metres long and 4 metres wide, the flat upper surface being the internal face of the gable with patches of white wall plaster and part of the underlying external face visible where the internal face has been lost or robbed. A pair of roughly rectangular insets in the masonry towards the churchyard wall – close to the 'top' of the gable wall and base of the pillar for the bell-cote shown in the 1742 print - may indicate the sockets of upper purlins. No trace was found of what may have been a small window shown in the 1742 print towards the centre of the gable wall. There was no indication either of buried topsoil apart from that noted at depths of 0.40 to 0.55m. below the modern level of the churchyard in two trial-pits south east of the church. These were cut through the overlying sand in order to locate the course of the enclosure wall which for about 25 metres could not be traced. Both pits indicated the quality of the stonework where it is hidden by the blanket of sand, in contrast to the greater part of the churchyard wall which consists of uneven and roughly coursed or random stone overgrown by turf. The intimation is that as sand has blown up against, and over-ridden, the churchyard wall the higher quality masonry had been buried and the upper part built up accordingly in less cohesive dry-stone.

There are at least three gaps in the churchyard wall, but it is uncertain how many of these represent original entrances. One break, at the north end of the circuit where the wall is cut by the 19th. century field wall, is probably comparatively modern since the terminal of the churchyard wall is thickened with what may be displaced stone. The churchyard wall appears to continue, at least for a short distance beyond the field wall and, perhaps, further if its lower courses are buried in sand. A faint cropmark, visible in the nearest field, suggests that as much as a third of the area of the churchyard was enclosed. Two other gaps in the wall are due south and south east of the porch, the first of these being more convincing than the second. A little way to the west of the first of them there appears to be a short length of an adjoining wall and a small part of a second wall was bonded at a forty five degree angle into the churchyard wall within trial-pit 1. (Fig.1) No bedrock was exposed in the churchyard, but it outcrops below the outer doorway into the porch and the south doorway of the chancel. Both appeared to be foot-worn and, possibly, modified to form thresholds for the doorways; how far this bedrock extends away from these places is uncertain, but it would seem reasonable to suppose that it provided the foundation for the walls.

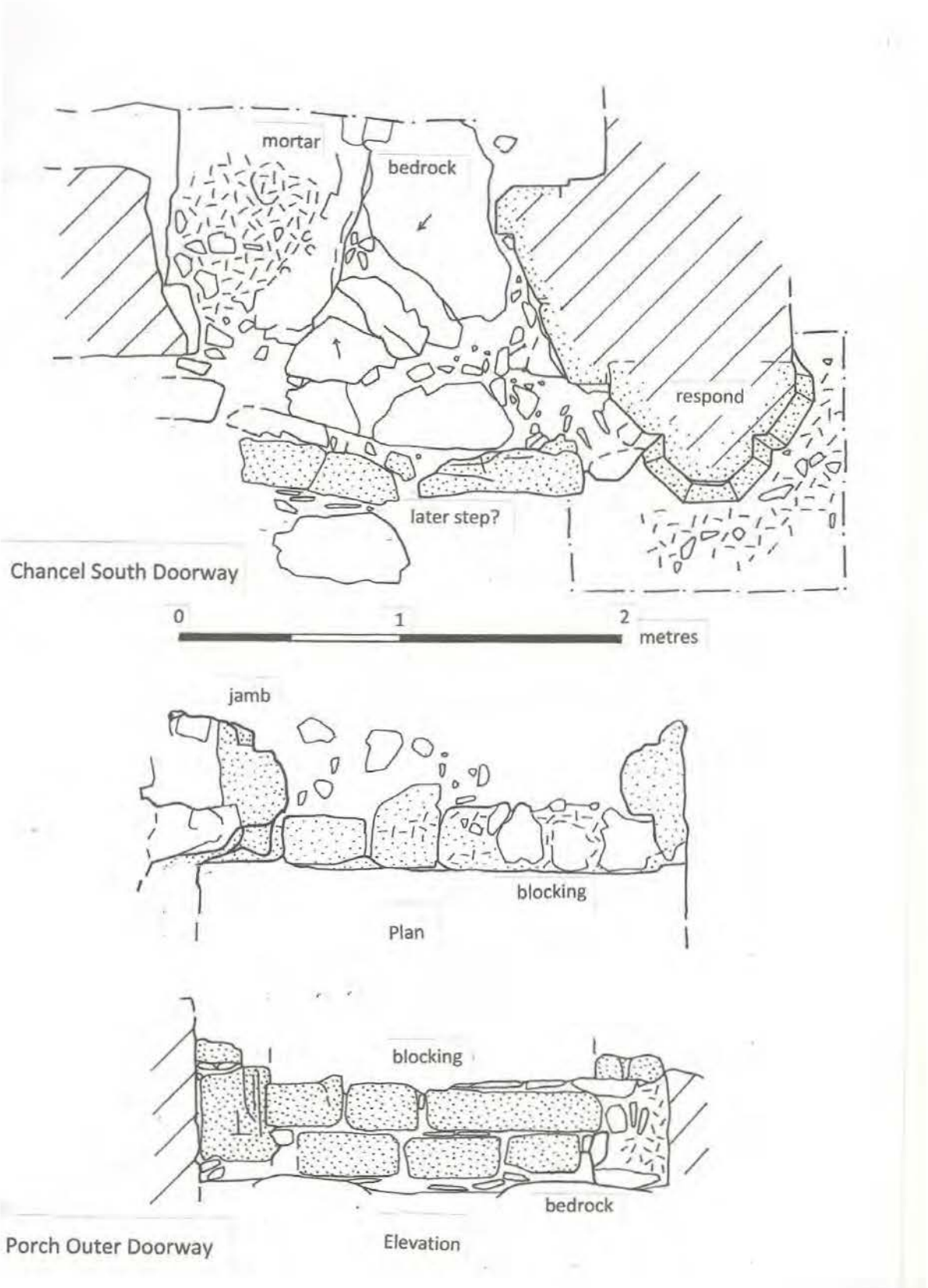


Fig.4: Doorways to Chancel and Porch

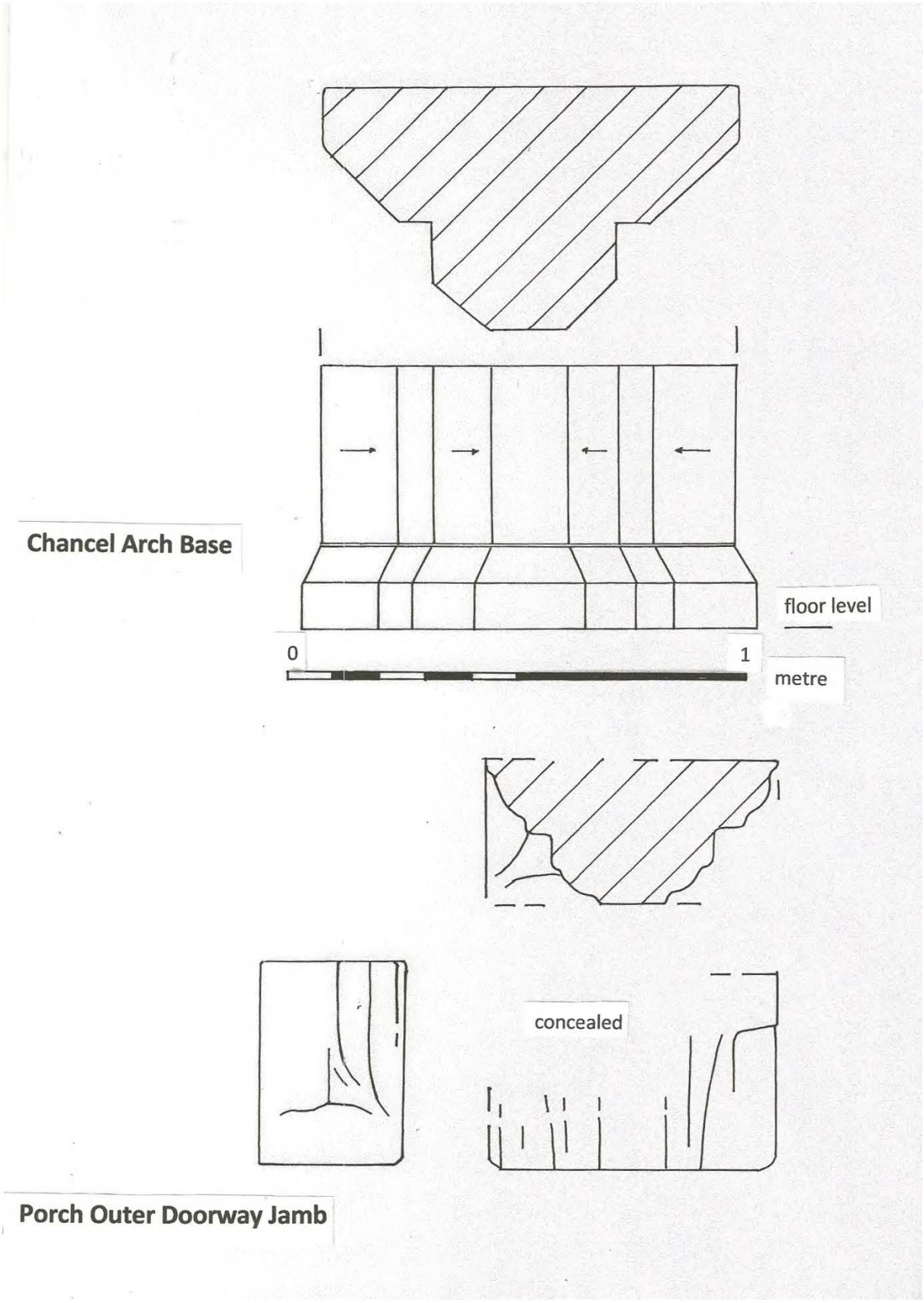
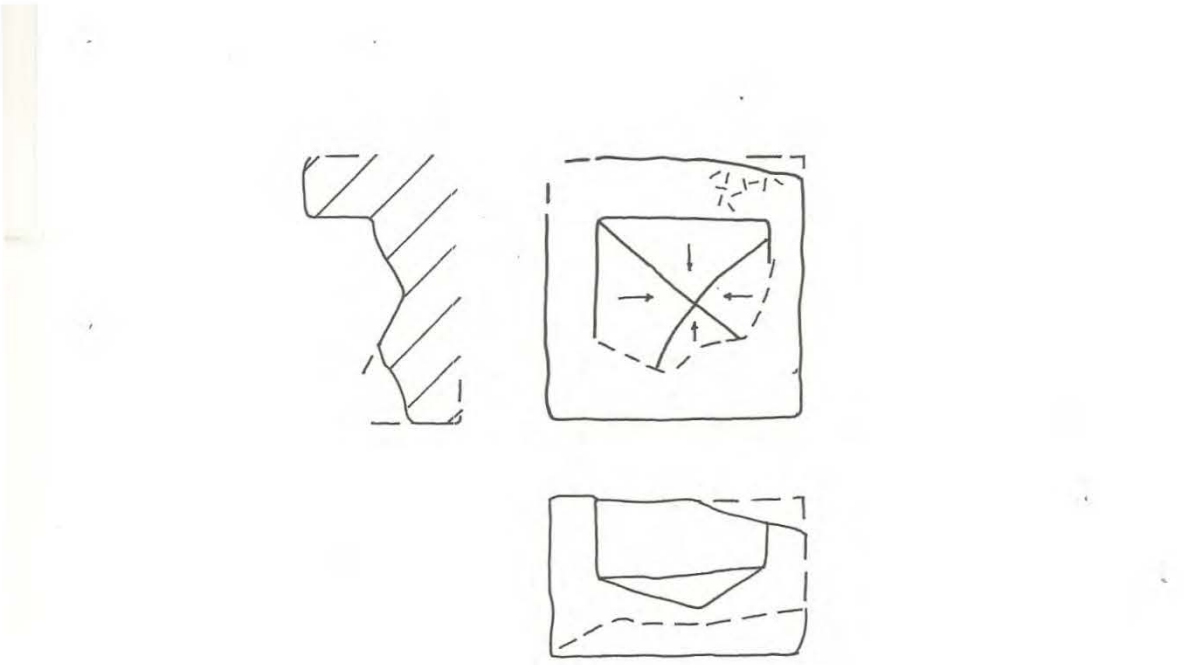
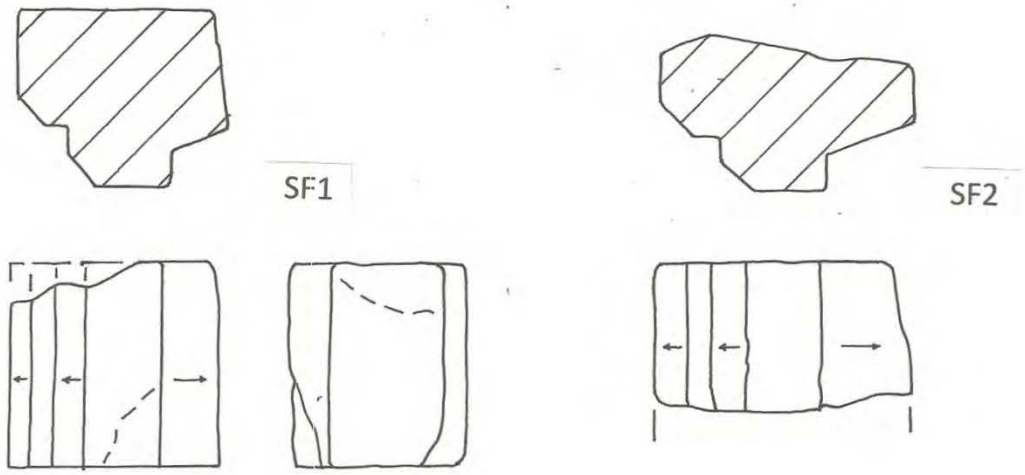


Fig.5: Details of Chancel Arch Base and Porch Outer Doorway E Jamb



In Situ Porch Stoup



Ex Situ Stones

Fig.6: Porch Stoup and Ex Situ Jambs

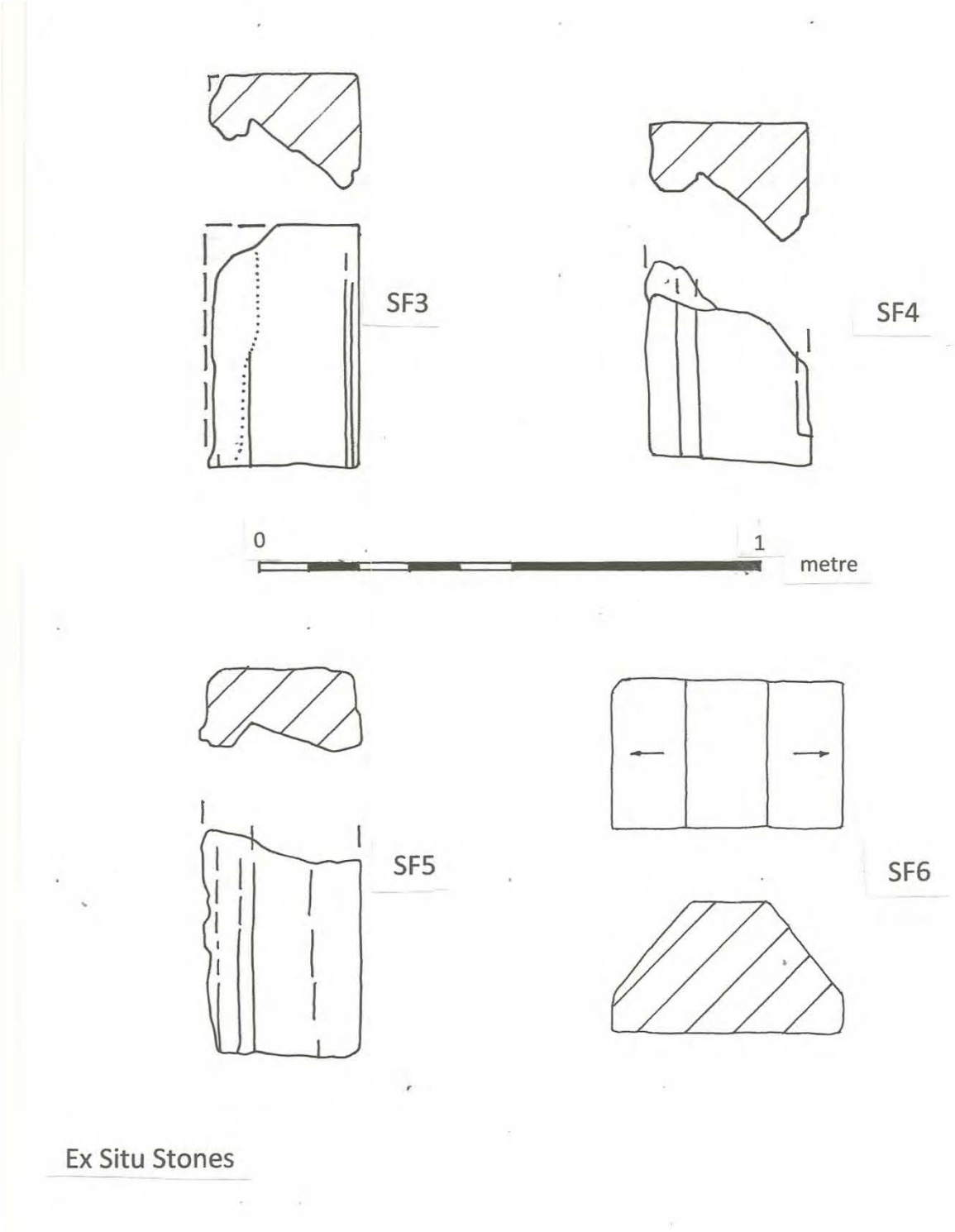


Fig.7: Ex Situ Stone

Conclusions

The cruciform plan and size of the church reflects its considerable wealth and status in the late Medieval period and Davidson has compared details of the church, largely based on the 1742 illustration by the Buck brothers, with the churches at Holyhead, Clynnog, Llaneilian and Beaumaris, and at Bangor Cathedral. This is attributed to a rebuilding programme about 1500 under the auspices of Dean Kyffin, who was rector of Llanddwyn and had a house on the island. Davidson discusses the problem of reconciling the shallow pitch of the chancel with the far steeper pitches of the roofs of the nave and the transepts, as well as the window tracery of the chancel and south transept. His suggestion is that the crossing roof was continuous and that the differently pitched nave and chancel roofs terminated at the crossing. The shallow roof, possibly covered with lead sheeting, and the copings may indicate a crenellated parapet such as those at Clynnog and Bangor Cathedral. No trace was found, however, of copings, crenellated stones or lead in the clearance, which may demonstrate the thoroughness with which material was stripped from the church for reuse. It is more surprising that only two fragments of arch were found in clearance of debris – one from the north window and one from a window not yet identified. Nothing was found of any internal tracery, although one would surmise that this kind of material was the least reusable.

There are contradictions between the phasing of the church proposed by the RCAHMW which allocates the chancel and the transepts to the early 16th.century and the nave to an earlier period. The only clear sequences in the present remains, however, are that the porch abuts the south wall of the nave, that the Buck print suggests that the chancel and south transept were separately built, and that a fragment of a string-course in the exterior face of the south wall of the nave was not continued around the south transept. Moses Griffith's watercolour implies that the chancel coping continued around the projecting stair tower, but the north transept had already been reduced to its footings at the time. Little or no supporting evidence, however, has survived to clarify the sequence; there is, for example, no clear break between the transepts and either the walls of the nave or chancel. The mouldings of the outer and inner doorways of the porch are similar, if not actually the same, but differ markedly from the comparatively geometric simplicity of the chamfered and rebated responds of the chancel arch. It is, of course, conceivable that the two sorts of moulding co-existed – each performing a very different structural role – but the distinction is probably significant. It seems reasonable to assume that the string-course carried around the west and north walls of the nave and, possibly, the porch but none of the walls have survived to a sufficient height to be certain of this theory. Its absence from the west wall of the south transept seems to confirm that the transept is a later build. There was no tower, the angles between the nave and transepts being formed of squared sandstone blocks rather than moulded responds.

What appears to unify the church are the stone benches, which were common to the nave, transepts and chancel; so far as the bench against the north wall of the nave is concerned, however, this was secondary to the plastered face of the north wall. Whatever their significance, fixed stone benches occur in several other Anglesey churches, although it is arguable whether they were originally more extensive and have been subsequently removed in favour of timber benches and pews.

The SLR evaluation was immaterial, except in so far as it provided some indication of a floor level, as informed by a thin layer of slate (107/114), at about 0.65m. below the modern ground surface. This was claimed to be evidence of a late 19th. or early 20th. century roof collapse, although the chancel was already roofless in 1742. Beneath this was a fairly compacted sandy soil, interpreted as wind-blown deposit on which the church was possibly constructed, and cut into this was part of an inhumation. This may have been a Medieval shroud burial, from which part of a femur and two ribs were recovered, although there was no clear grave-cut. No date has been obtained for the bones, and the sequence seems to have been confused by stone-robbing, presumably of material from the walls rather than a floor because there was no convincing evidence of stone slabs.

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Appendix 1 Wells or Springs

There is considerable confusion about the location and identification of the wells on the island and mainland, the exceptional geology of the island producing several springs and small watercourses which have, clearly, been influenced by underlying boulder clay and shifting sand. Coflein gives the NGR of Saint Dwynwen's Well as SH38691 62759, which appears to coordinate with the church, and states that the well (sic) 'cannot now be traced.' Another source, 'Ffynhonnau'r Santes Dwynwen' by Eirlys Gruffydd locates Saint Dwynwen's Well 'ar y creigiau uwchlaw'r mor', describing it as 'ffynnon fechan gwbl naturiol' and 'yn agos i weddillion yr eglwys'. From the description and accompanying photograph this is more usually named Ffynnon Ddafaden (sometimes misspelt as Dafoden). The article is dated 1997, but a capstone over part of the spring, where the water percolates from beneath boulder clay and sand, was displaced only in recent years, so the photograph clearly postdates the article.

Gruffydd acknowledges from 'Enwau Lleoedd Mon' that there are a number of wells connected with Dwynwen apart from this example, but believes that Ffynnon Ddafaden is the true Ffynnon Dwynwen, which is a reasonable conclusion. Unfortunately, she places Ffynnon Ddafaden at Merddyn Cil, which she says is a large well surrounded by walls and with steps leading down into it. It was, as the name suggests, a curative spring for warts; this property may not be so far-fetched as it appears, given the proximity of the spring to the sea – and Ogof Dwynwen – which frequently engulfs the rock-cut basin with salt water. Maredudd ap Huw draws attention to Dafydd ap Gwilym'as use of the term 'arian gawg'- a rough dish, perhaps of maple wood with silver gilt mounts, such as that at Clynnog Fawr dating to c1480-90 – but this may be poetic reference to one of the well basins at Llanddwyn.

Eirlys Gruffydd adds that Francis Jones, in 'The Holy Wells of Wales' says that Saint Dwynwen's Well was also known as Ffynnon Fair, dedicated to Mary; this was referred to as such in 'Lives of the British saints' where it goes on to describe the fortune-telling more usually associated with Dwynwen. She adds that there was another well connected with Dwynwen known as Crochan Dwynwen, about a mile to the north of Gwddw Llanddwyn, the narrow spit attaching the island to the mainland. This is marked on the OS 1839-41 map at SJ 409648 within Newborough Forest close to Cwningar; another writer suggested that divination was transferred here after the island well fell into ruins, but that this too is now lost. Gruffydd does not name the well close to the Pilot's Cottages, which now – as in the past – provides water to the cottages. This is enclosed with stone walls and is roofed, water collecting in what appears to be a roughly rectangular rock-cut basin before spilling down to Pilot's Cove below. A fifth well or spring, known as Ffynnon y Sais, was located to the west of Merddyn Cil, but this is no longer visible. In addition, there is a watercourse which at present springs from below the churchyard, but may also have been tapped for use at the Bishop's house 60m. to the west of the church. This stream has been channelled along the west side , and through the centre, of the small enclosures east of the church. This is

blocked in some places so that after heavy rain the water collects in temporary pool, but the general course is northwards to Porth y Sais.

The most impressive structure is Merddyn Cil, which appears to consist of an elongated well chamber, partly filled with debris, but about 2 metres deep. At one end there may be the remains of steps leading down from an attached an oblong building aligned south west to north east on a distinct terrace. There may be other buildings, but sand has obscured the precise lay-out. A faint stream, perhaps later used as a donkey-track, suggests the drainage is north east to the bay east of Gwddw Llanddwyn.

Appendix 2

Archaeologia Cambrensis 1879: Llanddwyn. RWB.