

THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

Cilcain Church, Flintshire

The Inscribed and Decorated Stones



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The Inscribed and Decorated Stones

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Report for Reverend Brian Harvey
and the Diocese of St Asaph

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The Inscribed and Decorated Stones in Whitford Church

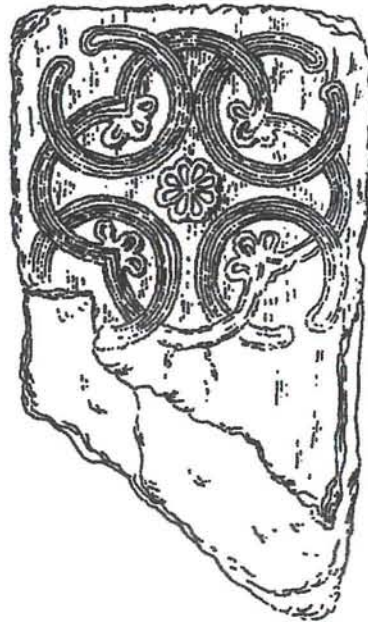
This brief statement describes the important and interesting collection of medieval and later stones housed in St Mary's Church at Cilcain in Flintshire, a Grade I listed building. It repeats much that was published in 1968 in what at the time was a comprehensive catalogue of medieval stone carving by the late Colin Gresham, and simply attempts to quantify the collection of stones that are currently stored in the church. The descriptions are those given by Gresham where recorded in 1968 and the line drawings come from the same source. It has been prepared as a result of concerns being expressed in early 2007 about the future housing of these stones.

All the stones currently reside at the west end of the south nave, some leaning upright against the west wall, other stacked. The exception is no.10 which presumably remains as an integral part of the tower doorway and has not been seen.

Medieval Sepulchral Slabs

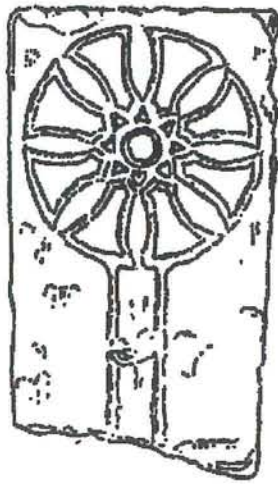
1) Gresham 99 (1968, 125 + fig 54) A slab of grey sandstone, with a weathered carving, and the surface and edges much mutilated. Only the cross-head remains, and its is formed by four open-ended circles set back to back, ribbed but not ties and not touching; these are interlaced with a large quatrefoil, decorated internally with triple loops. In the middle is an eight-petalled flower.

Dated to the early 14th century. Dimensions are 720mm by 430mm by 110mm max.



2) Gresham 115 (1968, 133 + fig 57 Thomas 1911, 369). The upper half of a small slab of light-grey sandstone. The circular cross-head is a geometrical design laid out accurately with a pair of compasses, and carved in shallow incised outline.

Dated to the early 14th century. Dimensions are 380mm by 230mm by 75mm max.



3) Gresham 130 (1968, 147 + fig 63; Thomas 1911, 369.). Two broken fragments of part of a large slab of grey sandstone, 8in. thick. Three [sic] pieces together represent about two-thirds of the upper part of the slab, which is carved with the distinctive design of a shield and sword grasped by a hand, very closely resembling the complete example at Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd (No. 129). The upper fragment, from which a smaller piece is broken but not lost, has its dexter side mutilated and measures about 2ft. 7in. long by 1ft. 9in. wide; the lower fragment, which does not quite join the other, is about 1ft. 3½in. long by 1ft. 10in. wide. The foot of the slab is missing, and the original length would have been between 5ft. and 6ft. The shield, which is short in its proportion, occupies the whole width of the slab, and is charged with *A lion rampant guardant*; there are also three decorative eight-petalled flowers on the field. Behind is the sword, partly drawn from its scabbard, set diagonally and grasped by the hand; the ornamented hilt is missing. The rest of the space above the shield is filled with a



pattern of naturalistic oak leaves and acorns on branches from a twisted stem. Below the shield is the characteristic symmetrical design of formal three-lobed leaves branching upwards in pairs from a central stem. The inscription is placed in a border round the shield, and starts down the sinister side, the final word being placed within the field. It is in florid Lombardic capitals, almost complete, and reads:

+HIC IACET IO(RW)ER(T)H DV CUI(US AIA R)EQESCATINPACE AMEN

Here lies Iorwerth Ddu, may whose soul rest in peace. Amen.

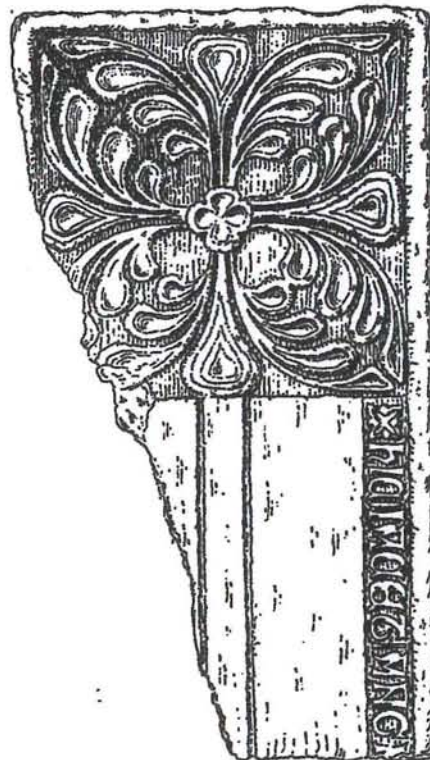
There are relevant contemporary documents to the son and grandson of Iorwerth Ddu which confirm the early 14th-century date.

Dimensions of the upper fragment are 790mm by 540mm by 200mm max, and of the lower fragment 410mm by 560mm by 140mm max.

4) Gresham 190 (1968, 210 + fig 85). The upper half of the broken slab of grey stone, and now measures 3ft. 3in. in length and 1ft. 10in. across the top, most of the dexter side being smashed away. The carving that survives is in good condition and but little weathered. The slab was originally rectangular without a taper, and possibly had an original length of 5ft. or over. The very fine floriated cross, carved in low relief, occupies a square; each of the arms ends in a bulbous projection and branches out on both sides into four lobes, which curve round to meet those of the adjacent arms. The plain shaft is marked out by two incised lines, and the inscription runs down the sinister side. It is in the small Lombardic capitals characteristic of the late 14th century, and is peculiar in that the words are divided by narrow bars in place of the usual dots. About half of it is missing, but the surviving portion reads: XHICIIACETIANGH(ARAD)

Here lies Angharad

Dimensions are 990mm by 570mm by 110mm max.

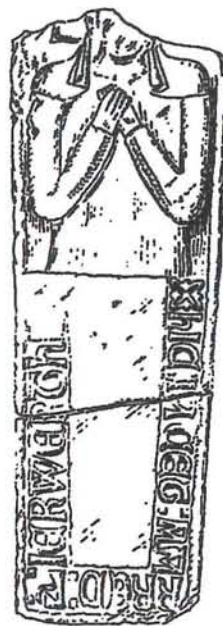


5) Gresham 216 (1968, 241 + fig 96; Thomas 1911, 369). The semi- effigy of a lady is of brown sandstone, 3in. thick. The top of the slab is broken and missing together with half the head of the figure; and the lower part is broken across in two pieces. The present length is 2 ft. 9 in. with a taper from 11½in. to 10in. at the foot. The figure, in low relief, is carved as far down as the waist; the arms are bent and the hands conjoined on the breast. The dress is tight-fitting and quite plain, except for a row of small buttons up each arm from elbow to wrist. A wimple hangs in folds from the sides of the head on to the shoulders. The features of the face and the head-dress are missing. Round the lower half of the slab is the inscription, which is complete in large, well-cut, false-relief Lombardic capitals, starting down the sinister side and reading from inwards: X HIC:IACET:MARRED:F':IERWE(R)TH

Here lies Marred daughter of Ierwerth

The style of the dress, which resembles that on the Eva monument at Bangor (No. 211), and the form of lettering clearly indicate a date towards the end of the 14th century.

Dimensions of the upper fragment are 560mm by 290mm by 90mm max, and of the lower fragment 310mm by 260mm by 90mm max.



6) Fragment of a graveslab of which only the top left corner survives. It displays the head of a



woman. The hands are open, palms outwards across the chest. A brooch at the neck. *Hic Iace..* inscribed below the hands but broken off. Not recorded in Gresham but Thomas 1911, 369.

Presumed to be late 14th century. Dimensions 890mm x 320mm x 120mm.

7) Angular block of stone, not presently moveable, because it supports the weight of a much larger slab. It could be the upturned corner of a medieval graveslab.

Dimensions 250mm x 210mm x 120mm.

8) Decorated fragment of graveslab with leaves and flower head. The crudely fashioned semi-circular head to the stone is presumably a later re-working. Broken at bottom. Limewash concretions. Decoration consistent with other 14th-century grave slabs, and comparable in general terms with no. 5 above. Not listed in Gresham.

Dimensions 310mm x 230mm x 60mm.



9) Fragment of a much worn, but deeply incised, grave slab with a figure on it, the head broken off,



left hand across chest, right hand resting on something, perhaps a shield; the first letters of an inscription. Possibly 14th century, but could be later. Not listed in Gresham.

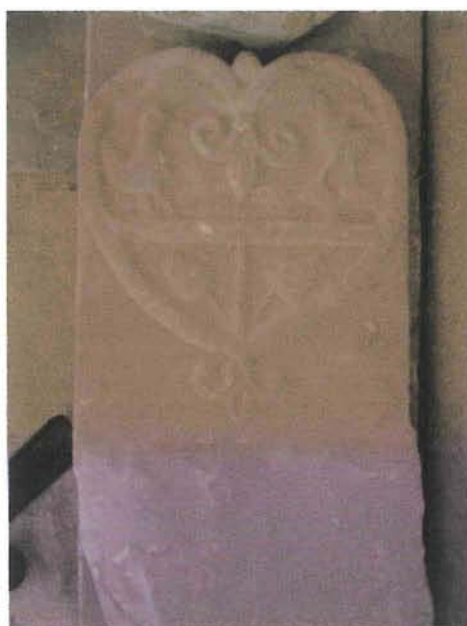
Dimensions 440mm x 290mm x 120mm.

10) Thomas refers to another inscribed stone fragment inscribed MAREDDIT AP BLEDDYN AP... serving as the lintel to the door of the tower (Thomas 1911, 369).

Later gravestones

11) Grave marker designed for vertical placement. Decorated top has two birds and roses set in heart-shaped cartouche and with fleur-de-llys terminals. No inscription. Date uncertain but perhaps earlier 17th century?

Dimensions 580mm x 310mm x 120mm (bottom) and 80mm (top).



Other Worked Stone

12) Stoup. This is probably a stoup as there is no obvious drainage hole and it was designed to fit into the angle of two walls. Those two sides, both straight, are undecorated, the third, curving side is partially broken, but carries crossed, raised ribs interspersed with decorative balls. Currently it is not accessible because of other stones. Thomas 1911, 369.

Dimensions 300mm x 380mm x 210mm in depth. Stone is 60mm thick.

13) Font or stoup. Not readily accessible. Square-based with interior in form of inverted pyramid and a drain hole at base. Fashioned from the capital of a column (unless an imitation of the same) and with a round rib base. Two of the four faces are broken, but three sides display decoration, the fourth is plain. Thomas 1911, 369.

Dimensions 420mm x 420mm x 300mm in depth.

14) Small fragment from a curved bowl with decoration that includes an arcing rib. Perhaps from no.12.

Dimensions 230mm x 170mm x 40mm.

15) Quarter-round capital, for use in an angle. The curved outer side is heavily decorated, a design of concentric rings with a half-round moulding above. There is nothing obvious similar within the body of the church today.

Dimensions: straight sides are 320mm and 300mm x 250mm in depth.



16) Small octagonal-sectioned column. Rather damaged on three of the four plain faces, but one has a cavity which may or may not be a part of the design; the intermediate chamfers have pyramid stops at their bases. Broken at top



Dimensions Diameter 220mm x 520mm high.

17) Solid pieces of worked stone, one-eighth round (see photo above). Curved side decorated with arcing rib, not dissimilar to no. 14. Its origin/function is uncertain

Dimensions Diameter 310mm x 210mm high.

Other fragments

18) Corner of plinth with milled edges. ?Victorian or later.

Dimensions: 185mm x 200mm.

19) Portion of a faintly quadrilateral-sectioned column or pillar. Sawn edges. Broken.

Dimensions 180mm x 180mm x 220mm in depth.

20) A rather anonymous piece of stone with a groove on its surface. Some tools marks on it. Date uncertain.

Dimensions 280mm x 220mm x 110mm in depth.

21) Two fragments of modern stonework with milled edges.

22) Stone fragment with solitary step incised on it. Broken. Date uncertain.

Dimensions 270mm x 240mm x 80mm in depth.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- a) Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11 & 13 are displayed in an appropriate manner at the rear of the church, together with small information plaques and or leaflets to enhance the interest of the church for visitors
- b) No. 17 and others from group a) that cannot be accommodated in the south nave, are placed in appropriate locations in the converted north nave.
- c) Nos. 16, 20 & 22 are placed for safety in the tower, but not on display.
- d) Nos. 18, 19 & 21 can be deposited in the churchyard.
- e) Nos. 7, 12, 14 & 15 need to be more closely examined before a decision can be made as to their future.

No stones should be discarded.

Sources consulted

Gresham, C A, 1968, *Medieval stone carving in North Wales*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press

Thomas, D R, 1911 *History of the Diocese of St Asaph Volume 2*. Oswestry: Caxton Press

Thurlby, M, *Romanesque Architecture and Sculpture in Wales*, Woonton Almeley, Herefordshire: Logaston Press