



Recent discoveries in Pershore Abbey!

Judy Dale

Early in 2020, before the Covid lockdown, preparations were being made for the Abbey's new organ due to be in place in 2021. The many pipes will be high up on the north side of the building and access for this part of the organ being created by making new door. Scaffolding enabled the building firm, Crofts, to reach the area and they began carefully to chip away at the stone wall at the western end of the high passageway (triforium).

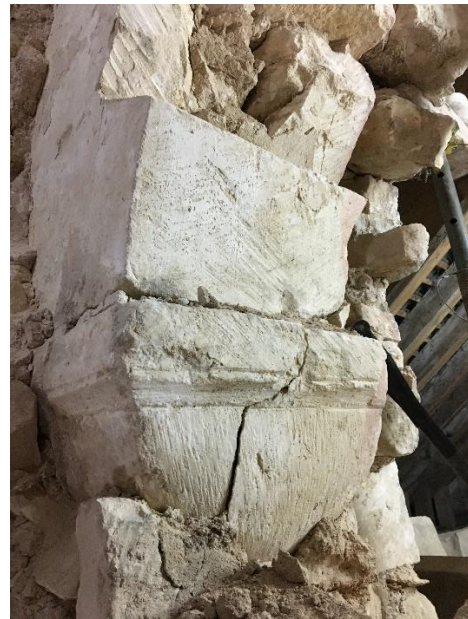
Great care was taken as it was known that 340 years ago the north part (transept) of the Abbey church had collapsed. Churchwardens asked for a special levy to save the tower:

“Parshore, Sanctae Crucis. - The breach in the walls of the abbey church hath been beyond the memory of any man now living in the parish and it cannot be put into better condition except the tower be wholly taken down.....but it is agreed that a course shall be taken that the breach may be stayed and prevented from further decay”. “The north side of the church wanteth a pillar to sustain it; otherwise it will fall. The windows want repairing; the great bell fallen out of the tower.”

Despite their efforts, the north transept collapsed in 1680, the hole was walled up, and a buttress built to support the tower. It was in this repaired area that this year, 2020, builders chipped away at the stone wall, and they found - **A DOOR** – small, blocked up Norman arched door built about 1100 showing damaged pink stone from severe heat - likely to be from the fire in 1223, and over this door a gothic pointed arch, also blocked, from the rebuild in 1239. Both had been hidden away by the repair after the 1680 collapse.



In early March, I was privileged to be taken up the scaffolding to see the progress towards a new access – and climbing up steep ladders, discovered several layers of wall, the inner part of the Norman door, and the amazing find of a Norman pillar which had once supported an arch in the North transept.



Because of Covid19, I was not able to return but understand that this area has been repaired, conserved and will be displayed for people to admire in time to come. I look forward to that moment! For another update.....

PS The new organ is being built, pipe by pipe. The Civic Society adopted a pipe following our AGM – if you would like to adopt a pipe see www.pershoreabbey.org.uk or contact Judy Dale on 07908537079