



Cilcain and its Parish Church

BY FRANK SIMPSON

(Read October 17th, 1911)



THE ancient village of Cilcain is pleasantly situated above the Alyn amidst beautiful scenery, lying beneath Moel Fammau, the highest of the Clwydian Hills, $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles distant from Mold.

The name is variously written Cilcain, Kilken, Kilcain, and Cilcen. Its origin has never been satisfactorily ascertained. By some it is supposed to be derived from *Cil*, a retreat, and *Cain*, fair or pleasant; others say "The retreat of Cain" (for her goodness surnamed "Eurgain").

Eurgain was the daughter of the tyrant Maelgwyn Gwynedd, King of the Britons, who died of the yellow plague in 560 A.D. She was niece to Asaph, second Bishop of the See, which, after his canonization, during the latter part of the 6th century, dropped the name of Llan-Elwyn and assumed that of St. Asaph.

Eurgain was brought up and educated by her uncle, Asaph, and during the general persecutions which at that time assailed the Christian religion, she retreated to this district, in a vale under Moel Fammau, where she built a cell and lived in solitude and devotion.

From her pious and exemplary life she acquired the name of "Eurgain,"¹ signifying "the fairness of gold"; and shortly afterwards a church was erected near the site of her hermitage, and consecrated to her memory.

The vale in which she dwelt is still called "Nant Cain," and the brook which runs from the mountain that shelters it (Moel Fammau) also retains the name of Cain.

According to the Ordnance Survey Map (sheet 108) of the district, the hermitage stood about 3 miles north-east of Cilcain; 1 mile north-east of Rhyd-y-mwyn; and about $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles south-west of Northop. The latter place was called "Llan-Eurgain" by the Welsh, from the dedication of its church to St. Eurgain.

There was another Saint of the same name, daughter of Caradog, a princeling of Glamorgan. She founded "Cor Eurgain," which afterwards became St. Illtyd's College, of Llantwit.

Willis, in his History of the Diocese of St. Asaph, states:—"Kilken or Kilcain, so called from the brook Kain, which springs at Moel Vammau, an high hil[l] in this parish."

A brief sketch of the life of Asaph will not, perhaps, be out of place here.

St. Kentigern, otherwise called St. Mungo, Bishop of Glasgow, and Primate of Scotland, having been driven from his See by a pagan prince of that country about 543 A.D.,² settled in North Wales, and founded a monastery at Llan Elwy in 560 A.D. Eventually

¹ Eurgain was married to Elidyr Mynfawr.

² *Pennant's "Tours in Wales"* (Rhys Edition), Vol. ii., p. 128.

“There were assembled in this monastery,” says John of Tynemouth, “no fewer than 965 brethren, who all lived under monastic discipline, of which number 300 were illiterate, 300 were appointed to prepare food, and 365 who were learned he deputed to say the daily offices. Among these was one Asaph, more particularly illustrious for his descent and his beauty, who from his childhood shone forth brightly.”

Roderic, king of the Strath-Clyde Britons, recalled Kentigern³ to his original charge, about 570 A.D., and reinstated him in the dignities of which he had been deprived. Kentigern then appointed as his successor Asaph, who was consecrated Bishop of Llan-Elwyn, which subsequently obtained from him the appellation of St. Asaph, by which name the See has ever since been known.

Asaph, who was a native of North Wales, died May 1st 596 A.D.,⁴ and was buried in the cathedral church, which had probably been built during his prelacy.

A fair was anciently held at St. Asaph on this day (May 1st) in commemoration of the Saint, and was continued for some centuries, being a source of revenue to the Dean and Chapter, who received the tolls.

Gold-mining has been carried on at Cilcain, but the results did not justify its continuance, as the yield was not sufficient to pay a profit on the working, though some assert that gold may probably be found in valuable quantities near.

³ Kentigern, or St. Mungo, died January 13th, 603, and was buried on the right side of the altar of Glasgow Cathedral.—“Dict. of Nat. Biography,” Vol. xxxi., p. 26.

⁴ “Dict. of Nat. Biog.” (Supplement), Vol. i., p. 79.

The principal attraction of Cilcain is undoubtedly the Parish Church dedicated to St. Mary.

The first church on this site is said to have been built during the Norman period, but no vestige of it remains, unless the Norman font now in the church occupied a place there. Parts of the present edifice date from the 14th century. It is of a form common in Wales, having two equal aisles.

The churchyard is entered, on the east side, by a lych-gate, erected in 1888. The gates themselves, which are of iron, bear a plate on which is engraved, "John Hughes, R.S.S., Cilcain, 1902;" denoting the fact that the gate was made by the village smith at that time.

On the collar-beam above is carved:—

"Y : mae : gorphwysfa : etto :
Yn : ol : i : bobl : Dduw : Heb : 4 : 9 :"

which translated is:—

"There remaineth a rest to the people of God."

On the inside the inscription is:—

"Byddwn : ddyfal : i : fyned : i : mewn ir :
orphwysfa : homo : Heb : 4 : 11 :"
"Let us labour to enter into that rest."

There is little in the exterior of the church to attract attention. The date, 1888, on the spout heads is scarcely necessary to show that the church had recently been restored.

The east end consists of two gables, different in height; in the south one is a window of five lights, and in the other one of three lights.

Passing round the north side of the church, we see two windows, with rounded heads, filled with plain

lead lights. On the lower panes of the westerly one we find inscribed on the glass:—

“ Edwd Bill New Leaded
This window in of new
Lead 1817.”

These windows formerly had shutters to protect them. The gudgeons and the iron bar⁵ which fastened the shutters are still to be seen.

Shutters were deemed necessary in days when less respect was paid to the church and churchyard than is happily the case at the present time, and so the windows had to be carefully guarded. This desecration is referred to by the late Rev. Elias Owen in his “Old Stone Crosses of the Vale of Clwyd.”

At the west end of the north wall is a circular-headed doorway which leads to the north aisle; and a few yards further on is another doorway by which access is gained to the base of the tower, which stands at the west end of the north aisle, and projects beyond that of the south aisle. The appearance of this solid-looking, straight, square structure is somewhat spoiled by the two huge buttresses which have been placed against its west side.

The tower was raised some years ago by about four feet of brickwork; this was taken down during the 1888 restoration, and replaced by red sandstone, surmounted by four pinnacles—a great improvement.

Near the east end of the south side formerly stood the priest's door, now filled up with masonry. This appears

⁵ Since the above was written this bar has disappeared. [F. S., April, 1912.]

to have been made up in 1788-9, for an entry in the Vestry Book states:—

“1788-9, to Hugh Lloyd for Working
the door up”

Nearly opposite the priest's door, in the boundary wall, under the shade of a chestnut tree, was a gateway—now filled up—leading to the old rectory.

To enter the church we pass through a modern porch near the south-west corner, and gain access to the south aisle or nave, in which Divine service is held.

There is no chancel arch or screen, as is also the case in most of the local churches; but the quasi-chancel is raised one step above the nave, with another step to the altar.

The division between the north and the south aisle is formed of four pointed arches, with good mouldings, three of which are filled in by modern glazed screens. The westernmost arch is less pointed than the others, and of much later date, being what is known as a four-centred arch. One pier is square, while the others are octagonal.

The north side of the church was burnt down early in the morning of Christmas Day, 1532, after a “Plygain,” or carol-singing; only the outer walls, including the window of three lights at the east end, remained standing. It continued in this state for upwards of two hundred years.

Willis, in his Survey of St. Asaph, states:—

“The north side of Kilken Church [was] burnt down early in the morning upon Christmas Day in 1532, when the parishioners were assembled to pray and sing carols upon the occasion in imitation of the High Mass, a custom particular to Wales, and which is called Plygain.”

Willis finds his statement on the following stanza which he observed on a brass plate in the church, which plate has since disappeared:—

“Mil pum cant, rhifant y rhai'n
Nöd addas a deuddeg ar hugain
Oedd y Gair am FAB Mair fain
Pan ddaeth y Golcaith i Cilcen.”

Translated:—

“It was 1532 years after the birth of the son of Mary fair—this is a true account—that the burning came to Cilcen.”

A copper plate, 12 inches long by 6 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches deep, fixed on an oak slab now hung in the vestry, at the east end of the north wall, bears the following inscription:—

“The North Isle of this Church
was rebuilt in the year 1746
at the sole Expence of the
Rev^d RICHARD. DAVIES. M.A.
RECTOR of this Parish

K I L K E N .”

Consequently the north side of the church appears to have been in ruins for 214 years.

Richard Davies, Vicar of Ruabon, was appointed to the sinecure for the interval by Bishop Wynne, who had promised to appropriate the tithes of this church to the endowment of a Welsh church at Wrexham. But the project fell through, owing to a dispute about the patronage, and the money which had been collected was returned. Mr. Davies therefore rebuilt, at his own cost, the north aisle, as stated on the copper plate.

“Richard Davies was Rector of Erbistock 1706, Canon of St. Asaph 1710, Sinecure Rector of Cilcain 1721, Prebend of St. David's and Brecon 1732.”⁶

⁶ “History of the Diocese of St. Asaph,” Archdeacon Thomas, p. 841.

In the Gwysaney chapel, which is situated in the south-east corner of Mold church, is a memorial brass on which his arms and crest surmount the following inscription:—

“Near the east end of this Chancel
in the Church yard, lieth the
pious and charitable, the
Revd Mr. Richard Davies, Vicar
of Ruabon; Precentor of Brecon,
Canon of St. Asaph and St. David,
fifth and youngest son of
Mutton Davies, of Gwysaney,
Esq., died May 25th, 1746, aged 73.”

Mytton, or Mutton Davies, like his father Robert Davies, was a staunch Royalist, and both suffered for their support of the Royal cause. Father and son were imprisoned in Chester Castle. The order, signed by Cromwell, for the release of the former is dated 30th June, 1658; and the latter was released by order of Colonel Croxton, the Governor of the Castle, January 28th, 1659. Soon after his release he visited another staunch Royalist, Sir Thomas Wilbraham, Bart., of Woodhey, Cheshire, whose only daughter, Elizabeth, he eventually married. He was High Sheriff for Flintshire in 1670, and from 1678 to 1681 represented that county in Parliament.

The word “Plygain” means cock-crowing; it is spelt, and pronounced, rather differently in various parts of Wales.

“On Christmas morn, tradition says, the church bell was rung in Cilcain from five to six o'clock, at which latter hour the service began; in other parishes the hour was four. The service usually consisted of a selection of appropriate portions of the prayer book,

with or without a brief admonitory address by the clergyman, and then the carol singing began. Anyone who desired to sing was at liberty to do so. Sometimes a party sang in chorus, and sometimes a single voice was heard, and this service of song was continued until the dawn of day, when the Benediction was pronounced and the congregation separated. Those who took part in the carol singing supplied themselves with their home-made candles; but the church authorities partially lit up the church for the occasion."⁷

Old people tell us that great disorder sometimes prevailed in the Plygain, caused by the fact that some who attended were scarcely in a fit condition to do so.

When reading through the Churchwardens' Accounts it is interesting to trace entries which refer to the Plygain. Although the word Plygain has been rarely used in the Cilcain accounts, yet it is referred to in such items as the following, which occur every year:—

1711	For candles agst Xmas	00	01	09
1775-6	to Carroll singers at Christmas day	0	5	0
	to Candles at Christmas Day	0	3	6
1790-1	for Himn (Hymn)	0	2	6
1803-4	Pd Peter of Rhuabon for a carol	„	1	0

Below are given the two entries in which the word Plygain actually appears:—

1731	December ye 22. Paid for 3 pound candles			
	to Plugin and carrage	„	2	0
1806-8	to Candles for 2 Plygains	1	8	9½

⁷ "Old Stone Crosses," p. 11. *Rev. E. Owen.*

Pennant, in his "Tour in Wales," says:—

"Upon Christmas day, about three o'clock in the morning, most of the parishioners assembled in church, and after prayers and a sermon, continued there singing psalms and hymns with great devotion till broad day; and if, through age or infirmity, any were disabled from attending, they never failed having prayers at home, and carols on our Saviour's Nativity. The former part of this service is still preserved; but too often perverted into intemperance. This act of devotion is called Plygan, or the *crowing of the cock*. During the holy season, the cock was supposed to exert his power throughout the night; from which undoubtedly originated the Welsh word Plygain, as applied to this custom."

A similar service was held at Gresford Church, for, in the Wardens' Accounts for 1739, we find:—

"It. Candles for ye Plygain o 2 o"

And again, at Hope Church, where, owing to the behaviour of some people who attended the service, and the scandal caused for some years past, (upon one occasion a man setting fire to another worshipper's head), it was resolved by the Church authorities that the service be discontinued, which was accordingly done in 1770, and the sum annually paid for candles was devoted to the purchase of flannel for the poor of the parish.

Although the north aisle is now used principally for storage purposes, this has not always been so, for we find in the Churchwardens' Accounts that:—

"At a Vestry holden, proper Notice being first given, on September the 6th, 1790.

It was agreed

that the space of twelve Feet of the North Side of the South Aile in Front and Depth answerable to the seats lately erected, be granted to Watkin Williams Esqr of Penbedw for the

Purpose of erecting seats for his own private Use, provided that he builds Seats on the North Side of the North Aile for the common use of the Parishioners at large, of equal Dimensions in Front and to range with the Seats already made there.

Agreed also that five feet of the Remainder of the North Side of the South Aile, & Depth answerable to the other New Seats, be granted to Mr John Hughes of Tan y Lan, & now living in Mold for the Purpose of erecting a Seat for his own private Use.

Agreed also that the remaining unoccupied Space of the South Side of the North Aile be granted to the aforesaid Mr John Hughes for the Purpose of erecting a Seat for his own Use answerable & in Conformity to the other Seats of the said Aile.

Agreed also that Mr Thos Williams of Vechles shall build a Seat on the South Side of the South Aile of equal Dimensions at least with his Seat on the North Side of the North Aile & in Conformity with the other Seats provided he gives up for the common Use of the Parish at large his said Seat in the North Aile.

JOHN LLOYD, Vicar of Kilken	} Wardens
DAVID X EDWARDS Mark	
ROBERT X WILLIAMS Mark	
WATKIN WILLIAMS	
THOMAS WILLIAMS	
JOHN HUGHES''	

And a number of other marks and signatures.

The services are held in the south aisle. Prior to the restoration of 1888 the latter was seated with old-fashioned square pews, made of oak, black with age; but these were at that time all taken out and replaced by plain modern seats.

The Churchwardens' pew, which was elaborately carved, stood near the south-west door. Part of the carved back was used up in the construction of what

is now the westernmost seat in the church, and some small portion, which has been made out with new, forms the back of the choir seat placed against the south wall of the chancel. The remainder of the old oak, I am informed by the caretaker, was taken away.

The west end of the south aisle was formerly occupied by a gallery, which seems to have been put up about 1788-9. Underneath, on the south side was the vestry, and in the north-west corner were some wooden stairs which led to the gallery. The latter extended to the second hammer-beam.

In the Churchwardens' Accounts we find:—

1788-9	To Hugh Lloyd . . . cutting the walls to put the beams and joyses and fill them up and plastering the same put mortar about the glass Clearing the Rubbech from the Ch: & Steeple Cutting ye piller by the Staires and flag the passage	2 5 0
	Jurney Mayjor Williams on acct of ye gallry	„ 1 6
May,		
1794-5	To cord for the Star [Stairs]	„ 1 6

During the restoration of 1888 both the gallery and the vestry were removed.

The musical part of the services was formerly supplied by string and reed instruments. The following extracts from the Wardens' Accounts are interesting:—

1781		
to June	To New Pitch pipe	„ 5 0
1782		
1791-2	To String for the base viol	„ 1 0
May 1795	To two Reeds	„ 1 4
to		
May 1796	To two Reeds	„ 2 0
1799-1800	To Wm Hooson for pitchin pipe	„ 4 6

Easter 1806			
to	To Reeds for a Bassoon &c	„	6 8
Easter 1808			
1842 Nov. 9	Set of Violincello strings as pr bill	3	10 0
1845 Mar. 25	To paid for a new set of Violincello Strings	„	4 6
1846 Dec. 26	Paid John for repairing bassoon	„	3 6

When the practice of using these instruments was discontinued, their place was filled by a harmonium, which in its turn was superseded by a pipe organ. This was purchased by the Vicar, the Rev. B Hallowes,⁸ from the Churchwardens of Llandurnog, and presented to his parishioners for use in the church. It stood for a considerable time in the gallery, and, when the latter was demolished, was placed at the east end of the north aisle. It had one manual, with five stops, as follows:—

Fifteenth ..	2 ft.	Gedact	8 ft.
Principal ..	4 ft.	Open Diapason ..	8 ft.
Dulciana ..	8 ft.		

At the annual Easter Vestry, held on Thursday, April 20, 1911,

“The Vicar mentioned that the organ was in a very unsatisfactory state and had been pronounced by Dr. Bridge of Chester to be beyond repairing and therefore we would have to get a new one very soon, but the Meeting was very divided on the point and it was decided to have a Special Meeting called in the near future to enter more fully into the matter.”

Evidently all opposition was subsequently withdrawn, for a new organ has been erected and was used for the first time on Sunday, March 24th, of this year (1912).

⁸ The Rev. B. Hallowes, M.A., was Vicar of Cilcain from 1851 to 1867.

The New Organ was built by Messrs. Rushworth and Dreaper Ltd., Liverpool, to whom I am indebted for the following particulars :—

“Two complete manuals, compass CC to A 58 notes. Pedal clavier.

SWELL ORGAN

1. Open Diapason ..8 feet
2. Lieblich Gedact ..8 feet
3. Salicional8 feet
4. Geigen Principal. 4 feet
5. Cornopean 8 feet
6. Tremulant (by Piston)

GREAT ORGAN

1. Open Diapason....8 feet
2. Dulciana8 feet
3. Flute8 feet
4. Principal4 feet

PEDAL ORGAN

1. Bourdon16 feet
2. Octave Bourdon ..8 feet

COUPLERS

1. Swell to Great
2. Swell to Pedal
3. Great to Pedal

ACCESSORIES.

Two double-acting Composition Pedals to the Great Organ.

Two double-acting Composition Pedals to the Swell Organ.

Swell Pedal (Balanced)

Case of fumigated Oak to match the existing woodwork.

R. and D. Tubular-Pneumatic action to the Pedal Organ.

Pedal Board radiating and concave to the pattern of the R.C.O.”

The cost of the instrument was £258, towards which Mr. Carnegie subscribed £90. It now occupies the whole of the easternmost bay on the north side of the south aisle. Mr. Carl Henreker, a resident in the parish, interested himself in the new instrument, for which he drew out the specifications.

The parishioners of Cilcain, it is evident, have always been fond of music, for we find in the Vestry Accounts many items such as the following :—

“ 1776	Paid to the Psalm Singers	2	2	0
1787-8	„ for Easter Hymn	„	2	6
1790-91	„ for Himn [Hymn]	„	2	6



Cilcain Church (Interior), looking East

Copyright

Frank Simpson, Photo.

1791-2	Paid to the Psalm Singers of Nannerch and Ruthin	„ 5 0
1792-3	To ale to Northop Singers	„ 5 0
1793-4	For Easter Hymn	„ 2 6”

The oak pulpit, which is placed against the south wall, is octagonal in form, and bears on four of the upper panels, carvings, in low relief, of the Evangelistic symbols.

The beautiful carved oak roof of the south aisle is one of the finest in the Principality. Like the one at the Church of St. Mary-on-the-Hill, Chester, it is said to have come from Basingwerk Abbey, about a year after the dissolution of that establishment, which took place in 1535.⁹ The Abbey, in its Church and other buildings, would have several roofs or ceilings suitable for removal to other Churches, so that the two statements are not necessarily contradictory.

In the Churchwardens' Accounts of St. Mary's, Chester, for the year 1536 is an entry:—

“the quere [or choir] was boght at basewerke, and sette uppe with all costs and chargis belonging to the same.”

The Chester roof was not specially constructed for its present position, and was used for a longer building, as is shown by the fact that the principal beams at the east and the west are elaborately carved on the inner surface next the chancel and tower arches.

There is no doubt whatever that the roof of the Cilcain nave was brought from elsewhere, and where so likely as the disused Abbey buildings not far away?

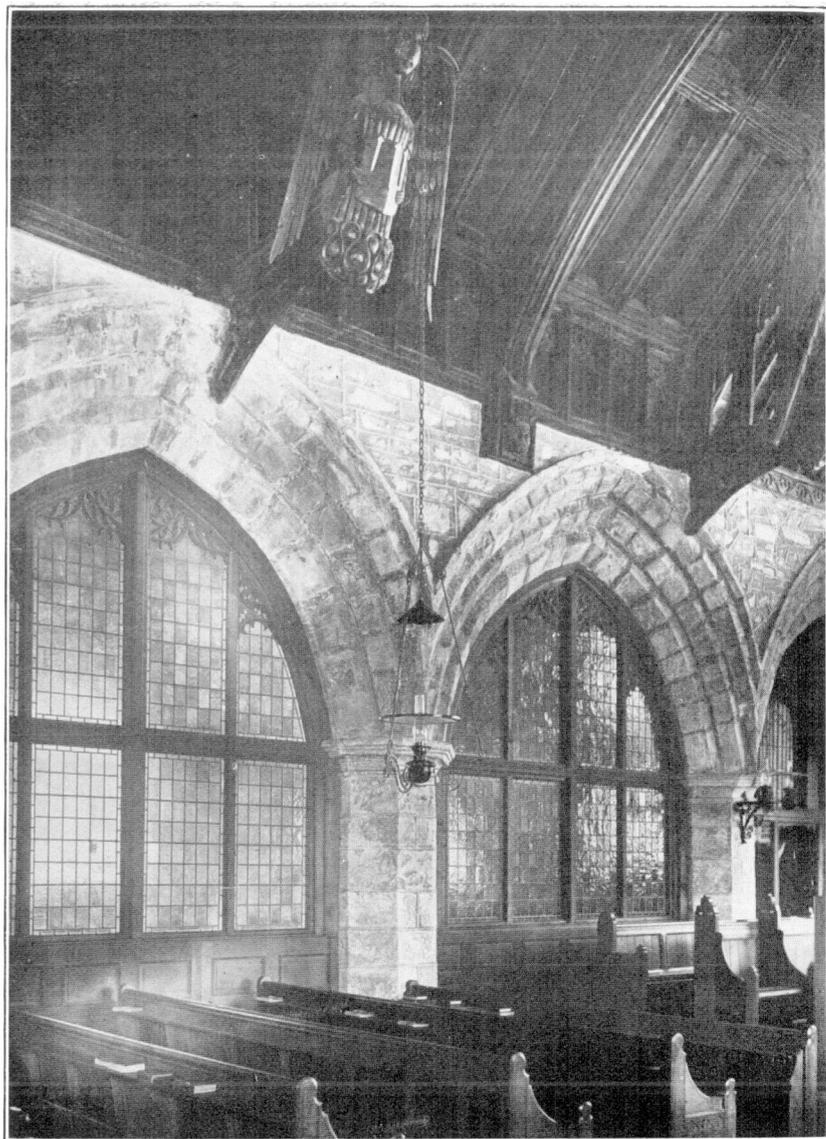
⁹ *Lewis' "Topographical Dictionary of Wales."* Vol. I., p. 448.

Pennant's Tours. Vol. 1., p. 440.

In most of the old churches in the neighbourhood may be seen articles of one form or another, which formerly belonged to one or other of the Abbeys.

The placing of this roof at Cilcain fulfilled a prophecy of Robin Ddu—that is, Robin the Black—who, when he first saw it put up by the monks, observed that it would do very well for a church below Moel Famau; *i.e.*, that of Cilcain.

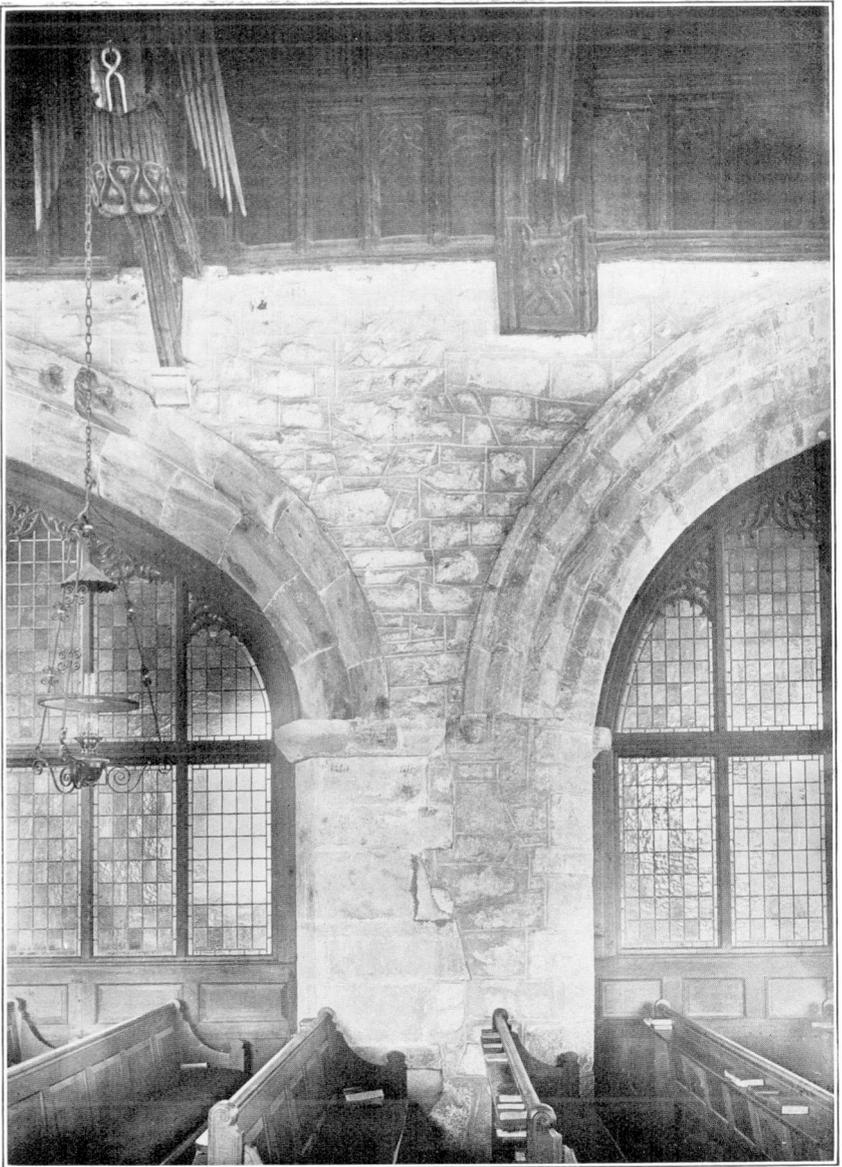
The roof is divided into ten bays, or compartments, by principals. The two bays over the chancel are segmental, almost semi-circular, with a carved wall plate and beautifully moulded rafters, purlins, ridge, and heavily-moulded principal. The panels between the rafters, from the east wall to the communion rails, are decorated with the fleur-de-lys, an evidence of the dedication to St. Mary. The remaining eight bays are divided alternately by five hammer-beam and four collar-beam principals of an elaborate and ornate character. The former are of similar design, except that the gracefully carved brackets to the tie-beams are different in detail in two of the principals. The brackets in these have ornamental panels with trefoil heads, though even here there is a slight difference of detail, as the third from the west end has seven panels on each side, and the fourth has only six. Each of these hammer-beam principals, with the exception of the one nearest the west wall, is terminated with a large carved seraph with semi-closed wings. The two western seraphs, one on either side, are modern. The story goes that an old parish clerk, with more appreciation of strong ale than fine art, sold the missing angels for a quart of beer. These angel terminals to the hammer-beams are not uncommon in



Position of Roof Principals in South Aisle (East end)

Copyright

Frank Simpson, Photo.



Position of Roof Principals in South Aisle (near centre)

Copyright

Frank Simpson, Photo.

Wales; somewhat similar decorations may be seen in the 15th century timber roof of Llanrhiadr Church; also in the timber roof of the nave of Llangollen Church. In the latter the seraphs have long trumpets in their hands, which they appear to be playing. This roof was originally at Valle Crucis Abbey, but was removed to Llangollen after the Dissolution.¹⁰

The hammer-beam principal nearest the east end, on the north side, is fitted into the outer splay of the arch, which has evidently been cut to receive it. This principal appears to have been considerably restored at some time—probably in 1843, when the whole roof was repaired—as the hammer-beams are of plain oak, rudely shaped to receive the moulded framed corbels underneath.

The second hammer-beam principal from the east end is fixed almost into the centre of the arch, a little to the east side, and the arch has been cut away for this purpose.

The third hammer-beam principal is further away from the centre of the arch than either of the former, and rests on a corbel immediately above the arch.

The hammer-beam principal nearest the west end is carved on its outside face,¹¹ and fixed within one foot of the wall, thus forming conclusive evidence that the roof was brought to Cilcain from elsewhere. It is terminated by two modern shields, placed there in 1888, instead of the seraphs as in the others.

¹⁰ "Churches of Denbighshire," by *Lloyd Williams and Underwood*.

¹¹ This was also the case at St. Mary's-on-the-Hill, Chester. Upon taking down the principal adjoining the chancel arch, during the last restoration, it was found to be carved on its outside face.

The shield on the north side bears the arms of the Buddicom family—*e.g.*, *Argent* a chevron, engrailed, between two crosses pattée in chief, and a demi griffin coupé in base, *gules*; on a chief of the last, three escallops of the first.

The one on the south side is engraved:—

W. B \times M J
18 B 88

signifying the initials of the late William Barber Buddicom and his widow, and the date when the church was restored at their sole cost.

The eight seraphs which terminate the remaining four hammer-beams bear each a shield on which are displayed the Cross and other emblems of the Crucifixion.

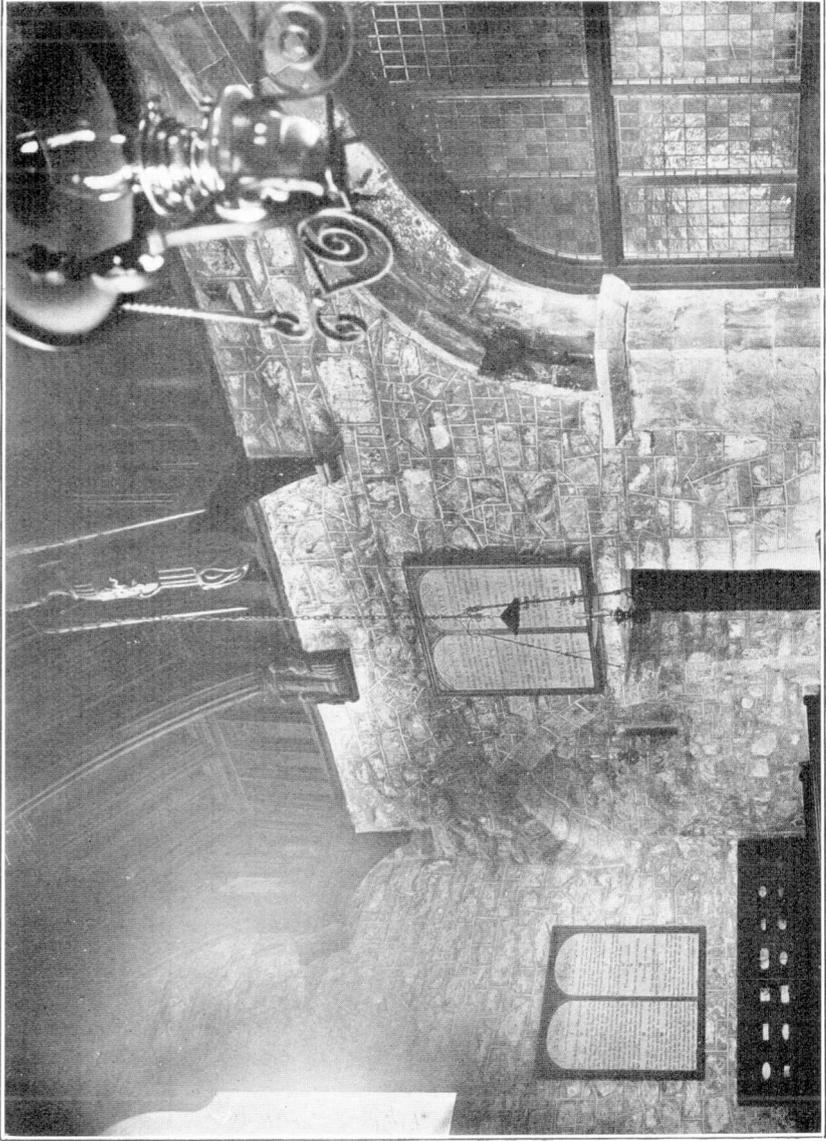
Looking from east to west, we see on the north side:—

1. On a shield *azure*, a cord, spear, and reed with sponge *Or*.
2. On a plain shield, three nails *Or*.
3. On a plain shield, a pair of pincers *Or*.
4. On a plain shield, a double fleur-de-lys *Or*.

And on the south side:—

1. On a shield *gules*, a hammer *Or*.
2. On a plain shield, a cross with nail-holes *Or*.
3. On a plain shield, a double fleur-de-lys *Or*.
4. On a plain shield, the Sacred Monogram *Or*.

The alternating collar-beam principals, which are four in number, are finely moulded, and terminate at each end in a wall-plate carved in high relief, no two of which bear the same subject.



Position of Roof Principals and Relieving Arch, in South Aisle (West end)

Copyright

Frank Simpson, Photo.

On the north side, from east to west, we find :—

First, a grotesque head with upright pointed ears. Across the forehead, immediately behind the ears, is what may best be described as a serrated band, out of which rise three objects which may represent feathers.

The second is also a grotesque head with ears similar to those just described. It displays a row of large teeth, and from below the chin falls a mass of long shaggy hair. The head is represented as supporting the bases and parts of two shafts, or pillars.

The third represents two figures kneeling, one on either side of a pillar. The one on the right wears a close-fitting head-dress, and has a long beard. He is clothed in a pleated jerkin, which falls just short of the knees, and is confined round the waist by a broad belt.¹² His left hand rests on the shaft of the pillar.

The figure on the left, in addition to a long beard, has a prominent moustache, and hair which reaches to the waist. He wears a low-crowned hat, round which is fastened a broad band with streamers descending to the small of his back. His jerkin and belt are similar to those of the other figure. His right hand rests on the shaft of the pillar.

The fourth also consists of a figure on either side of a pillar, but in this case we find a man and a woman, the latter standing on the right of the pillar, and the former on the left. The lady's head is draped with a coverchief, the throat and chest are covered by a gorget, while her hands are folded upon her stomach.

¹² An effigy of Thomas Bokenham, in St. Stephen's Church, Norwich, bears a similar belt and jerkin. The date of this effigy is 1460.

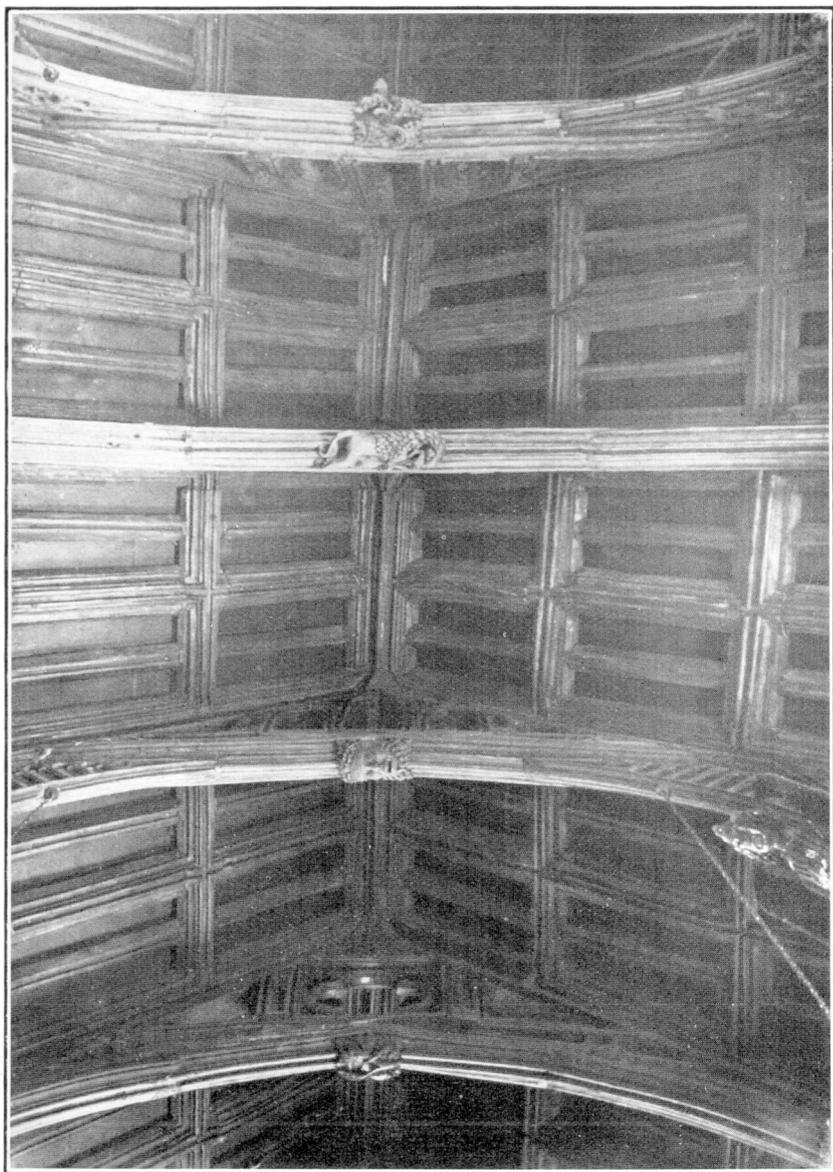
On the south side, the wall-plate nearest the east end presents a grotesque head somewhat resembling the one immediately opposite, but in this case the ears are small and rounded. On the head rests a crown, similar in design to the one illustrated in Vol. I., Plate VI. (No. 16) of *Planché's* "Cyclopædia of Costume" (Chatto & Windus, 1876), which he states to be the Crown of Edward III. The forehead is divided in the centre by a kind of spiral ornament which descends to the bridge of the nose. Before passing on, it is worth noticing that the head on the wall-plate at the other extremity of this same beam is surmounted by a coronet-like band, from which spring three ornaments like feathers.

Taking in conjunction the nature of the adornments of these two heads, is it possible that they were intended to caricature Edward III. and the Black Prince, who was also Prince of Wales?

The second figure is similar to the one opposite it, but shows no teeth. It has a long protruding tongue, the centre line of which is deeply carved.

The third consists of what appear to be two apes standing on their hind legs, one on either side of a pillar. Both have hair which grows in a fringe low on the forehead and falls at the back upon the shoulders. The bodies and limbs of both are carved in such a manner as to suggest a thick coat of hair. The right hand of the figure on the left rests upon the pillar, as does the left hand of the other figure.

The fourth and westernmost wall-plate represents two animals—more like rabbits than anything else—sitting on their haunches, the position of their forefeet corresponding to that last described.



The rafters are all finely moulded, and throughout the whole length of the roof are supported by the hammer-beam principals. Just above the wall-plate, on either side of the south aisle, it is panelled with moulded ribs and traceried heads, no two of which are exactly alike.

In the centre of each of the nine hammer-beams is a carved boss, the subjects are :—

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Four leaves | 5. Mask with open mouth |
| 2. A Rose | 6. A Lion |
| 3. Parsley leaf | 7. Parsley leaf |
| 4. Oak leaf | 8. A naked woman |
| 9. Grotesque head, showing teeth. | |

In the belfry were, at one time, a few beams with heads or other carvings on the corbels, similar to those in the roof of the Church. These unused beams support the tradition that a greater number of roof beams were taken from the Abbey than were required for the Church, and that the surplus timber was stored away in the tower.

The caretaker in charge of the Church, whose family have held this position for several generations, informed me that the surplus timber was in the tower in 1873; it was not there when I first visited the belfry in 1900, therefore it may have disappeared during the restoration of 1888.

The Ven. the Archdeacon of Chester, when delivering a lecture, March 19th, 1901, in the Grosvenor Museum, on "The Roof of St. Mary's-on-the-Hill, Chester," stated :—¹³

"We know that there is a tradition that the roof of Cilcain Church, near Mold, came from Basingwerke; but this may have been taken from the refectory or some other portion of

¹³ "Chester Archaeological Journal" (N.S.), vol. VIII., pp. 78-9.

the Abbey. It is, I am told, an interesting specimen of the double hammer-beam pattern; and evidently, from the position of the principals, was not made for that Church. The Vicar of Cilcain (Mr. Felix), informed me that a gentleman from Holywell had told him some time ago that it was his grandfather's horses that had brought the roof there; whilst the father of the present squire of Penbedw had said that an old clerk burnt some of the surplus timber, as if more timber than was required had been brought there. Putting these two stories together, and supposing them to be true, it seems as if some building belonging to the Abbey had been taken down (say in the 18th century), and the roof taken to Cilcain—though this is almost incredible."

If the gentleman meant the south aisle, I quite agree with Archdeacon Barber, it is certainly incredible; but probably he had been told that some timber was removed from Basingwerk to re-roof Cilcain Church. If this was the case, it would either apply to the north aisle—which, as before stated, was restored in the year 1746—or to some subsequent repairs to the roof. There is no account in the Vestry Books of the restoration of the north aisle, but this may be accounted for, as the cost was borne by the Rev. Richard Davies.

Considerable repairs took place at the church, evidently to the roof, in 1786-7, of which the following particulars are entered in the Vestry Book of that time:—

"To two Thousand and half of Slates	I	6	3
„ carriage of do.	I	6	3
„ 300 lots of nails	„	2	„
„ Robert Griffith Slater	5	9	10
„ Thos. Hughes Smith	„	5	2
„ 18 feet between Oaek and Sickomore	„	18	„
„ Eight hobets ¹⁴ of Lime	„	6	„

¹⁴ A hobbit, or hobit, is a local measure peculiar to North Wales. A hobit of wheat weighs 168 lbs.; of beans 180 lbs.; of barley 147 lbs.; of oats 105 lbs.; of potatoes 210 lbs. when getting up, but in winter 200 lbs.; and six pecks to the hobit; being $2\frac{1}{2}$ bushels imperial.—*Morton* "Cyclo. Agric." (1863). Farm produce is still bought by the hobit in Flintshire, but for builders' material the measure has ceased to be used.

To Laying and Setting Spars and Boards on the Ch	1	8	0
„ lot nails	„	8	„
„ 6 thousand of strong do.	„	15	„
„ one thousand of strong board nails	„	3	„
„ 30 hobets of lime	1	2	6
„ one load of gravel	„	2	„
„ 15 lb of Hair	„	9	4
„ 16 hundred of lats	1	17	4
„ to fetch do. from Ruthin	„	5	„
„ Shovel and Spead [Spade]	„	5	6

It has been suggested that the Cilcain roof was formerly that of the Refectory of the Abbey, which was stated to be 67 feet long and 28 feet wide; although it may perhaps originally have been 80 feet long.

The Cilcain nave roof is 54 feet 4 inches in length, and extends beyond the chancel step 4 feet 3 inches; it is 22 feet 6 inches in width. The main compartments, of which there are four, vary from 14 feet 7 inches down to 13 feet 3 inches from bracket to bracket.

The part over the chancel, which, as before stated, is of different design, is 17 feet $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches long to the first hammer-beam; 22 feet 7 inches wide, and 7 feet 11 inches from the wall-plate to the centre of the curve. The entire height is 23 feet 4 inches. It seems, therefore, hardly probable that this roof could have formerly been that of the Refectory at Basingwerk.

Much speculation has taken place as to when this roof (of the south aisle) and that of St. Mary's-on-the-Hill, Chester, were erected at the Abbey. After careful research, extending over a period of several years, I venture to think that there is little doubt that both roofs were erected during the abbacy of Thomas Ap Dafydd Pennant, about 1450-70.

Two celebrated bards—Guthin, or Guttin Owain,¹⁵ and Tudur Aled¹⁶—speak of the water-mills and wind-mills which this Abbot erected, and of his having enlarged and beautified the Abbey.¹⁷

We have the prophecy of Robin Ddu (already mentioned) who flourished about 1460.

Again speaking of the Chester roof, the architect responsible for its restoration in 1891 wrote to the late Mr. Micklethwaite, at that time architect to Westminster Abbey, submitting to him some rubbings of the carpenters' marks found during that restoration, and a photograph of the roof. The latter gentleman, after careful examination, assigned it to the time of Henry VII., 1485-1509. He remarked:—

“The carpenters' marks are curious. I take it that they are not, as such marks in masonry, the marks of individual workmen, but are meant as guides in putting up the roof. The roof would be framed together below, and the pieces marked, so that they would be put in their proper places when fixed above. We have a very curious lot of such marks in the bronze screen round Henry VII.'s tomb. Here they are numbers; but our Chester friends seem not to have been able to cypher beyond five, and used other marks. These marks, however, seem to be correlated; and by putting each in its place on a plan of the roof, the system might be recovered. Some of the marks are Tudor capital letters.”¹⁸

The writer has, at various times, examined Cilcain roof to see if any carpenters' marks could be found,

¹⁵ Guttyn Owain was a distinguished poet, A.D. 1460-1490.—“Arch. Camb.” Vol. 1, p. 26. *Ibid*, Pennant's Tours (Rhys). Vol. 1, p. 38.

¹⁶ Tudur Aled, a Dominican Friar and a bard who flourished from 1480-1520.—“Arch. Camb.” Vol. 1, p. 27. *Ibid*, Seabright MS.

¹⁷ According to Bishop Tanner, the Abbey was first built in 1131 A.D.

¹⁸ “Chester and North Wales Archaeological Society's Journal,” N.S., vol. viii., p. 75.

always without success. This is not to be wondered at, as marks such as these are probably hidden from view. This was the case at St. Mary's Church, Chester; when the roof was taken down, the marks were discovered on the upper side of the bosses, etc.

In 1843 Cilcain roof was in such a bad state that it was found imperative to undertake an early examination and thorough restoration as soon as possible.

After several meetings of the parishioners and others interested in this beautiful roof had been held, a subscription list was opened and donations were received by Mr. Molineux, the manager of the Mold Branch of the National and Provincial Bank of England.

Mr. Llewellyn F. Lloyd, of Nannerch, a large landed proprietor in the district, interested himself deeply in the scheme, and, in order that the work might be proceeded with at once, guaranteed the whole cost of the work, which amounted to £578 4s. 11½d. It was chiefly through the exertion of this gentleman that the work was completed.

Colonel M. Williams, another local landowner, generously headed the subscription list with a donation of £50. A complete balance sheet of the fund appears in the Churchwardens' Account Book of the time.

The services of Mr. Ambrose Poynter, F.S.A.,¹⁹ Secretary of the Royal Institute of British Architects, were requisitioned, who in 1845 undertook the restoration, which he completed in a most scientific and successful manner without removing the main structure.

¹⁹ Mr. Ambrose Poynter, Architect, was the father of Sir Edward Poynter, Bart., President of the Royal Academy.

Mr. Poynter described these repairs in the following words:—

“ Previous to the late repair, the roof of Cilcain Church was in a state which threatened immediate ruin. The principle of its construction, as of many of the church roofs of the Middle Ages, was that of the collar beam, united by knees to the principal rafters, the horizontal tie being placed so high as to oppose, in the absence of any other connection between the timbers but mortices and wooden pins, very little resistance to the tendency of such roofs to spread at the feet of the rafters; and the purlins and small rafters being tenanted to the principals, and to each other in short lengths, there was as little to prevent the whole structure from racking longitudinally by the action of the wind. Hence the failure of pins, which had occurred more or less throughout, partly from the strain on them induced by these causes, had produced a general dislocation of the parts. The joints between the timbers were generally open, many of the tenons drawn out of the mortices, and in some places the knees and the rafters were separated by a space of three or four inches. Many of the timbers were also in a rotten condition, and the tenons absolutely gone; so that nothing but the application of iron straps had held them in their places.

“ As a thorough repair had become imperative to prevent the fall of the roof, and it was altogether inexpedient to think of taking down and repairing it, it was necessary to devise means for maintaining it in its position and rendering it permanently secure. To effect this object, the first operation after laying the timbers bare was to bolt firmly together with long screw-bolts the rafters and collar beams, and the knees connecting them, so as to prevent all possibility of their separation going further; and, in performing this, a force was applied which succeeded in drawing these timbers into their places and closing the joints. The purlins, plates, and ridge-pieces were then secured from end to end by continuous longitudinal iron straps screwed to the back of these timbers across the principal rafters; and in like manner the short rafters were secured to the purlins. Thus was the structure made stable in all its parts without the removal

of any of the timbers except such as were too much decayed to be trustworthy; these were taken out and replaced by new. In places where, from neglect, it had been exposed to leakage, the oak was reduced to powder. Some decorative repairs were afterwards effected. A quantity of whitewash was removed.²⁰ The large carved angels terminating the hammer beams, some of which had lost their wings, were made good; and the whole, which had necessarily assumed a patchy appearance from the intermixture of new oak, was brought to a uniform tint by varnish stained with bitumen."

In 1910 Mr. Horace Davies, A.R.I.B.A., and the writer carefully examined several parts of the inner roof, and found, especially over the south-west door, that the woodwork was very much decayed, probably through the outer roof or the gutters not being in thorough repair, and the previous winter's snow having saturated through to the inner roof. The fact had only to be mentioned to the Vicar, when it received immediate attention. It is therefore evident that the outer roofs and gutters require careful and periodical examination in order to prevent injury from natural decay.

The west end of the church adjoining the doorway leading to the north aisle presents a curious feature. Near the door the stonework is broken off, and gives the appearance that a return wall has been removed and the aisle lengthened out. The face of the wall near the floor on the north side is 14 inches from the face of the stonework of the adjoining piers; but by means of a plain pointed arch the stonework above is brought forward to the same face and continued up to the wall plate.

²⁰ In the Vestry Accounts are the following items:—

"1787-8.	Whitewashing the Church	...	£1 11 6
1845.	To paid William Edwards for Whitewashing		
	Church and School House and repair roof	£2 6 0"	

This, I think, may be accounted for by the erection of the staircase in 1788-9, already mentioned.

The lower part of the staircase was, at that time, placed against the west wall and returned at right angles along the north wall, the lower face of which appears to have been cut away for that purpose. The arch above is, therefore, only what one would expect to find, supporting as it does the stonework above. This view is also borne out by the entry in the Vestry Book :

“1788-9. . . . Cutting ye pillar by the Staires,” etc., etc.

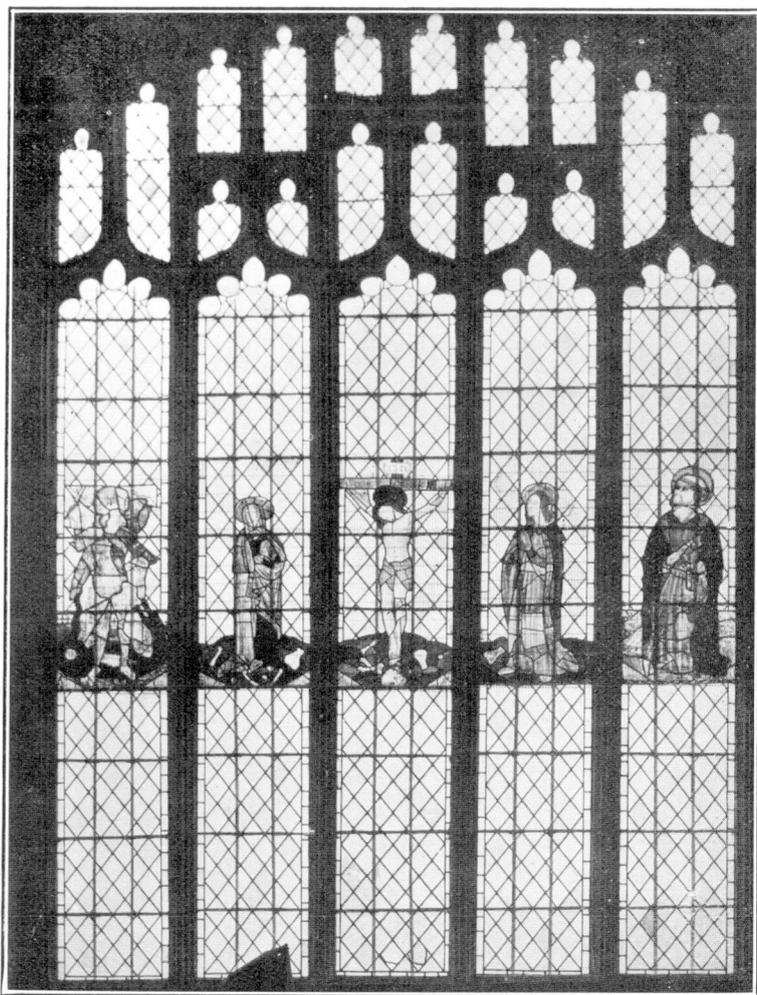
Although both aisles are similar in length, there is a difference in the width, that of the north being 17 feet 4 inches, and that of the south 23 feet 8½ inches.

To the back of a seat at the west end of the south aisle are attached a number of brass plates bearing the names of various local families and residences, including, “Cilcen Hall; Coeddu; Penbedw; Trellynia; Ll. Wynn, Esq., Coed cock; Dolevechles, Issa; Elizabeth Jones; Joshua Price, Fron; Thomas Williams, Maesygroes; T. Parry, of Caergwrely, seate, 1789; John Francis, Wrexham.”

These plates were removed from the old pews and attached to the westernmost seat during the restoration of 1888.

East Window

To the Perpendicular period belongs the chancel window of five lights, which contains some old stained glass. In the centre is the figure of Our Lord on the Cross, with a skull and cross bones below; on the left is represented St. Mary, and on the right St. John.



The East Window

Copyright

Frank Simpson, Photo.

On the extreme left is St. George and the Dragon, and on the extreme right St. Peter, robed in the garb of a monk.

In "Archæologia Cambrensis," 5th series, vol. 1, p. 182, 1844, it is stated that "This window bears the date of 1546." I have visited this church every year since 1900, have photographed it many times, but have failed to discover such a date on it; neither have I met anyone who has actually seen such a date; but on three of the bottom panes of the centre light, cut into the glass, are the following:—

"John Bill
New leaded this light
March 30th 1776

DAVID EDWARDS
JOHN ROBERTS

Churchwardens."

"This was made by Edwd.
Bill Junr, Feb 24, 1837."

"This glass all restored
and releaded by
Burlison & Grylls
London 1888."

It is therefore possible that the date 1546 may have been scratched on it at some later period, and disappeared during the last reparation.

The stained glass of the east window had a wire covering placed over it in 1794-5 at a cost of £1.

The Communion Table was formerly of stone, for we find in the Vestry Accounts:—

"1790-1. Beur etc to the Stone Cutters When	
them making the Alltter	,, 4 ,,
1794-5. For Table Cloth	,, 17 ,, "

Norman Font and Ancient Tombstones

Near the south-west door, on a stone shelf raised 16 inches from the floor, are remains of an early Norman font, remarkable for the interlaced ornamentation of its exterior and the conical form of its interior. This was found in 1845, buried in the ground about three feet below the surface, under the pulpit near the south wall.

Mr. J. O. Westwood, when writing about this font in 1846, says:—

“It is much the worse for the bad usage it has been subjected to; but when entire formed a square basin in its upper part, the external measure of which is about eighteen inches. The lower part of the basin has the angles cut off, so as to form an octagon, standing upon an octagonal base not quite so large as the rectangular upper part. I have nowhere met with such a curiously-formed font in my ecclesiological rambles, nor is there such a shaped one represented in Vanvoorst's work on fonts. The interior forms an obconical basin, having a small circular hole at the base for the discharge of water. I believe, therefore, that in this respect the font is also remarkable, as it is, thirdly, in the character of the ornamentation of the exterior surface. This, when the font was entire, consisted of twelve groups of trifoliations at the top, the lower part composed of five lines variously disposed, so as to form festoons and angulated patterns quite unlike anything I have ever met with either in stonework or MSS., with the single exception of the font in the dilapidated Church of Llanidan, in Anglesey. . . This pattern, it will be seen, partakes in no way of the Gothic style of ornament, but rather approximates to the Norman, so that we shall perhaps be not far wrong in assigning the twelfth century as its date. It is to be hoped that it will be repaired and placed in the church instead of the present font,²¹ which is destitute of architectural character.”

²¹ Mr. Westwood here alludes to the font in the church prior to the restoration, which was replaced at that time by the present one.



The Norman Font



1



2

14th Century Tombstones

Copyright

Frank Simpson, Photo.

Mr. Westwood gives the size of the old font as 1 foot 6 inches across the top; it actually measures $16\frac{1}{4}$ inches square, and is 12 inches in height. The error has probably arisen through the author having written in his notes 16 inches, and afterwards when writing his account mistaking the size for 1 foot 6 inches.

There is also a finely-carved corbel, and part of an old stone stoup, or vessel for holding holy water. The latter is said to have been brought from Basingwerk Abbey. It is three-cornered in shape, 9 inches high, and measures 12 inches on the right side and 14 inches on the other side.

There are also several 14th century stone coffin-lids with various designs and inscriptions. These, with the exception of one which formed the lintel of the doorway to the old vestry, and another used as a coping-stone on the north side of the church, were removed from the south wall of the church during the restoration of 1888. At one time they were scattered about in various places.

1. This inscribed and ornamented coffin-lid, from which the head has been broken off, bears the bust of a man with the left hand across the breast; the hand grasping a stick in a perpendicular position, the right arm hanging down. On the right side of the lower part of the stone are a few Lombardic letters.

This, prior to the 1888 restoration, was used as a coping stone on the north gable. The size of the remains are 11 inches wide at the top, 6 inches at the bottom, and 21 inches in length.

2. Another coffin-lid, decorated with a rude incised cross; the head a plain circle enclosing eight pointed leaves in a wheel-like pattern. The stem, part of which is gone, consisted of two simple lines. This measures 9 inches across the head, 8 inches across the lower part, and is $14\frac{1}{2}$ inches in height. This is probably the oldest of the coffin-lids now seen in the church.

3. A stone coffin-lid, from which part of the head has been broken off; bears in the upper part the bust of a man, with the hands crossed on the breast. On three sides of the lower portion, in a border $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, is inscribed:—

“X HIC . IACET . MARREDT . IERWERTH.”

The stone, which has been broken in two, measures 12 inches across the head, $9\frac{1}{2}$ inches across the foot, and 2 feet 9 inches in length.

4. Another sculptured stone, with part of an inscription down the centre, bears the effigy, in low relief, of a female in a rude style of art. This was formerly placed, with the face downwards, as the lintel of the doorway to the old vestry under the gallery. It measures 2 feet $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length, and 1 foot in width, but has originally been much longer and wider.

5. Head of a coffin-lid, ornamented with a cross fleury of quatrefoil design, interlaced with four curves somewhat resembling horseshoes. In the centre a flower. The part containing the shaft of the cross is missing. It measures 2 feet 4 inches in length, and 1 foot 5 inches in breadth. It is said to have been in the Rectory garden in 1845, and Archdeacon Thomas, writing in 1872, states it was there at that time.



3



4

14th Century Tombstones

Copyright

Frank Simpson, Photo.



5



6

14th Century Tombstones

Copyright

Frank Simpson, Photo.

6. A 14th century stone, mutilated and made use of as a lintel, with the face downwards, over the doorway leading from the north aisle to the base of the tower. In the centre of the stone is the stem of a cross, with rectangular base; and crossing from the upper left corner to the lower right corner is a broad, naked sword. Along the right side is part of an inscription in Lombardic lettering, now so clogged up with whitewash as to be almost indecipherable; but the following can still be seen:—

“MAREdit : AP : BLEdYHN.”

The centre portion is filled with floral ornamentation.

In the Vestry Book is the following:—

“1791-2, For Cutting Wall & Setting 2 Doors in
the Steeple by Agreement „ 18 0”

It is, therefore, only reasonable to presume that this coffin-lid was cut and used as a lintel at that time.

The second door was above the one just mentioned, on a level with the first storey in the belfry. For what use it was intended it is hard to say, unless as a kind of squint for the ringers. This is now blocked up with masonry, but in the belfry the lintel and position of the door is clearly seen.

7. This 14th century coffin-lid is undoubtedly the finest of the whole series. In the centre is a shield, 24 inches wide at the top, and 21½ inches in depth; in the centre is a griffin rampant, and three roses; around the shield, inscribed in Lombardic letters, 2¼ inches deep, is:—

“HIC : JACET : JO . . . NDYAU . . . REQUIESCAT
IN : PACE”;

and within the shield, “AMEN.”

The stone is broken in two across the bottom of the shield, *i.e.*, 15½ inches from the (present) bottom of the stone. A huge sword, evidently in a scabbard, as it bears a metal heel, extends from the upper left corner of the stone down to the lower right corner. Below the shield the space is partly filled by a foliated design.

Prior to the last restoration this stone was imbedded in the interior south wall of the church, near the pulpit. The upper portion measures 2 feet 9 inches in height, and 1 foot 9 inches to 1 foot 11 inches in breadth. The lower portion is 1 foot 10½ inches in width, and 1 foot 3½ inches in length; the total size being about 4 feet 1 inch by 1 foot 11 inches.

A somewhat similar altar tomb may be seen in St. Mary's Church, Llanfair, Dyffryn Clwyd. It bears a similar shield and a griffin: the inscription being:—

“HIC JACET DAVID F[ILIVS] MADOC, REQ[UI]ESCAT
IN PACE.”

There is also a fragment of another tombstone, 12 inches by 9½ inches, bearing an incised floral design.

The Bells

In the belfry are two bells; around the crown of the larger, and within a beaded band is this inscription:—

“Revnd. Thomas Evans, Vicar.”

and below the band:—

“William Williams
John Kendrick Church Wardens”



7

14th Century Tombstone

Copyright

Frank Simpson, Photo.

Round the outer cusp is:—

“Bury, Curtis & Kennedy
 Founders. Liverpool
 1848.”

The other bell is very small, being only 8 inches high and $10\frac{1}{4}$ inches across the bottom; the circumference round the cusp is 33 inches, This bell bears no inscription. That these two bells and those which they replaced have been a source of great expense is amply proved by the Churchwardens' Accounts.

The first entry relating to either of the bells appears in 1778-9.

Below are given most of the entries which refer to the bells:—

“ 1779			
3 Sept.	To ale when the new bel was Hung	„	2 6
15 „	To Mr. Green the Balance between the Old and New Bell	16 12	6
	to a Bell rope	„	3 0
	Journey to Chester to pay Mr. Green	„	1 6
1780-1	to making the Bell Clapper	„	4 0
	to new Glove for the . . . and fistnit [fastening it] in the Stock	„	3 0
	to rope for ye little Bell	„	1 6
	to carrying the Bell to Chester	„	2 3½
1781 to	to Jn. Roberts for Glove to the Bell	„	2 0
June 13	to Bell rope	„	4 4
1782	Journey for do.	„	1 6
1785-6	To Thos Hughes for mending the bell Expencies for taking the Bell down and putting up do.	„	8 6
	To Bell rope	„	4 „
	for the little Bell	„	12 „
	do. rope	„	1 6

	To Cord for the little Bell	„ 1 0
Easter 1792	To repairing the Little Bell	„ 2 6
to		
Easter 1793		
1808	To Pd. T. Wms for tolling the 8 o'clock Bell	„ 15 0
1849	Expenses attending the Bell from Mostyn to Liverpool and back	„ 6 6
	Two Journies to Mostyn and back with the Bell	„ 14 0”

The Vestry

At the east end of the north aisle is the vestry; on the north wall of which is a “Table of Charities,” painted on a wooden tablet, as follows:—

“An Exact List of ye Several Benefactions to ye Poor of ye Parish of Kilken:—

1617	David ap Rees ab Evan of Llyfsye coed bequeath'd ye sum of	00 05 00
1703	Mrs Dorothy Mostyn of Llandurnog be- queath'd	08 00 00
„	Thomas ab William Lloyd bequeathed	00 03 00
1729	Roger Mostyn, Sen ^r Esq, of Kilken left	50 00 00
„	Roger Mostyn Jun ^r Esq of Gyrm left	50 00 00
1634	Thomas Williams of Mould bequeath'd the Interest of	05 00 00
	to be distributed in White bread to ye poor of this Parish, Christmas Eve for ever.	
1756	Griffith Williams of Gwernassiog in the Parish of Mould left	50 0 0
1808	Miss Jane Edwards of Maes-y-groes in this Parish left by will	45 0 0

Richard Williams, Thomas Griffiths,
Church Wardens
1735.”

It is evident that the two last bequests were added later than 1735, or, which is very probable, the board has been re-painted since 1808.

I am informed by the Vicar that none of the above charities are now, 1911, in existence.

Monumental Inscriptions now in the Church

On the east wall of the chancel are two white marble memorial stones; that on the north side of the window is inscribed:—

“Mark the perfect man,
And behold the upright;
For the end of that man is peace.”

As a grateful tribute of filial affection,
This monument is erected to the Memory of
THOMAS MOSTYN EDWARDS ESQ^R
of Kilken Hall in this parish.

In whose person were meekly blended all
The inestimable qualities that form
The tenderness of a parent.
The character of a gentleman.
And the excellence of a Christian:
Prepared by a life of Godliness for an
entrance into glory,
He trusted in his Redeemers love
and died in peace,
On the 13th of January 1832,
Aged 78 years.

Blessed are the pure in heart
For they shall see God.”

In a panel below is a shield bearing the arms of the family, surmounted by their crest. Above the shield is a small scroll on which is engraved:—

“CUM LIBERTATE QUIES.”

Below the shield, and partly surrounding it, is a larger scroll which bears the motto:—

“NEC FLATUS NEC ELATUS.”

That on the south side of the window is inscribed :—

“ Underneath

The Bodies of three Roger Mostyns
Grandfather, Father, and Son lie Interr'd :

The first	}	buried	July 13 1710	}	aged	54
The Second			Augst 13 1729			48
The Third			July 27 1729			28

ROGER MOSTYN Y Grandfather was son of Tho. Mostyn, 2d Son of Sir Tho Mostyn of Kilken & Brother of Sir Roger Mostyn of Mostyn Bart.

ROGER MOSTYN Y Father married Margaret Griffith | Heiress of Gyrn & Pant y llanwndy, by whom he had Issue,

ROGER married to Jane daughter of David Hughes of | Carnddwen Gent & Elizabeth married to David Parry | of Plas yrhal Esq; His 2d wife was Susan Daughter of | Edd Williams of Meillionydd in ye County of Carnarvon | Esq, by whom he had no issue.

The Grand son, & last of ye name in Kilken House living | Altogether with his Father, & dying young wanted the | Opportunities of Exercising ye Virtues of Hospitality | And good nature, so long Hereditary in the Family | And for which his Ancestors had lived belov'd and | Dy'd lamented of their Neighbourhood. He left 3 Infants Charlotte & Elizabeth twin Sisters, and | Margaret to ye Care of their Tender Mother, who has Ordred this Monument to be Erected out of Dear Respect to ye Memory of him & his Family 1731."

On the south wall of the chancel is a marble tablet, on which is inscribed :—

W.B.B

“To the Glory of God, and in loving memory of William Barber Buddicom of Penbedw who, before he had effected his proposed restoration of this Church was called to his rest August 4th 1887. The Church was restored by his sorrowing widow : A : D : 1888.”

Next to this is an oblong brass plate bearing the following inscription :—

“ In Loving Memory of
Arthur Troughton Roberts Esq.
of Coed Dú in this Parish
Born Nov. 28th 1815 Died April 3rd 1893.
“ My soul hath hoped in the Lord.”
“ My soul hath waited on his word.”

Adjoining is a white marble memorial :—

“ In
Memory
of
Anne, The Beloved Wife of
Hugh Roberts Esqr of
Mold in this County
Who Departed This
Life Jan^y xxiii,
mdcccxlvii, Aged lxii years.
Also of their two Infant Children
Anne Catherine, born March xiii,
died March xxxi, mdcccxvii.
Hugh, born Dec^r i, died Dec^r xi
mdcccix.

I am the Resurrection and the life, saith the Lord; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, Yet shall he live: and he that liveth and believeth in me shall never die.”—
John C. xi V. xxv. xxvi.

A sculptured tablet on the splay of the arch of the middle window in the south wall bears the arms and crest, in colours, of Edward Eyton. It is inscribed :—

“ P.M.
Underneath
lies (sic) the Body
of EDWARD EYTON Gent, Son & Heir
of Edward Eyton of Maesÿ Groes Gent
by Jane his only Wife Daug^{tr} of John Griffith
of Brÿnford, by whom also he had
Issue 8 Daughters.

He married Mary eldest Daught^r
of Hugh Pritchard of Corvedwer
in Llandurnog Gent.
By whom he had issue Mary who dy'd
an enfant. He dy'd August 24 1718
Aged 29."

Flush with the floor, just outside the altar rail, are two small marble tablets, one on either side. That on the north side is inscribed :—

" Thomas Mostyn Edwards
of Kilken Hall, Esq :
Born December 20 : 1753
Died January 13 : 1832 : "

and on the south side :—

" Thomas Hughes
Late Vicar of this Parish
Died 14th September 1826
Aged 66 years
also Ann Relict of the above
Died 24th of Feby 1831 aged 43. "

On the floor, just below the chancel step, and on the north side, are three tombstones placed side by side. The first is inscribed :—

" In Memory of
Thomas Lloyd,
of Plas yr Efgob : who
died 10th of Sep^r 1824,
Aged 69
Also Jane wife of the above
who died Nov^r 21, 1830
Aged 74. "

The middle stone is inscribed :—

" Here lieth the body of
Margaret the daughter of
Thomas and Sarah Williams of
Dolevechles died June 14th 1812,
Aged 23.
Also John son of Thos. & Mary
Williams Celyn Northop who
died Nov^r 20th 1849. Aged 34. "

At the top of the third stone is a brass plate engraved —

“ Here lyeth the body of
Thomas Williams of Dolevechles
Who died December the 9th 1768,
Aged 83.”

Below and cut in the stone is :—

“ Cath^e Died Febr^y 24th 1779 Aged²²
Edw^d Died April 19th 1800 aged 14
John Died July 15th 1800 aged 16
Tho^s Died June 19th 1802 aged 72
Sarah Died June 23rd 1802 aged 55 ”

At the base of the Lectern is a stone inscribed :—

“ Sacred
to the memory of
Robert
Son of John & Rebecca Edwards
of Peny-cefn who died May 8th
1845 aged 25 years.”

On the floor of the aisle are three tombstones, and one brass, inscribed as follows :—

“ H R
Coed-Du ”

“ HERE LIETH THE BODY
OF SAMVEL IONES AT-
TVRNEY WHO WAS
BVRIED THE 18 DAY
OF ^OBER 1669
S ♥ I ”

²² space for age left blank.

“ HERE LYETH THE BODY OF
 OWEN IONES SON OF
 SAMVEL IONES WHO WAS
 BVRIED THE 13 DAY OF
 IANVARY 1669

O ♥ I ”

On the brass plate is engraved:—

“ Here
 Lyeth the Body of
 Jeffrey Eyton Son of Tho.
 Eyton of Kilken Interr'd
 May the 8th 1744 Aged 28.
 Also Lyeth Ellis Eyton
 Interr'd Sept^r the 6
 1751 Aged 29. ”

At the west end are two tombstones, one inscribed:—

“ Robert son of John & Rebecca
 Edwards Peny-Cefn Died
 March 11 1817 aged 3 years
 Also Sarah Daughter of the
 above, Died January 25 18..
 Aged 14 years
 Also Edward Died an Infant ”

Part of the inscription at the top of this stone has been cut off, evidently when re-seating the church in 1888.

The other inscribed:—

“ Here Lyeth the Body of
 Margaret the Wife of Joseph
 Hilditch of Kilford Farmer
 who was Buried the 17th day of
 September 1780 Aged 48.”

The Registers, &c.

The Church Registers begin in 1576, and continue through the Commonwealth period. The entries are all in English, with the exception of a short period between 1700 and 1737, during which time they are in Latin.

The accounts of each of the two churchwardens, year by year, have been kept independently. As a result of this method we find—

(1) That the one warden paid the whole of certain items.

(2) The other warden paid the whole of certain other items. And the payment of a third set of items was shared between them.

In the case of the last-named class of items, the cost was sometimes halved between the accounts and sometimes divided in unequal parts, no consistent ratio of payment, in the latter cases, being observed.

Consequently, in order to obtain the price of certain items, it is sometimes necessary to add together the prices shown in both Wardens' Accounts.

The Vestry Books, though few in number, contain many interesting items. We find a number of entries relating to the purchase of "Rushes," evidently for covering the floor of the church.

	s.	d.
" 1714 For Rushes & carriadge	4	6
1782 To John Williams for Rushes	5	0"

The killing of vermin caused considerable expenditure.

“ 1714	For killing a pole cat	oo	oi	oo
1732	Paid John Williams for killing 4 Foxes and two fichets in our time	„	4	4
	Paid Owan Griffiths for killing two fichets	„	„	4
1776	To Killing a fox Bich	„	2	6
	To Edw ^d Griffith for a Fox Bich	„	2	6
	To Jn. Humphreys for 3 Whelps	„	3	o
	To a Fox Dog and two Whelps	„	4	o”

and so these entries continue from year to year.

A professional “Mole Catcher” was retained by the churchwardens, for we find—

“At a Vestry held 24th day of January 1850. It was proposed by Mr. Catheral and Seconded by the Rev. T. Evans that Edward Simon having neglected to put in the necessary Bail for due performance of his Office, as agreed at a Vestry held on February 15th 1841; and having failed to destroy the Moles to the satisfaction of the Parishioners, be discharged on the 1st March next; and that he shall not be paid for the current year unless the Moles be killed in the meantime. It was agreed by the Parishioners that a Vestry be held on the 7th day of March 1850 for the purpose of electing a new Mole Catcher.”

“ March the 7th 1850.

At a Vestry held on March the 7th 1850, it was proposed by Mr. Catheral and seconded by Mr. John Lloyd that Edward Simon be allowed to follow his business as Mole Catcher for the year ending March 1851 upon the same terms as before.”

Ladders were frequently purchased. Several entries may be seen in each year:—

		s.	d.
“ 1777	To a Lather	„	1 o
	To two lathers	„	10 o
	To Elinor Price a lather	„	1 o”

The Vestry Meetings evidently proved very dry work, for each year we find entries like the following:—

“ 1777	To Vestry Ale	„ 11 6
1782	To Vestry Ale	„ 3 0
1783	To Vestry Ale	„ 3 0”

“ 12 Day of March 1781

It is further agreed that the s^d Vestry from the parishioners are here present we allowed but one Gownie [gown] yearly to the Psalm Singers and we will allow^d nothing for killing fox nor for Bich nor Whelps And we allowed nothing to the Carols Singers at Christmas Day.

EDWARD JONES

PETER WILLIAMS ”

		£	s.	d.
“ 1783	To Writing the Registers all	„	2	6
	To Parchment	„	„	8
1784-5	To Mending the Surprice &c	„	2	6
	To 3 yards of Bier Cloth at 15 ^d [? 15s.] yd	2	5	0
	To 10 yards of Black Ribon at 6 ^d yd	„	5	0
1785	P ^d for mending the Image	„	1	6
	Do. for nails for the loft	„	1	6
1786-7	To two Welch Com[m]on Prayer [Books]	1	7	0
	To two English do.	„	18	0
1789-91	To Robert Lloyd for carrying 89½ yards of Flax at 14½ Pr [?]	2	13	10
	Bevrets [Drinks] for the Joiner	„	2	6
	To Common Prayer Book	„	6	0
	To the Ruler [Rural] Dean	„	3	6
1791-2	To new Surplice	2	13	2
	To making do.	„	10	6
	To two jurneys to Holywell for the Surplice	„	3	0
1794-5	New Surprice	2	0	0
	For making do.	„	10	6
	For journey for do.	„	1	6
	To repairing the [pin] fold workman- ship & labourer	„	19	6
1799-1800	For Sto[c]ks	„	13	0”

“ At a Select Vestry held 31st May 1823

Agreed with Doctor Bevan for cure James Simon for 20/-
no cure no pay.”

[There are several such entries.]

“ 1844, May 6, Paid John Owen for Pulpit Candlesticks 1 5 0
1845 To New Welch Prayer Book 1 6 0 ”

In the church, formerly, was a chest or box. In the Vestry Accounts we find :—

“ 1807-8 To 3 Locks for the Chest in the Church „ 5 0 ”

This box is now in the porch of the school. It is considerably smaller and not cut out of the solid trunk of the tree, as are most of those to be seen in the Welsh churches. It measures 3 feet in length, 15 inches in width, and $17\frac{1}{4}$ inches in depth. It has three heavy massive hinges, which extend up the back, across the lid, and fall over the front, fitting over three very heavy staples.

The Church Plate

The church is not very rich in Communion plate. The silver sacramental vessels now in the church consist of two pieces, as follows :—

1. Cup with cover (Elizabethan);
2. Paten, 1729 (Geo. II.)

There is also a large pewter flagon.

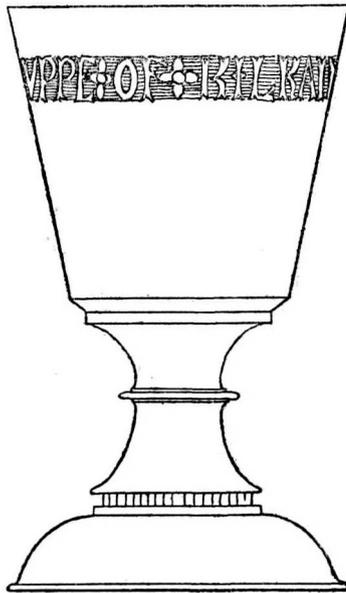
ELIZABETHAN CUP (*circa* 1570).

This is a very fine specimen of the cups of the Elizabethan period. It is similar in shape to others to be seen in churches of old foundation, but as a rule the bowl of the cup is decorated with a band of interlaced strap and foliated work, which is so universal as to have become a guide to the period of their manu-

facture throughout the country. This cup, however, differs, as in place of the usual interlaced band on the bowl, two incised lines form a belt on which is an elaborately-engraved inscription as follows:—

“The cuppe of Kilkain. G.T. B.K.”

Between each of the words is a quatrefoil ornament, and between the initials (probably those of the church-



Communion Cup (*Elizabethan*).

H. F. DAVIES, A.R.I.B.A., *del.*

Copyright.

wardens) is a cross. The cup bears no hall marks. It appears as if it had done so at some time, but it is now very thin, and whatever marks may have been stamped on it have entirely disappeared.

The cup is elongated in form and of bell shape. The stem has a knob in the middle, and is ornamented in

parts with small bands of a lozenge-shaped ornament. It is 6 inches in height; the diameter at the lip is $3\frac{3}{8}$ inches; and at the base nearly $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Depth of bowl is 3 inches.

In the Churchwardens' Accounts is:—

“ 1709	For mending the Silver Cupp	oo	oz	oo
	For fetching the same from Chester	oo	oi	oo”

An almost identical shaped chalice may be seen at Christ Church, Monmouth, the date of which is 1576. The cover, of a single shallow depression, bears on the upper side the same design of lozenge ornament. It is used as a paten.

THE PATEN (1729).

The paten is a large heavy one, standing on four feet. It is $8\frac{1}{4}$ inches square, with scalloped corners and bears the marks:—

1. The maker's initials, V.D., with a small ornament above; the whole in a trefoil.
2. The lion passant.
3. Leopard's head crowned.
4. The date letter O, for 1729.

Beneath is engraved:—

“The Gift of Mrs Susan Mostyn Relict of Roger Mostyn Esqr of Kilken in the aforesaid, for the Service of God.”

PEWTER FLAGON

The massive pewter flagon bears within a shield the maker's initials, G. B.; lion passant; leopard's head; surmounted by a large X.

It weighs 5lb. $9\frac{1}{2}$ oz., and is engraved:—

“The Gift of the Rev. E. Edwards Vicar 1773.”

Churchyard Cross and Sundial

In the churchyard, on the south side, stands a dilapidated 14th century cross. It consists of a tapering shaft, 7 feet $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches in height, true octagon in shape, with 4 inch splay, brought to square, 11 inches at the bottom, and at the top 7 inches, by chiselled broaches 13 inches in length. It is dowelled into a stone base, 2 feet 3 inches square. The shaft is cracked in several places and much decayed, and leans out of the perpendicular. The remains of iron plugs and brace,²³ now nearly eaten away, point to some kind attention having been bestowed upon it in former days. The head has entirely disappeared.

A short distance away, adjoining the south boundary wall, and nearly opposite the priest's old door, which formerly led into the church, is another shaft of similar design and workmanship, but on close inspection it is seen to be that of a sun-dial which has lost its gnomon and dial-plate. Through exposure to the weather it is much decayed. The stem, which is dowelled into a stone base, stands 3 feet 9 inches in height, and is brought to a rectangular base, $6\frac{3}{4}$ inches on two sides and 6 inches on the others. The stone base, 21 inches by 22 inches, shows a moulding on one side, but is plain on the others. This rather points to its having been previously used for some other purpose, or in some other position. Unless attention is soon given to these two relics, they will shortly be past repair.

²³ When visiting the church in 1911 I found the iron plugs and brace had disappeared.

The Ecclesiastical Parish

The parish is one of twelve which formed the Deanery of Holywell in 1844 (December 13th). The Ecclesiastical Commissioners at that time transferred to the Vicar a tenement called "Plas Person,"²⁴ with thirteen acres of land previously belonging to the Rectory; but this was sold in 1869, and the money invested in the purchase of land 11 acres in extent; five acres near the church, and the remainder a short distance away.

The vicarage, which was built in 1807, is situated within a few hundred yards on the south-west side of the church. This took the place of the old thatched rectory, which stood adjacent to the churchyard on the south side.

The patronage of Cilcain Church, which formerly belonged to the See of St. Asaph, was transferred by Act of Parl. 6 & 7, Will. IV. [1835-36] to the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, who subsequently gave it to the Lord Chancellor (in whose gift it still remains) in exchange for another living in his own diocese.

The church has seating accommodation for 268 worshippers.

The population of Cilcain Parish is 362,²⁵ but formerly it numbered 949. The difference is accounted for by the fact that at that time it included the townships of Trellan Llysycoed, Maes-y-groes, Dolfechlas,

²⁴ "Plas Person" is a farm situated on the hill side, on the Denbigh road, about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile from the church.

²⁵ *Crockford*. 1910.

Cefn, Trelynian, and Llysdianhunedd (also called Glust), having an area of 5,500 acres, rated at £5,637.²⁶

For ecclesiastical purposes, however, the townships of Dolfechlas and portions of Cefn and Llysdianhunedd have been assigned to the new district of Rhydymwyn,²⁷ and that of Trelynian and part of Llysdianhunedd to Rhescæ.

It therefore now consists of seven townships, viz.:—Trelan, Llysycoed, Maes-y-groes, Dolfechlas, Cefn, and Llysdianhunedd, and is within the Deanery of Mold.

Near to the lych-gate is a stone building used as a house for the parish hearse. The agreement for its erection in 1810 reads as follows:—

“ At a Vestry further held this 11th day of June 1810,

It was then and there agreed upon that William Jones Wheelwright of this Parish do undertake upon himself fully to make an Hearse & forthwith build an apartment for Lodging the said Hearse with Oak Linten to the Roof Slating the same and also making a door upon the Same to the satisfaction of the Parishioners the door to be of Red Deal and Painted for the sum of Thirty pounds as Witness my hand this day and year above written and the same to be completed by the first of November Inst

The Mark X of

WILLIAM JONES, Wheelwright. ”

“ 1842-3.

April 22	New Set of Harness for the Hearse	£	s.	d.
		5	10	0”

²⁶ “Diocese of St. Asaph.”—*Archdeacon Thomas*.

²⁷ The Order in Council is dated 31st March, 1865.

On the north side of the lych-gate is a stone house, upon the front of which is a stone slab, bearing the following inscription:—

“This building was Erected on the Common by a Voluntary Subscription from the Landowners and Occupiers of land in the Parish as a School for the use and Benefit of the Parishioners 1799.”

It is now used as the residence of the School Mistress, and a National School was built near to it in 1842.

List of the Clergy

“SINECURE RECTORS.”

Collated by

1537	Ralph Birkenhead	Bishop Wharton
1557	John Parsey	Goldwell
1560	Griffith Jones	R. Davies
1564	Thomas Brereton	T. Davies
1566	Thomas Ithell, L.L.D.	T. Davies
1579	William Tomson	Hughes
1596	Thomas Yale.. ..	Hughes
	Bishop Parry (In Commendam).	
1622	Morgan Wynne	Parry
1644	Samuel Lloyd, B.M.	Owen
1673	Thomas Clopton, M.A.	Barrow
1721	Richard Davies, M.A.	Wynne
1746	John Wells	Lisle
1747	John Allen	Lisle
1765	Benjamin Newcome, D.D. . . .	Newcome
1775	Charles Poyntz, D.D.	Shipley
1779	J. Delap, D.D.	Shipley
1813	C. Towerson Cory, D.D.	Cleaver

On the death of the last-named in 1835 the sinecure lapsed to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

VICARS

		Collated or Instituted by	
1536	Gruffydd ap Thomas	..	Bishop Wharton
1585	Thomas Morgan	.. ..	„ Hughes
1626	Robert Prichard	.. ..	„ Hanmer
1626	Henry Morgan	.. ..	„ Hanmer
1665 ²⁸	Edward Lloyd		
1702	Ellis Lewis	.. ..	„ Jones
1705	Peter Hughes, B.A.	..	„ Beveridge
1739 ²⁹	Thomas Price, M.A.	..	„ Maddox
1740	Thomas Edwards, M.A.	..	„ Maddox
1749	John Pryce, B.A.	.. ..	„ Drummond
1762	Evan Ellis, B.A.	.. ..	„ Newcome
1772 ³⁰	Edward Edwards, M.A.	..	„ Shipley
1782 ³¹	John Lloyd, B.D.	.. ..	„ Shipley
1807	Rowland Williams, M.A.	..	„ Cleaver
1809	Thomas Hughes	.. ..	„ Cleaver
1826 ³²	John Hughes	.. ..	„ Luxmoore
1841	Thomas Evans	.. ..	„ Carey
1851 ³³	Brabazon Hallowses, M.A.	..	„ Short
1867	Ebenezer Jones	.. ..	„ Short
1885	John Felix	.. ..	„ Hughes
1909	Henry Richard Hughes, M.A.	..	„ Edwards

²⁸ Vicar of Llan-gwm, 1664, of which he was deprived by Bishop Griffith.

²⁹ Resigned.

³⁰ Collated to Llanarmon in Yale in 1782, and at one time Curate of Wrexham. He published a new and enlarged edition of *Browne Willis'* "Survey of St. Asaph," in two volumes, 1801. It was printed and sold by John Painter, Wrexham.

³¹ Formerly Vicar of Holywell, 1773.

³² Collated to Nannerch.

³³ Collated to Dyserth.

In conclusion, I desire to express my thanks to those who have aided me in my work, and especially to the Rev. H. R. Hughes, M.A., Vicar of Cilcain, Mr. James Hall, Mr. C. Cooper, and Mr. Horace Davies, A.R.I.B.A. To the latter I am indebted for preparing the plan of the church and for sketching the Communion cup.

