

CHESTER CATHEDRAL – PILGRIM PORCH

As part of the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee celebrations a sculptural bronze porch with ceremonial glass doors will be unveiled at the west end of Chester Cathedral in 2022. The Pilgrim Porch will allow the medieval doors to remain open to the city allowing visitors to step into the porch and view of the interior of the Cathedral. This will reinforce the idea that we are an open, welcoming Church guided by the mission “Discovery, Encounter, Faith”.

Each church in the Diocese has been asked to submit an “image” that is significant to their church and the art work from all the churches will form a Labyrinth design, symbolically connecting every church in the Diocese to each other leading to the Cathedral at the center.

For further information visit website:- www.broadbent.studio/pilgrim-porch
<https://www.chester.anglican.org/news/every-church-invited-to-contribute-to-new-jubilee-artwork.php>

The parishioners of our church were asked for their suggestions as to a suitable contribution to this project and the voting results of this exercise was:-

• Saxon Stones	10 Votes
• Font	9 Votes
• Tower	7 Votes
• Mainwairing Memorial	5 Votes
• Hornby Grave	3 Votes
• Woodwork (Finials on the choir stalls)	3 Votes
• Sundial	1 Vote

Thus the submission from St. Mary’s was the Saxon Stones and the photograph and write up that accompanied the photograph are as follows:-

“Our Saxon Heritage, 1,000 Years of Worship”

“Actune Earl Morcar held it”

The above is an extract from the translation of the Domesday Book (1086/7) and it is highly likely that Saxon Princes, Earl Morcar and Earl Edwin, built the first church in Acton in the 11th Century. This building was eventually replaced by the medieval building which we know and love today.

At the time of the Norman Conquest (1066) William the Conqueror granted possession of The Hundred of Warmundestrou to the Norman Earl William de Malbanc.

The carved Saxon Stones which now rest in St. Mary’s were found embedded in the wall of the clerestory during the major Victorian renovation of the Church in 1897 and indicate that there was a permanent church on this site in Saxon times. One stone depict the majesty of Christ, another shows three human heads, possibly the open mouths denoting supplication. We also see the image of a bishop bearing his shepherd’s crook and lastly the symbol of the Eagle which is connected to St. John’s Gospel (Chapter 4 – the Revelation of St. John).

These Saxon stones have seen countless worshippers for over a 1,000 years and also the reigns of many Monarchs including our beloved Queen, Elizabeth the Second. They have witnessed the joy and suffering of so many who have sought solace and understanding from our Lord, Jesus Christ.

May Acton Church always be known as a sacred place which offers welcome, love, kindness and commitment to the community it serves and to all who seek tranquility within its walls.