Ranton, Staffordshire

Feature Sets (2)

• Exterior Features

Description

The ruined priory of Ranton and the remains of the Georgian hall alongside it stand in landscaped parkland 1 mile W of the village of Ranton and 5 miles W of Stafford. All that survives of the abbey church is the W tower and a short section of the S nave wall rebuilt to house the S doorway. This doorway is of the late 12thc. The 15thc. tower has angle buttresses, a five-light W window and two-light bell-openings below a saltire frieze and an embattled parapet. All the main windows are now blocked with bricks. To the S of the church is the ruined shell of the house, called Ranton Abbey and dating from c. 1820 according to Pevsner. Various antiquarian drawings survive in the William Salt Library, many by Buckler and most concentrating on the W tower. SV VIII 59 (Buckler 1842) shows the S doorway looking much as it does today, but it is not clear from this whether any more of the nave wall was standing at that date.

History

Ranton was held by Robert of Stafford in 1086, and Godric held it from him. Nicholas de Stafford granted Ranton in fee to the father of Robert fitzNoel of Ellenhall, who founded the priory founded in the mid-12thc. The dedication to St Mary des Essarz indicates that it was founded on newly cleared (assarted) land. The foundation charter, given in Dugdale, states that the canons were to live under the rule of Haughmond Abbey (Shropshire), and fixes the foundation date between 1130 (the earliest date for the foundation of Haughmond) and 1166 (when some of the signatories of the charter were dead). The founder and later his son, Thomas Noel, gave endowments of land in Staffordshire, and other grants followed in the 12thc. and 13thc., including generous benefactions from the Knightley, among which was the right to quarry stone in their manor in Gnosall. Full details of these benefactions are given in VCH. At some time in the 13thc. a Hospital of St Anne was established in the priory precincts. Ranton thus grew large and sought independence from Haughmond, and this was granted, in return for an annual payment of 100s, in 1247. The Taxation of 1291 gave Ranton’s total income as £59 14s, of which £26 7s. 4d. was temporal income from rents, mostly within the county, and the remaining £33 6s. 8d. was spiritual, coming from the appropriated churches of Grandborough and Seighford.

Ranton was dissolved in 1536, and by 1538 it had passed to Sir Simon Harcourt. It now belongs to Lord Lichfield.

Features

Exterior Features

Doorways

S nave doorway

Single order, round headed, continuous. The doorway and the wall around it is all there is of the nave, and since this wall is entirely rebuilt it provides no reliable evidence for the plan of the church.
The continuous order has an angle roll and the label is a roll with a fillet. Label stops are formed by horizontal returns the turn upwards and taper at their outer ends. Lying on the horizontal sections of each return is a ring of the same profile moulding, enclosing a boss. The E boss is better preserved and has spiral-reeding.

Dimensions

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>h. of opening</td>
<td>2.16 m</td>
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<tr>
<td>w. of opening</td>
<td>1.11 m</td>
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</tbody>
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Comments/Opinions

The form of the label and especially the filleted roll profile points to a date at the end of the 12thc. for this reconstructed doorway.

Bibliography


Staffordshire County Council, Staffordshire Views Collection, SV VIII 52a, 52b, 52c, 53a, 57, 58, 59,. Available online at http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/portal/page?pageid=47,71124and_dad=portaland_schema=PORTAL

W. Dugdale, Monasticon Anglicanum, ed. J. Caley and others (1817-30), VI (i), 257-58.

Tower from SW.
Site Location
Ranton

National Grid Reference
SJ 838 243

Boundaries
pre-1974 traditional (England and Wales): Staffordshire
now: Staffordshire

Diocese
medieval: Lichfield (to 1075); Chester (to c.1086); Coventry and Lichfield (to 1541)
now: Lichfield

Dedication
now:
medieval: St Mary des Essarz

Type of building/monument
House of Augustinian canons

Report authors
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