

Whistle Stones

These unusually shaped stones appear frequently, reused and built into many of the rubble masonry walls around Hyde. In this way, they are usually only seen in section and it can be hard to imagine what their architectural function might have been. They can appear in a number of shapes and sizes but all share the characteristic 'whistle' shape.

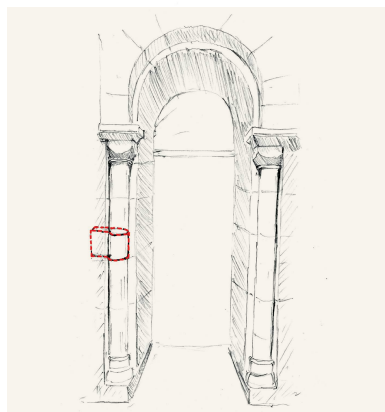
The example displayed in the exhibition allows us to view the piece in its correct orientation and as it would appear in a building.

These stones were in fact, simply part of a shaft or column and the straight projection would not have been visible at all, as it was used to tie the structure back into the main body of the wall. It would have been part of a shaft that was positioned where two walls intersected to form an internal right-angle. The tying-in end of the stone would be hidden in such a way as to create the illusion of the shaft being a freestanding structure.

The whistle stones have been found carved from both Quarr and Caen stone, displaying a variety of different tooled finishes. This would suggest that this was a well-established building practice throughout the medieval period.

Despite this, the only whistle stones found have been in the area of Hyde and Headbourne Worthy. The presence of these stones, and many others from Hyde Abbey in Headbourne Worthy, may be due to the ownership of the manor of Worthy Pauncefoot (or Paunceforte) - part of Headbourne Worthy - by Hyde Abbey during the period the abbey flourished.

Whilst many of the stones shown are located on private property, those in the walls around Hyde, unless otherwise stated, are visible from public land. Can you find them, and indeed any others? A handout is available for you to help you track them down.



Sketch showing the stone as part of a column in the reveal of a building.



The whistle stone was found in Hyde Street in 2004.



One of the 'whistle' stones that has been reused in the east end of Hyde House. William Bethell built the house adjacent to the demolished Abbey buildings in the second part of the 16th century. The shaft is oval rather than circular and the tongue is at 135 degrees from the shaft.



Another stone that has been reused in the Hyde area. It is accurately carved in a near perfect circular shape with the tongue set at a right angle to the shaft. However the tongue is not parallel across its length and appears to have a rounded end. This could be as a result of damage prior to reuse.



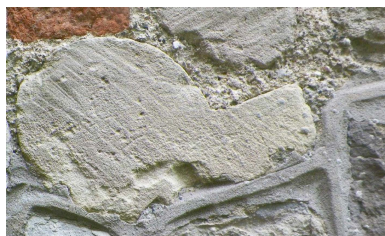
This example, reused in the Hyde area, is accurately carved in a near perfect circular shape with the tongue at a right angle to the shaft.



This piece is accurately carved in a near perfect circular shape with the tongue set at slightly more than a right angle to the shaft. However the tongue is parallel across its length. The stone was reused in Hyde in a central position over a chimney beam and was clearly intended as a decorative feature.



This example is also accurately carved in a near perfect circular shape with the tongue set at a right angle to the shaft. However, again, the tongue is not parallel across its length, and appears to have a rounded end. This could be the result of damage prior to reuse.



This stone has been reused in the Headbourne Worthy area in the outside wall of a cottage. It is carved in an approximately circular shape with the tongue at a right angle to the shaft. The tongue is parallel across its length. The finish suggests an axe was used in the carving of the stone.