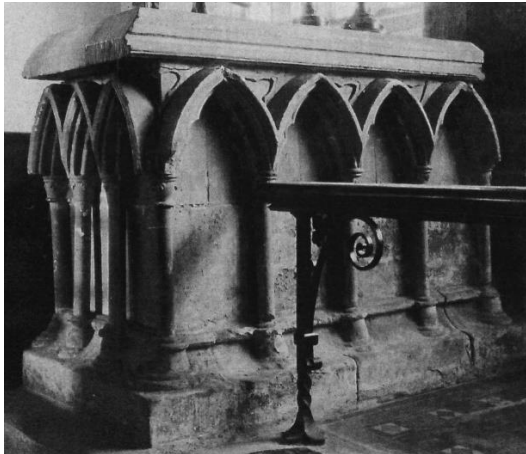


15. THE TOMB

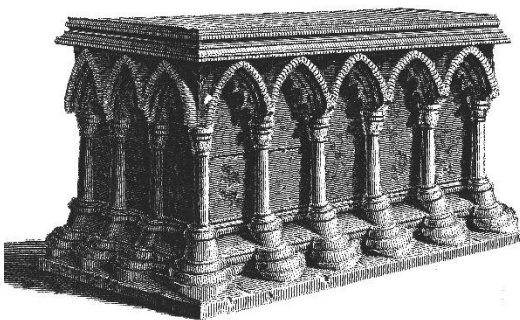
At the eastern end of the church, hard up against the last pillar of the arcade which runs down the middle of the church, is the poor remnant of a medieval tomb. From its style it dates from about 1300 or slightly later. The first picture below shows the tomb as it appeared in 1927.¹ Since then, it has suffered the indignity of being painted grey.

In 1799 Bonnor published a picture of it before it was truncated to four bays of arches (see below). Even then the top was upside-down (as it is considered to be) in 1927. This implies that it had been altered before that date. A further indignity is that the surviving carved short end of the lid is up against the arch, so the roughly shortened end is in view.



In 1754 a faculty was confirmed to George White of Goodrich House for a 'seat' in the south corner of the chancel on the north aisle of the church, having a 'raised tomb that lay between two isles of the said church on the south part...'.²

In 1829 Dr Samuel Meyrick was building Goodrich Court and as a new building it had no pew allocated in the church. He persuaded the church authorities to let him move the tomb in order for him to build a pew appropriate to his status. Unfortunately the tomb must have been damaged, because he says 'I have sent my Clerk of Works with some masons and a cart to remove the remaining portion of the monument...'.³



The tomb is earlier in style than the date of the building of the arch which now spans it and of the presumed chapel in the east end of the north aisle. Possibly it was originally in the chancel, but may have been moved to the chapel. It has features in common with a small shrine or tomb at Bridstow, maybe a heart burial, dated to the same period.

Who does it commemorate? The tomb is rather early in style to be that of Richard Talbot, founder of Flanesford Priory in 1349, who died in 1356 - his tomb is sometimes said to have been moved from the priory to the church at the Reformation. One important person of sufficient status to warrant such a monument who died around 1300 was Joan de Valence. Goodrich was one of her favourite residences and it is believed that she may have died at Goodrich in about 1307.⁴ On some evidence she is believed to have been buried at Flaxley Abbey, as she left them possessions to say her annual 'obits' and at the time of her death the bishop of Winchester excused himself from another engagement saying he had to attend her 'internment' at secluded place at Gloucester, which fits Flaxley. However, things may not have gone to plan or an empty tomb in the church may have been put up in her honour. Certainly Samuel Meyrick doesn't mention finding anything in the tomb when it was moved.

¹ Royal Commission for Historic Monuments of England, Surveyors' Notebook, 1927.

² This doesn't really make sense, as the seat couldn't be on the south side of the chancel *and* have a tomb between the aisles on its south side.

³ Herefordshire Archives (HARC), BF16/22.

⁴ See *Joan de Valence*, Linda Mitchell, 2014.