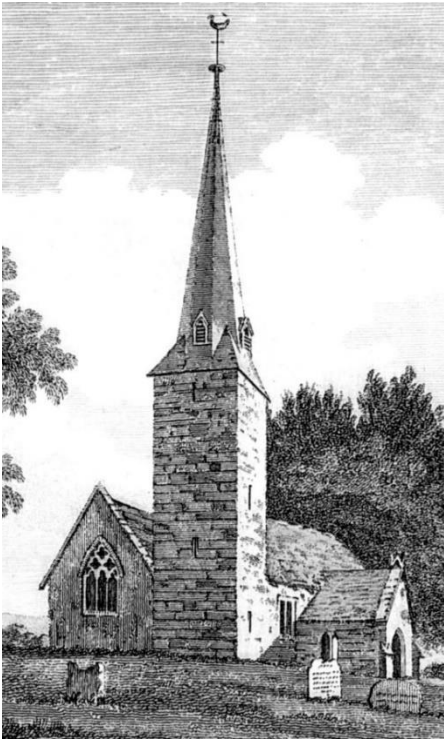


3. THE TOWER AND SPIRE



This engraving of the west view of the church was published in 1782 by Richard Godfrey. Although it's not obvious from the engraving, the tower lies completely to the west of the main body of the church.

It is about 4.80m square externally, 2.75m square internally and is 14th-century, according to the 1927 RCHME report. At the base of the tower is a larger supporting stone plinth. Small windows on the west and south sides light the four internal floors.

There is no evidence whether this is the original form of the tower. However, on the west face the stone courses get narrower with height and then large stones are used again. This could just reflect one of the tower repair episodes mentioned below.

On the south wall of the tower, is a square sundial dated 1820. In 1820 William Barrow was paid 2 shillings for repairing the 'dial' which was presumably then dated. This sundial was originally located on the face of the porch - it is shown there in the 1927 photos and earlier drawings.



West window



South window



East window



North window

The lower window on the south wall of the tower has been enlarged. There are a number of reports of work on the spire in the churchwardens' accounts and in the newspapers.

Apparently in the ninth century Pope Nicholas I decreed that every church should be topped with a cock-shaped wind vane as a reminder of the biblical prophecy referencing Peter's betrayal of Jesus. The weather vane at the top of Goodrich church spire is in the form of a cockerel. It is made of iron and is about 75cm from its beak to the end of its tail feathers.



The spire is tall, built of stone and of a *broach* form i.e. it starts on a square base but is carried up as an octagon and has pyramidal roofs at each corner which cover the top of the tower completely. It is surmounted by a gilded weathercock. The spire has dormer windows with remains of trefoil tops on each of the four compass points, regarded as original by the RCHME surveyors. The engraving shows the south and west of these windows, which already had louvres right across, but the eastern window has still a middle mullion with two sets of louvres. It is possible to see from the others that the stone has been cut away. Two of the carved trefoil heads are made from much paler stone; the drip moulding over the west window is relatively new. The louvres appear to be made of slate slabs, apart from two which look almost like wood.

There are a number of entries in the churchwardens' accounts which show that work on the spire was fairly frequent and expensive. The Goodman family of masons from Mordiford and Lydney twice worked on the spire. They had developed a method of ascending a spire by hammering staples into the joints in the stone, thus avoiding the expense of scaffolding. In 1791 the churchwarden's accounts showed that they had paid out for nails for a scaffold, carriage of the scaffold poles and repair of the church ladders. Some lead work was being done, presumably on the roof, and so no doubt the opportunity was taken to re-gild the weather cock, which cost £1 1s, about £115 today. A Goodman's bill of £32 was paid later in the year. In 1808 Mr Goodman was paid £21 for 'taking down and rebuilding the spire'.

In January 1809 a bill for £2.4s.6d from Rudge for a new weathercock was paid, so the re-gilding had been a waste of time. It seems likely that this is the weathercock now on the spire. When the top of the spire had to be repaired in 2001 the opportunity was taken to renovate then photograph it. In August 1843 the *Hereford Times* carried an advert for contractors and masons to take down and rebuild the spire after it had been struck by lightning and a portion thrown down.