

RE-UNITING THE STONES OF HYDE ABBEY

Secrets of the Hyde Abbey Master Mason Part 1 - The whistle stone revealed



The whistle stone found in the Hyde area.

This image shows a 'whistle' stone found in the vicinity of Hyde Abbey. It was made from Caen stone for use in the Abbey church or a major ancillary building and is likely to have been carved around the 12th to 13th century.



An example of a whistle stone reused in a wall alongside Hyde Path.

At least 40 examples of stones with this profile have been located within a 15 mile area of Hyde, including many in Hyde and others at Abbots Barton, Headbourne Worthy and Micheldever. There is documentary evidence showing that Hyde

Abbey stone was reused in these three districts. Shown here is an example reused in a wall alongside Hyde Path.



Ross Lovett carving the shaft for use in the Nook Shaft display.

To demonstrate the way these stones have used in a building, Hyde900 commissioned a set of stones from Master Mason Ross Lovett, until recently Head Mason of Winchester Cathedral. This image shows the shaft piece being worked on.



The first course of the Nook Shaft display, showing the positioning of the whistle stone alongside the rectangular blocks of ashlar.

This photo shows the first course with the whistle stone in the context of stonework of a type that is likely to have been used adjacent to the stone.



The two courses of the Nook Shaft display, showing the positioning of the new shaft stone alongside the rectangular blocks of ashlar and the original whistle stone

The skill of the medieval stonemason is shown by the way the shapes of the stones disguise the joints, as can be seen in the two courses of stonework.



A whistle stone in the Norman foundations of Bath Abbey

The advantage of the design is that the shaft is keyed in to the corner stonework, becoming an effective structural addition to the corner. The alternative method is to use a 'joggle' as described in the banner entitled 'Six More Stones.'

The distinctive shape of the stone (which has been christened as a 'whistle' stone by the Hyde900 group) appears to be virtually unique to Hyde Abbey. The only other known stone of this shape has been found in the Norman foundations of Bath Abbey.

If you would like to be involved in this Hyde900 project or would like any further information, please do contact us on david@pekingparismorgan.com or access the website below. Should you have, or know of someone who may have, stones from the abbey there is a form available on the website below.