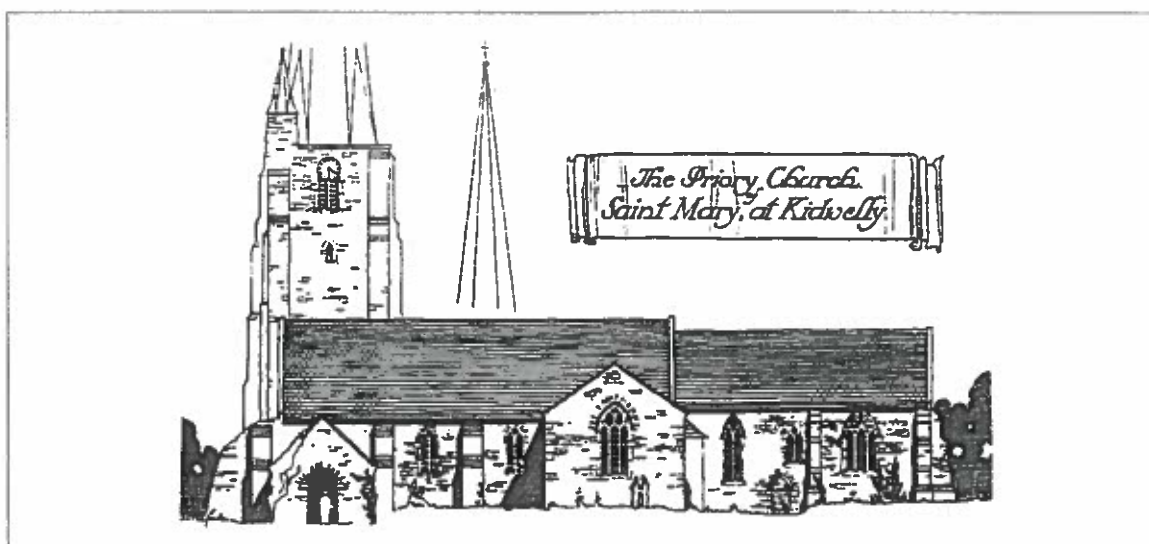


01/09/98

THE WELSH HISTORIC  
CHURCHES PROJECT

CARMARTHENSHIRE CHURCHES, 1996-7  
(DAT 48)

PART 1: ABERGWILI - KIDWELLY



*Kidwelly, Carmarthenshire*

Reports prepared for Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments  
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September 1998

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# **THE WELSH HISTORIC CHURCHES PROJECT**

**CARMARTHENSHIRE CHURCHES, 1996-7  
(DAT 48)**

## **PART 1: ABERGWILI - KIDWELLY**

### **CONTENTS**

Abergwili (PRN 17407)

Abernant (PRN 2251)

Carmarthen St Peter (PRN 50)

Cenarth (PRN 17355)

Cilymaenllwyd (PRN 17390)

Cyffig (PRN 3897)

Cynwyl Elfed (PRN 2237)

Eglwys Gymmyn (PRN 5059)

Henllan Amgoed (PRN 4967)

Kidwelly (PRN 1629)

**ST DAVID,  
ABERGWILI,  
CARMARTHENSHIRE**

**Dyfed PRN 17407**

**RB No. 3486**

**NGR SN 4398 2086**

**Not listed (1998)**

**SUMMARY**

19th century church; 0% medieval core fabric. On site of, but not in the same location as, medieval church (PRN 5372).

A multicell church, small. Consists of chancel, 1 bay; nave (continuous with chancel), 5 bays; north aisle, 5 bays; north porch; vestry (north of aisle), and tower (over aisle west bay), all 1840-43. Boilerhouse (north of vestry; below-ground), early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Construction is in limestone rubble. Slate gable roofs; vestry and boilerhouse with slate lean-to roofs; tower with oolite broach spire. All openings from 1840-43, neo-gothic with yellow oolite dressings.

Roofs and floors, 1840-43. Finishes, 1840-43 - 1996.

Condition - fair-good; undergoing renovation in 1996.

Archaeological potential - good. Different location from medieval church; no physical evidence for earlier church; below-ground evidence for former college?; no external cutting or drain; suspended floors (over heating ducts?); below-ground floor in 5% of church; external memorials lie significantly close to 20% of church.

Structural value (pre 19th century) - poor. 0% pre-1840 core fabric.

Group value - medium-high. C19 landmark church with tower; former college; large churchyard; good memorials; associated former Bishop's Palace; amenity value.

**Phasing:**

Phase 1 - Chancel, nave, north aisle, north porch, vestry, tower, 1840-43.

Phase 2 - ?Boilerhouse, early C20.

## DESCRIPTION

St David, Abergwili, is a multicelled church, of large size. It was (re)built in 1840-43 on the same site, but immediately to the north of its predecessor (PRN 5372), retaining nothing from the earlier fabric.

The present church consists of a single-bayed chancel, continuous with a 5-bayed nave, a 5-bayed north aisle, a north porch, a 3 storeyed tower including, and over, the north aisle west bay, a vestry north of the north aisle and a boilerhouse (below-ground) north of the vestry. Construction is in limestone rubble; the interior is plastered. All dressings are in yellow oolite and from 1840-43. The openings are neo-gothic and simple. The exterior is buttressed throughout. A broach spire, in limestone ashlar, lies over the tower. The roofs are slated gables; the vestry and boilerhouse have slated lean-to roofs. The floors are suspended except in the porch. The chancel east wall has an unusual blind internal arcade serving as a reredos.

The earlier church was described, in 1833, as 'a neat plain building'. Its form can be reconstructed from the sources (Evans, 1905, 63-5; Lewis, 1833; NLW, St Davids Map Book, 1811). The chancel and nave lay to the north, the nave divided from a south aisle by a 4-bayed arcade of pointed arches on 'massive' octagonal piers. There was a south porch at the west end of the south aisle, and a transeptal structure at its east end. A double bellcote lay at the west end of the nave. Inside the church was a 16<sup>th</sup> century stone coffin lid (Anon., 1849, 150), destroyed when the church was rebuilt.

In 1705 'some part of the church roof (was) out of repair, and some of the walls, and some of the windows... but all the floor is not paved' (Evans, 1917, 49); the floor had been partly paved by 1710 (Evans, 1905, 63-5). Only a 'small part' of the church was described as in 'good and laudable repair' in 1735 (Anon., 1906, 215). In 1822 it had been suggested that a vestry be converted out of a former lime-house (Evans, 1919, 15); this may have adjoined the church.

The church was entirely rebuilt to the designs of the architect C. Nelson in 1840-43 (Yates, 1974, 69). According to Yates it was enlarged under the architect Ewan Christian, of London, in 1889 (Yates, 1974, 69) but nothing can be readily assigned to this period. An organ was inserted into north aisle in 1890 (NLW, SD/F/8). The boilerhouse may have been added in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and is largely below-ground.

The building appears to have undergone no substantial further alteration, but was undergoing thorough renovation including repointing, reslating and selective rebuilding, 26/7/96.

The font is 19<sup>th</sup> century.

There is no physical evidence for the earlier church. There may be below-ground evidence for the former college. There is neither an external cutting nor drain. The floors are suspended (over heating ducts?). The boilerhouse is below-ground. Some external memorials lie significantly close to the north and east walls.

Within the church is a stone coffin lid with a foliated cross, from the 13<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> century RCAHM, 1917, 4).

The church was not listed in 1998.

## **SITE HISTORY**

There is some evidence for the pre-conquest religious use of the site - Celtic dedication; established tradition.

St David, Abergwili, was a parish church during the medieval period (Rees, 1932), of the medieval Deanery of Carmarthen. It was appropriated to St Davids Cathedral and in 1287 Bishop Bek constituted the church as a college for 22 prebendaries, 4 priests, 4 choristers and 2 clerks (Lewis, 1833). In 1334 Bishop Henry Gower added a precentor, chancellor and treasurer (*ibid.*); the college had an annual revenue of £42 in the 'Valor Ecclesiasticus' of 1536, when it was removed to Brecon (*ibid.*). It had an annual value of £116 17s in 1809 (Matthews, 1917, 12). Abergwili parish had dependent chapelries at Llanfihangel-uwch-Gwili, Llanllawddog and Llanpumsaint.

In 1833 the living was a discharged vicarage in the patronage of the Dean and Canons of Windsor but the advowson belonged to the Bishop of St Davids by courtesy (Lewis, 1833). The benefice was rated in the king's books at £3 6s 8d, endowed with £200 private benefaction and £200 royal bounty (*ibid.*).

In 1998 St David, Abergwili, was a parish church. The living was a vicarage, held with Llanfihangel-uwch-Gwili and Capel-y-Groes (Benefice no. 681) in the Archdeaconry of Cardigan, Rural Deanery of Carmarthen (St Davids, 1997-8).

The dedication is given as St Maurice by Lewis, 1833, supposedly an early dedication, but the church was referred to as 'ecclesie sancti David de Abergwily' as early as 1395 (RCAHM, 1917, 8).

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Yates, W. N., 1974, 'Carmarthenshire Churches', The Carmarthenshire Antiquary Vol. X.

**ST LUCIA,  
ABERNANT,  
CARMARTHENSHIRE**

**Dyfed PRN 742**

**RB No. 3359**

**NGR SN 3393 2311**

**Not listed (1998)**

**SUMMARY**

Medieval church; 75% medieval core fabric.

A 3-cell church, small. Consists of chancel, 2 bays; nave, 2 bays; medieval. West porch; vestry (north, transeptal; above boilerhouse), 1 bay; 1898-9. Limestone and mixed rubble construction. Internal walls with render/plaster. Slate gable roofs; vestry with a slate hipped roof. Chancel arch with squint and rood-loft corbels, chancel and nave windows, piscina, rebuilt west door, medieval. All other openings from 1898-9 and neo-gothic, including windows, doors, western double bellcote and buttress, with yellow oolite dressings.

Roofs, floors and finishes: 1898-9.

Condition - fair. Plaster poor; nave floor poor; some external ivy.

Archaeological potential - good. Deep, wide external cutting around 25% of church, partly primary; shallow external drain around 30% of church, secondary; ground level secondarily lowered around 100% of church exposing footings; below-ground boilerhouse beneath 10% of church; floors secondarily raised, without underfloor void; few external memorials significantly close to 10% of church.

Structural value (pre 19th century) - very good. 75% medieval core fabric; medieval chancel arch, windows, rebuilt door, squint, corbels and piscina.

Group value - medium. Medieval church; large churchyard; good memorials; lychgate.

**Phasing:**

Phase 1 - Chancel (and nave?), C13.

(Phase 2 - Restored 1706, low impact).

(Phase 3 - Restored mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, medium impact; west porch built).

Phase 4 - Restored 1898-9, high impact; vestry/boilerhouse built, west porch rebuilt.



## DESCRIPTION

### *The present church*

St Lucia, Abernant, is a 3-celled church, of small size. It retains approximately 75% medieval core fabric.

The present church consists of a 2-bayed chancel, a 2-bayed nave, a west porch and a transeptal single-bayed vestry, above a below-ground boilerhouse, north of the chancel. Construction is in limestone and mixed rubble; dressings are mainly yellow oolite and from 1898-9. The exterior was repointed in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century and the interior is plastered. Roofs are slated gables; the vestry has a slated hipped roof.

The chancel east wall leans outwards slightly. The cusped, 2 light east window is from 1898-9. There are single cusped lancets with limestone surrounds in the north and south walls, 14<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> century but partly rebuilt 1898-9. Beneath the south window is a piscina with a triangular head, late medieval, re-used and rebuilt 1898-9. The vestry door is from 1898-9. The plain, rounded 2-centred chancel arch is medieval, 13<sup>th</sup> century?. There is a plain square squint to the south, and 2 rood-loft corbels above the chancel arch, all medieval. The roof is concealed by a matchboarded, 'wagon-roof' ceiling, from 1898-9. The sanctuary floor and passage are tiled, with woodblock flooring on concrete, from 1898-9; no underfloor void. The internal plaster throughout the church has a roll-moulded dado from 1898-9.

The nave is lit by 2 windows in the south wall, both like the chancel east window and similarly from 1898-9, separated by a large, stepped external buttress also from 1898-9. A medieval window like those in the chancel lies in the north wall of the east bay but appears to have been re-used, its opening rebuilt in 1898-9 when the upper courses of the north wall were (re)built. The west wall has a slight external batter and a rebuilt medieval west door; the head is from 1898-9. Above it lies a double bellcote, with a concrete gable and 2 semicircular-headed openings, all built 1898-9 on the truncated remains of an earlier bellcote. The nave is roofed as the chancel, on wall-corbels from 1898-9. Floored as the chancel, also 1898-9.

The vestry is from 1898-9, including all openings, and lies over a below-ground boilerhouse, reached by a revetted flight of steps along the nave north wall. It has an external basal batter up to an oolite course. An external door in the east wall has a Caernarfon-headed surround; a 3-light window with similar heads in a square surround lies in the north wall, and a similar single-light window lies in the west wall. The boilerhouse door has a segmental brick head. The softwood hipped roof is without trusses, all common-rafters having collars, and is matchboarded above, all from 1898-9. The suspended floor is boarded. There is a hot-water boiler in the boilerhouse.

The west porch was entirely rebuilt in 1898-9 and its walls are like the vestry walls in all respects. There is a door in both the north and west walls, the former with a Caernarfon head, the latter 2-centred, both from 1898-9. The softwood gabled roof lacks trusses and is matchboarded above, 1898-9; the herringbone-tiled floor lies directly on the substrate and is also from 1898-9.

A deep, wide external earth cutting runs along the chancel north wall and vestry walls, partly primary, a shallow, earth-cut external drain runs along the south walls, secondary, exposing footings in areas. The ground level around the church was lowered in 1898-9 exposing footings of nave north wall. There is a below-ground boilerhouse beneath the vestry, and a stairwell along the nave north wall. Floors were raised in 1898-9. There is no underfloor void. Few external memorials lie significantly close to the east wall.

### *Structural development*

The form of the chancel arch suggests that the chancel (and nave?) may be 13<sup>th</sup> century. The west porch and vestry are from 1898-9, the former replacing a mid 19<sup>th</sup> century porch.

There was a single bell (and bellcote) in 1552 (Wallcott, 1871, ii); this was rebuilt as a double bellcote (in 1706?). The chancel was 'out of repair' in 1684 (Evans, 1915, 92).

The church was restored in 1706 by one 'Ludovicus Davidem' (Robinson, 1887, 119-122). Many medieval features were retained, and it is now difficult to assess how much of the pre-1898 fabric and detail was from 1706, and how much belonged to earlier 19<sup>th</sup> century alterations. The 'small neat building' of 1833 (Lewis, 1833) comprised a chancel and nave; a plain west porch was added in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century (not shown on NLW, Parish of Abernant, Tithe Map, 1839). The church is depicted on the plans accompanying the faculty application of 1898 (NLW, SD/F/12) and was described in 1887 (Robinson, op. cit.). There was an east window, and 2 windows in the nave south wall; they were 2 centred, with timber tracery and appear to have been inserted, along with 3 buttresses on each of the nave side walls, in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, but were rebuilt in 1898-9. The nave north wall medieval window, and the medieval chancel side wall windows, are still present. Two squints were apparently present. The late medieval piscina was moved in 1898-9; there was a further recess in the chancel north wall, for a tomb?. The plain, rounded double bellcote, with semicircular-headed openings, was decayed, and there was one bell. The floor was 'paved'. A west gallery was present, and a timber screen (date?) separated nave and chancel, now gone. The exterior was 'whitewashed'; the walls had been 'well plastered and whitewashed' in 1790 and the floor was 'plain and even' (Evans, 1922, 6).

It had been intended, in 1898, to retain the roof trusses which were inscribed 'Ludovicus Davidem, 1706' and were magnificent, neo-Classical structures with carved braces and a turned king-post (Robinson, op. Cit.); this was not, unfortunately, carried out.

The church was restored in 1898-9 (NLW, SD/F/12) to the designs of the architect D. Jenkins, of Llandeilo. The vestry and boilerhouse were added, and the west porch was entirely rebuilt. The chancel east window, and nave south windows, were rebuilt with larger openings. The medieval windows were partly rebuilt. The church was reroofed. The floors were raised and refloored. The west gallery was removed, the church was reseated and the interior entirely replastered with a dado.

The softwood stalls, pews and pulpit are all from 1898-9.

The exterior has been repointed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The limestone font has an square bowl from the 12th-13th centuries; the stem and base are from 1898-9.

The church was not listed in 1998.

### **SITE HISTORY**

There is no firm evidence for the pre-conquest religious use of the site.

St Lucia, Abernant, was a parish church during the medieval period (Rees, 1932), of the medieval Deanery of Carmarthen. In 1284 Maredudd ap Rhys Maredudd granted Abernant, with its appendent chapel at Cynwyl Elfed, to Carmarthen Priory (Anon., 1915, 14); the grant was confirmed by Bishop Bek of St Davids in 1290 (ibid.). They had previously (c.1197), and illegally, been granted to the Priory by William de Braose (Evans, 1876, 98). Abernant Church was valued at £9 6s 8d in the 'Taxatio' of 1291 (Waters, 1910, 20).

At the dissolution, the advowson fell to the crown but found its way into private patronage. In 1833 the living, a discharged vicarage, rated in the king's books at £7 13s 4d, endowed with only £200 royal bounty and £1000 parliamentary grant, was in the joint patronage of Edward Lawrence St Loc, Esq., and Mr Parr (Lewis, 1833). Cynwyl Elfed had become a parish but was annexed to the vicarage of Abernant (ibid.).

In 1998 St Lucia, Abernant, was a parish church. The living was a vicarage, held with Trelech a'r Betws, Llanwinio and Eglwys Fair a Churig (Benefice no. 658) in the Archdeaconry of Carmarthen, Rural Deanery of Carmarthen (St Davids, 1997-8).

## **SOURCES CONSULTED**

### **Map Evidence**

NLW, Parish of Abernant, Tithe Map, 1839.

Rees, W., 1932, South Wales and the Border in the XIVth century.

### **Church in Wales Records**

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**ST PETER,  
CARMARTHEN,  
CARMARTHENSHIRE**

**Dyfed PRN 50**

**RB No. 2655**

**NGR SN 4152 2022**

**Listed Building No. 9435**

**Grade II listed (1998)**

**SUMMARY**

Medieval church; 80% pre-19th century core fabric.

A multicell church, large sized. Consists of a chancel, 3 bays; nave, 5 bays; north transept, 1 bay; south aisle, 7 bays, south porch; west tower, 3 storeys; medieval. Boilerhouse (west of transept), 17<sup>th</sup> century. Clergy vestry (north, transeptal), 1 bay, 18<sup>th</sup> century. South-east porch, 1869. Choir vestry (north), 1886-8. WC block (east of clergy vestry), 20<sup>th</sup> century. Limestone and ORS rubble construction; plastered internally. Slate gable roofs; boilerhouse with slate lean-to roof; choir vestry and WC with flat roofs; tower roof not seen. Medieval chancel arch, arcade, piscina, stoup, niches, tower openings and arch, tomb recesses. 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century windows. Most windows and doors 19<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> century, neo-Gothic, with yellow oolite dressings. (Nb. many early memorials including medieval effigies; some 18<sup>th</sup> century fittings.)

Roofs: 1861. Floors, 1876 - later 20<sup>th</sup> century. Finishes, 1855 - later 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Condition - good.

Archaeological potential - very good. No external cutting or drain; below-ground drainage beneath 2% of church; suspended floors, over heating ducts, in 75% of church; below-ground floor in 5% of church; known burials beneath 75% of church; external memorials significantly close to 100% of church; Roman deposits beneath church?.

Structural value (pre 19th century) - very good. 80% medieval core fabric; medieval chancel arch, arcade, piscina, stoup, niches, tower openings and arch, tomb recesses; 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century windows.

Group value - high. Large, important medieval landmark church with tower; in historic town centre; Roman defences beneath; churchyard with good memorials; listed lych-gate, 1879; urban amenity value.

**Phasing:**

Phase 1 - Chancel, nave, and north transept (and former south transept?), C14.

Phase 2 - West tower, late C15.

Phase 3 - South aisle, south porch, c.1500.

Phase 4 - Boilerhouse (formerly charnel-house?), C17.

Phase 5 - Clergy vestry, early C18.

Phase 6 - Restored 1855-1876, high-impact; south-east porch built 1869.

Phase 7 - Choir vestry, 1886-1888.

Phase 8 - WC block, mid-later C20.

(Phase 9 - South porch closed off, 1969).

**DESCRIPTION**

*The present church*

St Peter, Carmarthen, is a multicell church, of large size. It retains approximately 80% pre-19th century core fabric.

The present church consists of a 3-bayed chancel, a 5-bayed nave, a single-bayed north transept, a boilerhouse (former charnel-house?) west of the transept, a 7-bayed south aisle, a south-east porch, a south porch (closed off), a 3-storeyed west tower, a single-bayed transeptal clergy vestry north of the chancel central bay, an adjoining single-bayed choir vestry north of the chancel west bay, and an adjoining WC block north of the chancel east bay. Construction is in limestone and Old Red Sandstone rubble throughout. The external pointing is largely 20<sup>th</sup> century; the interior is plastered. Roofs are slated gables; the boilerhouse has a slated lean-to roof, the choir vestry and WC have flat roofs and the tower roof was not seen. Most openings were rebuilt in 1855, in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century, and in the early-mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, all neo-Gothic with yellow oolite dressings. Externally, the church is very plain, with tall walls and windows retaining much of their mid-19th century character. It is rich in memorials from all periods, 'the finest group in the county' (Yates, 1974, 69-70).

There is neither a cutting nor a drain around the church. There is below-ground drainage beneath the WC block. The flooring is suspended in the nave, transept, south aisle and vestries, over underfloor heating ducts. The boilerhouse floor is below ground level. There are known burials beneath the chancel and south aisle, and probably the nave and transept. External memorials lie significantly close to the church. The site overlies Roman town defences.

*The chancel*

The chancel walls have good medieval quoins. The large, 5-light east window is from 1855, and comprises uncusped ogival lights with slender yellow oolite tracery typical of the earlier-mid 19<sup>th</sup> century in a wide, slightly depressed 2-centred arch which may be late medieval; a depressed segmental-pointed arch can be seen externally, overlying the outer arch. The east bay is lit by small, 2-light windows in both side walls, with cusped ogival heads and curvilinear tracery, in yellow oolite and featuring drip-moulds on plain stops, from 1855 but possibly copying 14<sup>th</sup> century originals; the 2-centred outer arches may be 14<sup>th</sup> century. The west bay north wall features a window at 'clerestory level' ie above the choir vestry roof, which has 3 uncusped, elliptical-headed lights, with sunk spandrels, in a square surround and label in neo-Tudor style, all in yellow oolite from 1855. Between the 2 windows, at a high level, are 2 small external memorial slabs in square recesses from the 18<sup>th</sup> century; the easternmost is interrupted by the clergy vestry roof. Internally, a plain recess in the south wall is probably contemporary with the effigy within, a kneeling female from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century (Lady Anne Vaughan, d.1672 - Lodwick and Lodwick, 1970, 14). The tall, 2-centred chancel arch is plain and may be 14<sup>th</sup> century. The softwood, scissors-braced roof has a low-pitched matchboarded ceiling above, all from 1861?. The chancel has glazed floor tiles, originally from 1855 and relaid in 1876 and during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### *The nave*

The nave is quoined as the chancel. The east bay is lit by a window at 'clerestory' level in the north wall, as the chancel west window and in similar neo-Tudor style, from 1855, but 4-light; it has a segmental, brick outer arch which may be somewhat earlier, which itself appears to truncate an 18<sup>th</sup> century memorial like those on the chancel north wall. The 3 western bays of the nave are lit by 4 windows in the north wall, each of 2 lights with 4 cusps and a quatrefoil pierced spandrel, with slender oolite dressings from 1855 and typical of the early-mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, with 2-centred outer arches in brick which may be somewhat earlier (cf. the nearby Llangynnwr, Carms.); the eastern 3 windows also have drip-moulds on plain stops from 1855. Four low relieving arches are visible externally, below window-sill level and not corresponding with the openings, each with a very rounded 2-centred head; they are primary (14<sup>th</sup> century?) and may have been thought necessary due to a perceived substrate instability, suggesting longevity of burial within the yard. They do not correspond with the four internal tomb-recesses, with plain 2-centred heads, all of which are probably also 14<sup>th</sup> century; one of the recesses houses a stone coffin lid (not *in situ*) with a contemporary inscription (RCAHM, 1917), and in another is a male torso effigy in domestic dress, again probably 14<sup>th</sup> century. The steps leading to the rood-loft were apparently exposed on the outside of the nave north wall during the 1855 restoration and can still be seen as an impression on the interior of the east bay north wall. The north end of the west wall is coped back to the west tower at the north end, an original feature. The softwood, king-post roof is from 1861 and has tie-beams lying on carved timber corbels incorporating a moulded plaster cornice; the creasing for a higher roof pitch can be seen against the tower east wall; the pitch was lowered, almost to chancel roof-pitch level, in 1785 (Brigstocke, 1907, 340). The nave floor is tiled over heating ducts, with suspended board floors, from 1876.

### *The north transept*

The north transept has crude medieval quoins. It was opened to nave roof level in 1851, the opening now being spanned by a decorative neo-Perpendicular screen with 4-centred, carved lintel dated 1954. The interior is lit by a 3-light window in the north wall, with cusped, neo-Decorated tracery with mouchettes, in yellow oolite designed by R. Kyrke Penson in 1866 (Baker-Jones, 1971, 91). The sill and infill interrupt the head of a low, depressed semicircular relieving arch which occupies the entire width of the wall between the quoins, primary, and like the nave arches possibly due to substrate instability. A 2-centred brick arch in the east wall appears to represent a (pre?)1855 window blocked when the choir vestry was constructed. The matchboarded ceiling is from 1861, and the terrazzo tiled floor is probably post-1876. The transept is now a Lady Chapel (Bartosch & Stokes, 1994, 19).

### *The south aisle*

The south aisle is quoined like the chancel and nave. It communicates with the chancel via a chamfered 2-centred arch on chamfered stops with plain chamfered abaci, and with the nave through an arcade of 5 similar arches on octagonal piers with similar abaci, all from the c.1500. The east bay north wall displays a similar respond adjacent to the chancel arch, suggesting that it was formerly separated as a chapel. The east window is identical with the chancel east window and also from 1855, but has the relieving arch above in brick and may be somewhat earlier. The south wall is pierced by 5 windows which more-or-less correspond to the internal bays, but the east bay is now blind. All are like the nave windows and from 1855, but 3-light, and with brick outer arches. All occupy slightly taller, wider, segmental headed openings with crude, largely Old Red Sandstone jambs and limestone voussoirs that may be primary, from c.1500, and plain 2-centred rear arches may be contemporary; a similar opening, but blocked, lies in the east bay. The south door has a rather low, 2-centred head with a plain surround from c.1500. The west wall is pierced by a window like those in the south wall, from 1855, but the infill does not appear to occupy an earlier opening. Internally, a piscina lies in the south wall, from c.1500. The south aisle contains the tomb of Sir Rhys ap Thomas, which dates from c.1525, was moved from Carmarthen Friary in 1535 and now lies south of the chancel arch. It comprises 2 full effigies of Sir Rhys and his wife, the former in full plate-armour, upon a magnificently moulded late Perpendicular chest with good sculpture. It occupied the chancel until 1865, when it was moved to a position beneath the arch between the chancel and the south aisle (NLW, SD/F/96); it was moved to its present location in 1886 (*ibid.*). The east bay of the aisle has been the location for the Consistory Court of the

Chancellor of the Diocese since at least the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century and is fitted accordingly (see below). The south aisle is roofed and floored as the nave but the east bay has glazed tiles from 1855 or 1876 (*ibid*); a burial vault from 1729 vault lies beneath the central bay.

#### *The south porch*

The former south porch was closed off when it was converted into a War Memorial chapel in 1969, the jambs of the former external doorway being visible; the blocking is pierced by a plain lancet, with an oolite surround, also from 1969. The side walls have always been blind. The porch has retained a stoup and a niche, for statuary, from c.1500, and has a 2-centred barrel-vault. However, the softwood internal panelling concealing many of its features (Lodwick and Lodwick, 1970, 24). The floor is fully carpeted and incorporates a ramp from the south aisle, from 1969.

#### *The west tower*

The 3-storeyed west tower is from the late 15<sup>th</sup> century and is typical of the region, being slightly tapered and featuring an external batter and string-course. A square spiral stair turret projects from the eastern half of the north wall, entered through a low, late 15<sup>th</sup> century doorway and lit by simple slit-lights. The ground floor communicates with the nave through a plain, 2-centred arch, late 15<sup>th</sup> century. The west door has a 2-centred, chamfered surround, from the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, around which the string-course is carried as a drip-mould; a segmental outer arch lies above. Above it lies a large, 3-light window from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, with cusped, curvilinear tracery in yellow oolite, and a drip-mould on moulded stops, beneath a 2-centred arch from the late 15<sup>th</sup> century; it replaced a 3-light window with Perpendicular tracery shown in a print of 1862 (Lodwick and Lodwick, 1970, 37). The ground floor has a timber ceiling, a tiled floor from 1876, and contains the stair up to the west gallery, from 1855. The second stage is lit by cusped, single lights in the west and south walls, both heavily restored, but the latter is traditionally held to light 'what was once a priest's chamber' (*ibid.*); there is a partially blocked slit-light in the north wall. The belfry stage has an RSJ floor (Bartosch & Stokes, 1994, 16) and 2-light openings in the south and west walls, each with a segmental surround of possible early 19<sup>th</sup> century date, c.1817?; the voussoirs of a 2-centred arch can be seen above the southern opening. The north and east walls have similar, single-light openings, the former displaying a similar outer arch. The overhanging parapet lies on an offset from the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, but the crenellations were rebuilt in oolite ashlar in 1770 (Evans, 1907(I), 101), and restored in 1868 (Lodwick and Lodwick, 1970, 37).

#### *The boilerhouse*

The boilerhouse was built against the west wall of the north transept in the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century, possibly as a charnel-house (see below); the joint to the transept is visible externally. It is entered from the churchyard through a low, plain segmental-headed doorway without a surround, mid 17<sup>th</sup> century, in the north wall. A window lies above, with a plain, square chamfered oolite surround also from the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century; the brick-lined memorial slab in the west wall is early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The lean-to roof up to the transept east wall is late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The floor is partly sunken floor approached down a flight of steps from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The building has housed a boiler since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the former boiler occupying the lower floor level. A new gas-fired boiler was installed at ground level in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century with a contemporary breeze-block flue and stack rising up the external face of the north wall of the nave west bay.

#### *The clergy vestry*

The transeptal clergy vestry was built against the north side of the chancel during the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. It is entered from the chancel through a doorway of uncertain date, possibly later rebuilt, and lit by a 3-light window in its north wall, with a rounded segmental outer arch and surround and plain lights in yellow oolite, all from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. A blocked window in its east wall has a weathered, plain, square surround in chamfered limestone of probable early 18<sup>th</sup> century date, blocked when a fireplace was inserted before 1886 (NLW, SD/F/96). The simple softwood roof timbers are late 19<sup>th</sup> - early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The vestry has a suspended board floor.



#### *The south-east porch*

The south-east porch was built in 1869 with a contemporary 2-centred doorway into the south aisle east bay. It is small, with yellow oolite quoins and an external doorway with a 4-centred, chamfered surround, like the quoins and similarly rather weathered. A trefoil-light lies above, and there is a similar light in each side wall, all from 1869. The plaster ceiling and tiled floor, laid directly on the substrate, are contemporary.

#### *The choir vestry*

The choir vestry was added between 1886 and 1888 and is entered from the clergy vestry through a contemporary doorway. The external wall, ie the north wall, appears to be entirely from the earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century when the vestry may have been largely rebuilt; the doorway, with a 4-centred oolite surround, and the window of 3, square-headed lights in a square oolite surround beneath a segmental outer arch of squared voussoirs, are both earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century. It has a 20<sup>th</sup> century flat roof and a suspended board floor.

#### *The WC block*

The WC lying against the east wall of the clergy vestry is from the mid-late 20<sup>th</sup> century, and is entered from the clergy vestry through a plain, contemporary doorway. It is lit by a 3-light window in the north wall with plain, square heads in a plain, square yellow oolite surround, and a similar single light in the east wall, all mid-late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The flat roof has a sheet-lead covering, and the walls and floors have late 20<sup>th</sup> century tiles (Bartosch & Stokes, 1994, 20).

#### *Structural development*

Though large and important, the church is very plain and the absence of dressings hampers accurate dating of the various components. However, the great unity of fabric and facework suggests that the constructional history may be relatively straightforward. The lower courses of the chancel and nave, including the nave relieving arches and tomb-recesses, the chancel arch (and the original east bay windows if copied in 1855) may be 14<sup>th</sup> century. The north transept is, unusually, set 1 bay west of the chancel arch; it similarly cannot be closely dated but it has a similar relieving arch and may be contemporary, representing the 14<sup>th</sup> century trend towards transept construction and possibly the site of the chantry chapel known to have been established by 1394 when licence was given for a service in a chantry within the church (Brigstocke, 1907, 339, *et al.*). The west tower belongs, stylistically, to the late 15<sup>th</sup> century. The south aisle, with its arcade, was added c.1500 and displays, contrary to suggestions by Salter, 1994 *et al.*, a unified, single-phase construction; it may, however, have absorbed a former south transept. At the same time, the nave (?and chancel) appear to have been largely rebuilt and heightened to correspond with the aisle. The south porch is probably contemporary. The boilerhouse belongs stylistically to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, while the clergy vestry was added in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century and before 1751 (see below). The choir vestry and south-east porch are 19<sup>th</sup> century, while the WC block is 20<sup>th</sup> century (see below).

The north transept was formerly known as the 'Mayor's Chapel', and the south aisle as the 'Town Chancel'.

In 1557 the church was described as being in a state of decay (Lodwick and Lodwick, 1970, 32). It was 'newly paved' in 1637 (Lodwick and Lodwick, 1970, 32), a very early mention of flagged flooring, but the windows were 'out of repair' in 1672 (Anon., 1916, 214).

A building, depicted in the angle between the south aisle and the south porch west wall in a late 17<sup>th</sup> century print (Evans, 1921 (iii), 40), has been interpreted as being the charnel-house mentioned in a presentment of 1783. However, the present boilerhouse, 17<sup>th</sup> century in origin, is almost certainly the site of a former charnel-house (Welsh Office, 1981, 9).

The floor of the south aisle was uneven in 1710, and the 'roof of the church' required repairing (Evans, 1907(ii), 5). The north transept was repaired in 1712 (*ibid.*) but the south transept still wanted 'to be better flagged' in 1720 (Evans, 1921 (i), 17). The floors were 'not very even' in 1745 (Evans, 1937, 30) and the chancel roof and floor were 'out of repair' in 1749 (Lodwick and Lodwick, 1970, 35).

The clergy vestry had been added by 1751, when it was 'very much decay'd' (Carms. R. O., CPR/65/29), and the character of the surviving original window suggests an early 18<sup>th</sup> century date. The roof, and the flags 'in both church and chancel' also 'should be repaired'.

Small-scale expenditure, typical for churches within the region, was undertaken during the 1760s - 1780s and concerned tasks such as white-liming, reslating ('tileing' in the records) and the reflagging of floors (Carms. R. O., CPR/65/29). However, the present west tower crenellations were rebuilt in ashlar 1770 (Evans, 1907(i), 101).

Furthermore, the 'windows in the chancel were taken off without the minister's and churchwardens' consent' in 1771 (Carms. R. O., CPR/65/29). Six windows were 'altered and made after a new plan' in 1776 (Evans, 1907(i), 101); the windows have since been replaced and their location is unknown. A gallery had been erected 'at the south end of the church' in 1753 (Carms. R. O., CPR/65/29); this may be the 'Taylor's gallery' in the 'south ile' mentioned in 1777 (Evans, 1906, 107) when further refenestration was undertaken, 3 windows in the nave being 'taken down, and 3 new ones erected in their room'. The windows were described overall as 'modern... of incongruous character' in 1833 (Lewis, 1833) but their brick outer arches may date from before 1855.

New roofs and plaster ceilings, with a cornice, were constructed by John Nash in 1785-90 (Anon., 1929, 35-40) to a lower pitch than their predecessors. The church was reseated, a west gallery was erected and the floors were flagged in 1789 (Lodwick and Lodwick, 1970, 36). The Consistory Court was moved to the east bay of the south aisle.

The arch from the nave into the north transept was removed in 1851 when the organ was installed (Lodwick and Lodwick, 1970, 16), and complete restoration was undertaken in 1855. It was a very conservative restoration (Yates, 1974, 69-70) but the church was entirely refenestrated, and the plaster was stripped exposing the rood-loft stairs (Crossley and Ridgway, 1947, 224). The interior was replastered and reseated, a new west gallery was installed replacing the 1789 gallery, and a new vicarage pew and mayoral seat were installed.

Restoration continued through the 1860s and 70s. Nash's ceilings of 1785-90 partly fell in 1860 (Anon., 1929, 35-40), were removed, and the church was reroofed in 1861 (Anon., 1861, 174) while the screen between the Consistory Court and the rest of the south aisle was removed (Brigstocke, 1907, 335). The tomb of Sir Rhys ap Thomas was moved from the north side of the chancel east bay, to the south aisle, in 1865 (Lodwick and Lodwick, 1970, 19). The north transept window, designed by the architect R. Kyrke Penson, was inserted in 1866 (Baker-Jones, 1971, 91). The south-east porch (to the Consistory Court) was built in 1869 (Lodwick and Lodwick, 1970, 37). The church was refloored in 1876 'covering up many old memorials' (Lodwick and Lodwick, 1970, 12).

The tower was struck by lightning in 1817, destroying a belfry opening (Lodwick and Lodwick, 1970, 36) and possibly dating the present openings. The crenellations were restored 1868 (Lodwick and Lodwick, 1970, 37) and the tower was renovated in 1935 (Lodwick and Lodwick, 1970, 9).

The choir vestry had been established in its present location by 1907 when it was described as 'recently built' (Brigstocke, 1907, 335). No building is shown here in 1886 (NLW, SD/F/96) but it was present by 1888 (Ordnance Survey 1:2500, First Edition) and was substantially rebuilt in the earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century. There are suggestions that it occupies the site of an earlier building, ie. the chancel and nave windows of 1855 were inserted above roof level (see above), but no early maps of Carmarthen appear to indicate a structure in this location (eg. Carmarthen Museum, John Wood's map, 1834).

The WC block was added in the mid-late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The south porch was converted into a War Memorial Chapel in 1969, and the outer door blocked.

There are important fixtures and fittings from a number of periods (see above, 'Description', for effigies etc), and an altar table dated 1716 lies loose in the south aisle east bay.

The gallery at the west end of the nave and south aisle is from 1855 but replaced the gallery of 1789; it is of softwood supported on 6 cast iron columns, approached by a timber stair from the tower ground floor, and it has a boarded ceiling (Bartosch & Stokes, 1994, 16). Beneath it is a Faculty pew, from 1789 (Yates, 1974, 69-70; 1709 according to Welsh Office, 1981, 10)

An organ had been installed in 1701 (Lodwick and Lodwick, 1970, 33), but the present organ, originally made for George III by G. Pyke England, of London, was introduced in 1796 at the south end of the west gallery (Lodwick and Lodwick, 1970, 16). It was moved to the north transept in 1851, then back to the west gallery in 1865 (*ibid.*). In 1886 it was moved to its present location in the arch between the chancel and the south aisle (NLW, SD/F/96), which had hitherto been occupied by the tomb of Sir Rhys ap Thomas (see above); specifications for the work were drawn up by the architects Middleton, Prothero and Phillott, of Westminster, Cheltenham and Newport (*ibid.*). It was further altered in 1896, by William Hill & Son of London (NLW, SD/F/97).

The oak pews are from 1855, and have poppyhead bench ends (Bartosch & Stokes, 1994, 21). The 'Corporation seats' towards the east of the south aisle are contemporary, and feature a wrought-iron rest for swords and maces; the seating for the Mayor and Corporation stood in the north transept until 1836 (Lodwick and Lodwick, 1970, 12). The oak and marble pulpit is dated 1877. The carved oak reredos, with panelling and tracery, and oak stalls, are later 20<sup>th</sup> century (Bartosch & Stokes, 1994, 20); the similar north transept screen and fittings are dated 1954 (*ibid.*).

The Consistory Court is held in the east bay of the south aisle, with furnishings from 1855 including pews and the Bishop's Chair, on a raised dais; the seat from 1718 has been replaced (Anon., 1926, 12). The open screen is dated 1962 (Bartosch & Stokes, 1994, 22).

The old boiler has been removed and replaced with a recent gas-fired boiler (Bartosch & Stokes, 1994, 23); 20<sup>th</sup> century stores have been made beneath the west gallery and tower stairway.

The font lies on a base derived from a cross, found beneath the pulpit during one of the 19<sup>th</sup> century restorations (Lodwick and Lodwick, 1970, 11).

There were 4 bells in 1552 (Wallcott, 1871, ii), and 5 in 1720 of which 2 were cracked and soon to be recast (Evans, 1921 (ii), 17); the 'steeple' itself was 'in good repair'. A new peal of 6 bells was cast by Adam Rudhall, of Gloucester, in 1722 (Raven, 1878, 267) but 'all the bells' were 'out of order' in 1753 (Carms. R. O., CPR/65/29). The bells were rehung in 1904 and augmented by a further 2 bells to complete the octave (NLW, SD/F/98); they were rehung again in 1976 (Bartosch & Stokes, 1994, 17)..

A clock was present somewhere within the church, presumably the tower, in 1751 (Lodwick and Lodwick, 1970, 25) and was 'out of repair' in 1755 (Carms. R. O., CPR/65/29). A new tower clock was fitted in 1858, shown lower down on the west face than the present clock in an engraving of 1862 (Lodwick and Lodwick, 1970, 37); the present clock was installed in 1904 (NLW, SD/F/98), and renovated in 1970 (*ibid.*).

A crudely carved figure, lying loose in the church, may be 12<sup>th</sup> century (Lodwick and Lodwick, 1970, 14).

The church was Grade II listed in 1998.

## **SITE HISTORY**

There is some evidence for the pre-conquest religious use of the site:-

On site of Roman defensive gateway; long history of burial?; long tradition.

St Peter, Carmarthen, was a parish church during the medieval period, of the medieval Deanery of Carmarthen. It was granted to Battle Abbey in Sussex between 1107 and 1124 by King Henry I (Brigstocke, 1907, 337, *et al.*), and transferred to the Augustinian Priory of St John at Carmarthen in 1125, confirmed in 1180 (*ibid.*). The benefice was valued at £9 6s 8d in 1291 (Lodwick and Lodwick, 1970, 29). At the dissolution, it was valued at £6 13s 4d, when it fell to the crown with the dependent chapels at Llangain, Llanllwch and Newchurch (Barker, 1907, 154-7)

The Consistory Courts of the Chancellor of the Diocese of St Davids have been held in the church since at least the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and Bishop Ferrar was tried here in 1555 (Lodwick and Lodwick, 1970, 22).

In 1833 the living was a discharged vicarage, rated in the king's books at £6 13s 4d, endowed with £400 private benefaction, £400 royal bounty and £400 parliamentary grant (Lewis, 1833). It had remained in the patronage of the crown until 1816 when it was ceded to the Principal and Tutors of St Davids College, Lampeter (*ibid.*). By 1907 it was in the gift of the Bishop of St Davids (Brigstocke, 1907, 351).

In 1998 St Peter, Carmarthen, was a parish church. The living was a vicarage (Benefice no. 149) in the Archdeaconry of Carmarthen, Rural Deanery of Carmarthen (St Davids, 1997-8).

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**ST LLAWDDOG,  
CENARTH,  
CARMARTHENSHIRE**

**Dyfed PRN 17355**

**RB No. 3756**

**NGR SN 2703 4150**

**Listed Building No. 14226**

**Grade II listed (1998)**

**SUMMARY**

19th century church; 0% medieval core fabric. On site of, but possibly not in the same location as, medieval church (PRN 2086).

A 2-cell church, small. Consists of chancel, 1 bay, apsidal; nave, 4 bays; south porch; vestry (transeptal, north of nave), 1 bay; all 1872. Construction is in slate rubble. Neo-gothic. Slate gable roofs. All openings from 1872; western double bellcote, 1872.

Roofs and floors, 1872. Finishes, 1872.

Condition - good.

Archaeological potential - very good. No physical evidence for earlier church; deep, wide external cutting around 50% of church, and platform beneath 50% of church, primary?; suspended floors over heating ducts; external memorials lie significantly close to 30% of church.

Structural value (pre 19th century) - poor. 0% pre-1872 core fabric.

Group value - high. C19 landmark church in hilltop location; central within village; former circular churchyard; ECM (not in situ); good memorials; C19 arched churchyard gateway (Grade II listed).

Phasing:  
All 1872.



## DESCRIPTION

St Llawddog, Cenarth, is a 3-celled church, of small size. It was (re)built in 1872 to the designs of the architects Middleton & Goodman of Cheltenham (Cadw, 1994, 5; Yates, 1974, 70), on the same site, but possibly not in the same location as its predecessor (PRN 2086), retaining nothing from the earlier fabric.

The present church consists of a single-bayed, polygonal apsidal chancel, a 4-bayed nave, a south porch, and a single-bayed transeptal vestry north of the nave east bay. Construction is in local slate rubble; the interior is plastered. All dressings are in yellow oolite and from 1872. The openings are neo-gothic comprising simple single lancets and a rose west window; the south door has complex mouldings. The exterior is buttressed throughout. There is a fireplace and chimney in the vestry. An elaborate gabled doubled bellcote, in yellow oolite, lies on the west end, the openings exhibiting plate-tracery, from 1872. The roofs are slated gables. The floors are suspended except in the porch.

If the tithe map is accurate (and it appears to be) then the pre-1872 church may have stood immediately to the south of the present building (NLW, Cenarth, 1840); however, there is no physical evidence in the yard, or disposition of burials, to support this. The earlier church was described as 'a neat edifice' in 1833, but 'without any architectural details of importance' (Lewis, 1833). It had one bell in the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Walcott, 1871, ii). A detailed account from 1855 describes a fundamentally medieval church (Glynne, 1898, 356). It was long, comprising a nave and chancel, both ceiled, with a transeptal south chapel. The plain chancel arch was pointed and there was a 'projection in the south wall' (nature?). The windows were all 'modern and very bad'; there was a pointed west door. There was a western double bellcote.

The 1872 church was built to the designs of the architects Middleton & Goodman of Cheltenham (Yates, 1974, 70) and appears to have undergone no substantial alteration.

The font is from Llandysiliogogo Church, Cer., from which it was brought to Cenarth in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (RCAHM, 1917, 14). It has a circular bowl with a wave-moulding and 4 human masks in relief (cf. Pencarreg, Carm., and Silian, Cer.) of late 12<sup>th</sup> - early 13<sup>th</sup> century date (Anon., 1931, 411); the stem and base are 19<sup>th</sup> century. The original font had a square, scalloped bowl on a cylindrical stem (Glynne, 1898, 356).

The ECM now in the churchyard, a Latin inscribed stone, is also not in situ, having originally stood in nearby meadow, and was installed in its present location in 1894 (Anon., 1927, 30).

There is no physical evidence for the earlier church, unless the deep, wide earth-cut cutting around the east half of the church, and the platform beneath the west half formed by the resultant spoil, are primary (see above). The floors are suspended over heating ducts. Some external memorials lie significantly close to the church.

The church was Grade II listed in 1998.

## SITE HISTORY

There is some evidence for the pre-conquest religious use of the site - Celtic dedication; former circular churchyard; established tradition.

St Llawddog, Cenarth, was a parish church during the medieval period (Rees, 1932), of the medieval Deanery of Emlyn. It was appropriated to St Davids Cathedral.

The living was still in the patronage of the bishop in 1833 when, as a discharged vicarage, it was rated in the king's books at £4 6s 8d, endowed with £400 royal bounty and £800 parliamentary grant (Lewis, 1833).

In 1998 St Llawddog, Cenarth, was a parish church. The living was a vicarage, held with Llandygwydd, Cilrhedyn, Llangoedmor and Llechryd (Benefice no. 807) in the Archdeaconry of Cardigan, Rural Deanery of Emlyn (St Davids, 1997-8).

St Llawddog represents the dominant cult within Emlyn, cf. Cilgerran and Penboyr. Cenarth appears to have been the cult centre; Giraldus wrote c.1188 'Canarch Mawr, the ancient residence of St Ludoc (sic)... the church, dedicated to St Ludoc, mill, bridge, salmon leap, orchard and garden, all stand together on a small plot of land' (Yates, 1973, 80).

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**ST CYFFIG,  
CYFFIG,  
CARMARTHENSHIRE**

**Dyfed PRN 3897**

**RB No. 3029**

**NGR SN 2081 1393**

**Not listed (1998)**

**SUMMARY**

Medieval church; 80% medieval core fabric.

A multicell church, small-medium sized. Consists of chancel, 2 bays; nave, 2 bays; north aisle, 3 bays; west tower, 4 storeys; medieval. Former south transept and west porch?. Remains of 18<sup>th</sup> - early 19<sup>th</sup> century external render; internal walls with render/plaster. Slate gable roofs; west tower roof not seen. Chancel arch with squint, tower openings and arches, south and west doors, bellcote(s), nave light and stoup, medieval. Two 18<sup>th</sup> century windows. Other windows from 1890-91 and neo-Perpendicular, with yellow oolite dressings.

Roofs and floors: 1890-91; tower floors gone. Finishes: 18<sup>th</sup> century - 1983.

Condition - good.

Archaeological potential - good-very good. Shallow-deep, wide earth cutting around 100% of church, primary but secondarily deepened exposing footings in 50% of church; former components beyond 15% of church?; floor lowered in 10% of church, exposing internal footings?; suspended floors over a void in 50% of church.

Structural value (pre 19th century) - good. 80% medieval core fabric; medieval chancel arch, squint, tower openings, south and west doors, bellcote(s), nave light and stoup; 18<sup>th</sup> century windows.

Group value - medium. Medieval landmark church with tower, in hilltop location.

Phasing:

Phase 1 - Nave, C13.

Phase 2 - Chancel, C14.

Phase 3 - North aisle, C15.

Phase 4 - West tower, C16.

Phase 5 - Refenestrated mid C18.

Phase 6 - Restored 1890-91, low-medium impact.

## DESCRIPTION

### *The present church*

St Cyffig, Cyffig, is a multicelled church, of small-medium size. It retains approximately 80% medieval core fabric.

The present church consists of a 2-bayed chancel, a 2-bayed nave, a 3-bayed north aisle, and a 4-storeyed tower west of the north aisle. Former south transept and west porch?. Construction is in limestone rubble. There are medieval and 18<sup>th</sup> century dressings, in limestone; other dressings are in yellow oolite, neo-gothic and largely from 1890-91. There are some remains of 18<sup>th</sup> - early 19<sup>th</sup> century external render, and pointing mainly from 1890-91. The interior is plastered, 1983. Roofs are slated gables; the tower roof was not seen..

The 3-light chancel east window is uncusped, in late Perpendicular style with a square surround, and all from 1890-91 in imitation of the tower openings. The plain, 2-centred chancel arch is probably 14<sup>th</sup> century; to the south is a contemporary, plain square squint. The chancel has a softwood roof from 1890-91, with tie-beam trusses with king- and princess-posts, and matchboarding. The quarry-tiled floor is from 1891.

The upper quarter of the nave south wall was rebuilt (and heightened?) in 1890-91. The south wall of the nave west bay was rebuilt in the mid-late 18<sup>th</sup> century as a thicker area of rubble pierced by 2 contemporary semicircular-headed windows with limestone ashlar jambs and voussoirs, and plain imposts. To the west is a low, square-headed simple light, medieval, 13<sup>th</sup> century?. The plain south door has a rounded 2-centred head that is probably also 13<sup>th</sup> century. The west wall carries a large, elaborate double bellcote, probably fundamentally 14<sup>th</sup> century but much restored in 1890-91. It is gabled, with 2 segmental-headed openings, but preserves the body of an earlier bellcote with 2 semicircular-headed openings, from the 13<sup>th</sup> century?. The plain west door below also has a semicircular head, probably from the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The nave is roofed like the chancel, 1890-91. The passages are quarry-tiled as the chancel, with suspended woodblock floors, also from 1890-91.

The north aisle communicates with the nave and chancel through a 3-bayed arcade of 2-centred arches, on plain, chamfered square piers with chamfered impost offsets, 15<sup>th</sup> century. The east wall is demonstrably secondary to the chancel and there is a vertical joint between the two; however, the location of the joint suggests that the aisle wall was built against a buttress on the north side of the chancel east end. The 3-light east window is like the chancel east window and similarly from 1890-91, with surrounding infill; there are 2 similar windows in the north wall, of which the upper quarter is from 1890-91, like the nave. The aisle is roofed like the nave and chancel, 1890-91. The passage was flagged in 1890-91, possibly re-using earlier flags; the floors are woodblock as the nave, from 1890-91.

The west tower is from the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century and comprises 4 storeys, but is low. It is of roughly squared and coursed rubble and marked late Perpendicular character. It has the external batter up to a string-course typical of the region. A square spiral stair turret projects from the west half of the north wall, entered through a plain 4-centred doorway and lit by simple loops. The ground floor communicated with the nave through a plain, rounded 2-centred arch, 16<sup>th</sup> century, which was blocked with a thin, rendered wall featuring a plain square doorway in 1966; to the east of the arch is a stoup comprising a plain, 2-centred recess and bowl, possibly part of the 13<sup>th</sup> century nave north wall. There was a similar arch into the west bay of the north aisle, also blocked but with ?early 19<sup>th</sup> century blocking. The tower was entered from the exterior through a doorway in its north wall; it has a 4-centred head in a chamfered, square surround with a drip-mould, all 16<sup>th</sup> century. There is a 2-light window in the west wall with 4-centred, uncusped lights in a similar surround and drip-mould, also from the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The tower is now open internally to the roof, all former timber floors having been removed, but corbelling for the floor survives on all 4 walls. The floor is quarry-tiled as the nave and chancel, 1890-91. The second storey is blind, but the third storey is lit by a simple single light with a square surround, 16<sup>th</sup> century. The south-east corner of

these upper stages has been repaired during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The belfry stage has single, square openings with simple surrounds, from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, in all 4 walls. The crenellated parapet lies on a corbel table, all from the 16<sup>th</sup> century but the crenellations have rebuilt copings.

A shallow-deep, wide earth cutting runs around the church; it is primary but appears to have been deepened in the 15<sup>th</sup> century when the aisle was added exposing the nave and chancel footings, and deepened again in 1890-91 exposing the aisle footings in areas. A south transept, and west porch, may formerly have been present. Part of the nave floor may have been lowered; internal footings may be exposed at the west end of the nave. Floors are suspended over a void in the nave and aisle. No external memorials lie significantly close to the church.

### *Structural development*

The nave openings suggest a 13<sup>th</sup> century date. The present nave bellcote is probably 14<sup>th</sup> century, pre-dating the tower that supplanted it and preserving an earlier, ?13<sup>th</sup> century bellcote suggesting that the nave was heightened in the 14<sup>th</sup> century - when the chancel was added? (There is a similar bellcote, similarly supplanted by a later tower, at Pembrey, Carms.). The rebuilt wall around the nave south window may represent the site of either a former transept or rood-stair (Yates, 1974, 71), and there may have been a west porch (see below). The north aisle is considered to be 15<sup>th</sup> century (Yates, 1974, 71 *et al.*). The tower detail is late Perpendicular and from the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century, but before 1552 (see below); any resemblance to the tower at Marros, part of the same medieval benefice, is purely superficial.

In 1869 the church was described much as it exists today (Glynne, 1898, 366); the 16<sup>th</sup> century character of the tower was noted, and the 'few' windows in the church had been 'modernised'. Drawings from 1890 show the pre-restoration church (NLW, SD/F/206). The present south and west doors are shown, and the 18<sup>th</sup> century nave south windows; similar, single-light 18<sup>th</sup> century windows lit the chancel and aisle east walls, and there was a further single-light window in the aisle north wall. There had evidently been more than one window on the north side of the church in 1720, when 'one of the windows on the north side' was 'out of repair' (Evans, 1921, 7). The tower arches, and the west window, are shown as blocked in 1890, but in a drawing of 1887 the window was a 2-light Perpendicular window with a square surround much as the present window. In the same drawing can be seen the scar of a west porch, but the west door is shown as blocked (open again by 1890); a blocked, 2-centred window opening lay above. The valleys at both the east and west gable ends were closed off with masonry. The floors were flagged, and the roofs, which had been renewed c.1870, were described 20 years later as 'poorly constructed' (Anon., 1890, 157-8).

The church was restored in 1890-91 (NLW, SD/F/206), to the designs of the architects Middleton, Prothero and Phillot, of Cheltenham. It was refenestrated, but the nave south windows, doorways, tower openings and chancel arch were retained. The nave walls were heightened and the bellcote restored. The arch between the tower and the nave was unblocked and given a timber screen. The church was reroofed, refloored, replastered and resealed.

The softwood stalls, pews and pulpit are from 1890-91 (*ibid.*). The tower screen was removed in 1966 and replaced by the present screen wall (Houseman, 1986). The church was superficially renovated in 1982-3 (*ibid.*), including internal replastering.

The limestone font has a square bowl, stem and base, possibly medieval but retooled (RCAHM, 1917, 20).

The tower contained 3 bells in 1552 (Wallcott, 1871, ii), but in 1784 the 'bells fell down, and in the fall broke the loft' (Evans, 1921, 5). Consequently, in 1790 there were only 2 bells and one of them was 'broken' (Evans, 1922, 44). Since at least 1887 there has been just one, inscribed 'Walter David, Minister, 1793' (Robinson, 1887, 27).

The church was not listed in 1998.

## **SITE HISTORY**

There is evidence for the pre-conquest religious use of the site:-  
Celtic dedication; early documentary reference.

St Cyffig, Cyffig, was a parish church during the medieval period (Rees, 1932), of the medieval Deanery of Carmarthen. 'Lann Ceffic' is mentioned in the 'Book of Llandaff' (Houseman, 1986), compiled in the mid 12<sup>th</sup> century.

By 1563 the church, with that at Marros, had become a chapel-of-ease to Laugharne parish church (ibid.). It became a parish church in 1777 and in 1833 the living, a perpetual curacy consolidated with that of Marros, was endowed with £600 royal bounty; £8 per annum was contributed by the Vicar of Laugharne, who held the advowson (Lewis, 1833).

In 1998 St Cyffig, Cyffig, was a parish church. The living was a vicarage, held with Whitland, Henllan Amgoed and Llangan (Benefice no. 826) in the Archdeaconry of Carmarthen, Rural Deanery of St Clears (St Davids, 1997-8).

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### **Map Evidence**

Carmarthenshire Record Office, Sale Plan of Westmead Estate, Cyffig and Marros Parishes, 1821.

NLW, Parish of Cyffig, Tithe Map, 1840.

Rees, W., 1932, South Wales and the Border in the XIVth century.

### **Church in Wales Records**

Bennett, C. J., 1992, Quinquennial Report, Cyffig.

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(CPR/44 - Cyffig)

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**ST CYNWYL,  
CYNWYL ELFED,  
CARMARTHENSHIRE**

**Dyfed PRN 2237**

**RB No. 3576**

**NGR SN 3737 2750**

**Listed Building No. 9388**

**Grade B listed (1998)**

**SUMMARY**

Medieval church; 80% medieval core fabric.

A multicell church, medium-sized. Consists of chancel, 2 bays; nave, 3 bays; north aisle, 3 bays; all medieval. West porch, 19<sup>th</sup> century. Coalhouse (north of aisle), c.1900. Local rubble construction. Internal walls with render/plaster. Slate gable roofs; coalhouse with slate lean-to. Arcade, aisle west door, stoup (reused), medieval. Windows, blocked door, c.1600. Blocked windows, early 19<sup>th</sup> century. All other openings, including chancel arch, western single bellcote, windows and doors, (re)built in 1863 and neo-gothic with yellow oolite dressings.

Roofs and floors: 1863. Finishes: 18th-20th centuries.

Condition - good.

Archaeological potential - very good. Large, deep, external sump beyond 5% of church; soakaway around 30% of church; wide, shallow external cutting around 15% of church; external earthworks adjacent to the 10% of church, 1863 building debris?; floor levels unchanged; underfloor void in 70% of church; external memorials significantly close to 10% of church.

Structural value (pre 19th century) - very good. 80% medieval core fabric; medieval arcade, blocked door and reused stoup; windows and blocked door from c.1600..

Group value - medium. Medieval church; churchyard formerly circular; C19 churchyard gateway.

Phasing:

Phase 1 - Chancel and nave, C13-14?

Phase 2 - North aisle, c.1500.

(Phase 3 - Refenestrated c.1600)

Phase 4 - West porch, early C19.

Phase 5 - Restored 1863, medium impact; west porch extended.

Phase 6 - Coalhouse, c.1900.

Phase 7 - Restored early-mid C20, low impact.

## DESCRIPTION

### *The present church*

St Cynwyl, Cynwyl Elfed, is a multicelled church, of medium size. It retains approximately 80% medieval core fabric.

The present church consists of a 2-bayed chancel, a 3 bayed nave, a 3-bayed north aisle opposite the chancel west bay and the nave east bays, a west porch and a coalhouse north of the north aisle east bay. Construction is in local rubble; dressings are in limestone and from c.1600, or in yellow oolite and from 1863. Pointing is from the 18<sup>th</sup> - early 19<sup>th</sup> century surviving as render in areas, with some repointing from 1863 and 1922; the interior is plastered. Roofs are slated gables; the coalhouse has a salted lean-to roof.

The chancel east window is of 3 uncusped lights in a square surround, from c.1600. There is a similar, 2-light window in the south wall; a 4-centred doorway to the west, from c.1600?, was blocked in the early-mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. The 4-centred, moulded chancel arch is from 1863. The softwood roof is from 1863; it is without trusses, all common rafters having collars arch braced from wall-plates. The floor was quarry-tiled in the early-mid 20<sup>th</sup> century..

The nave is lit by 3 windows in the south wall, of 2 cusped lights with Geometric tracery from 1863, when the upper  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the wall was substantially rebuilt/refaced. A low internal buttress has been built against the north wall, in 1863?, to support a reset, crude medieval stoup. The west door was rebuilt in 1863. Above it is a single, gabled bellcote on stepped corbelling which exhibits 4 gabled openings, from 1863. The nave is roofed as the chancel, from 1863. The passages are carpeted but are probably quarry-tiled, from 1863; the boarded floors are suspended.

The north aisle is separated from the chancel and nave by a 3-bayed arcade of segmental, double-chamfered arches on octagonal piers, without stops and with square bases, from c.1500. The east wall has a window like the chancel east window and also from c.1600. In the north wall are 2 blocked windows, both exhibit the remains of square surrounds from the earlier 19<sup>th</sup> century (post-render); to the west is an open window like that in the chancel south wall and similarly from c.1600. In the west wall is a blocked doorway with a 4-centred surround from c.1500. There is a pair of internal sockets in the south wall pier corresponding with the chancel arch, for a former timber screen?; the aisle east bay was formerly used as a vestry and there is a blocked fireplace in the north wall (chimney gone), from 1863. The aisle is roofed as the chancel, from 1863. The floor is unknown, being fully covered, but there is a void below.

The west porch was originally in brick, and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was extended to the west in 1863 and the north wall brickwork has been replaced by a window with timber 'Y' tracery, 20<sup>th</sup> century. The 2-centred doorway, softwood collar-rafter roof and quarry-tiled floor are all from 1863.

The coalhouse is from c.1900 and has a plain door to the churchyard in the west wall, and a lean-to roof up to the eaves of the north aisle.

There is a large, deep, brick-lined drainage sump just beyond the north-east corner of the chancel, 19<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> century and in an area of much disturbance. A gravel soakaway runs around the south walls, 20<sup>th</sup> century. A wide, shallow earth cutting along the north wall leads to the coalhouse, early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Earthworks adjacent to the east end may represent building debris, from the 1863 restoration?. Floor levels are unchanged. There is an underfloor void. External memorials lie significantly close to the east walls.

### *Structural development*

The chancel and nave are medieval but lack detail. The north aisle is from c.1500. The west porch was added in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and was extended to the west in 1863. The coalhouse is from c.1900.

There were 2 bells, presumably within a double bellcote, in 1552 (Wallcott, 1871, ii); the present bellcote is single and from 1863.

The church was largely refenestrated c.1600 (Williams, 1915, 4). The windows were out of repair in 1672 (Anon., 1919, 210). In 1720 the church was in 'good and sufficient repair', the roof was covered with 'tilestones', the windows are glazed and shuttered, but the (earth?) floor was not paved (Evans, 1921, 7). The 'steeple' (bellcote?) was intact.

The original, brick west porch, and 2 former north aisle windows, were from the earlier 19<sup>th</sup> century. The pre-restoration church was described in 1855 (Glynne, 1898, 363). It differed little from the present church, but the medieval chancel arch was still present and was 'rude'. There were 'very few windows to the north; some windows bad, with sashes', from the earlier 19<sup>th</sup> century and their (blocked) remains can still be seen. The 'plain Perpendicular (window), square-headed of three lights' in the north wall is still open. The chancel had a 'rude' panelled, boarded ceiling and the north aisle had a boarded coved ceiling with and 'embattled' cornice.

The church was restored in 1863 (Williams, 1915, 4). The restoration was low-medium impact. The chancel arch was rebuilt and the nave south wall was rebuilt/refaced and fenestrated. The bellcote was rebuilt. The early 19<sup>th</sup> century north aisle windows were blocked. The church was reroofed and refloored.

The softwood pews and pulpit are from 1863. The organ is later 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The church was again restored in the early-mid 20<sup>th</sup> century when the chancel was refloored, its south door was blocked and the oak reredos, altar rail, free-standing stalls and the ?aisle screen were fitted. This work may not all be contemporary; the door had been blocked by 1917 (RCAHM, 1917) while some may be contemporary with external cement repointing incised '1922'. The vestry screen at the west end of the north aisle is probably broadly contemporary.

The limestone font has an octagonal bowl, stem and base and is from 1863; in 1917 the original font was apparently observed attached to the western end of the aisle arcade in 1917 (RCAHM, 1917).

The church was Grade B listed in 1998.

### **SITE HISTORY**

There is some evidence for the pre-conquest religious use of the site:-

Churchyard formerly circular; Celtic, or original pre-conquest Latin dedication?.

St Cynwyl, Cynwyl Elfed, was not a parish church during the medieval period (Rees, 1932), but a chapelry of Abernant parish in the medieval Deanery of Carmarthen. In 1284 Maredudd ap Rhys Maredudd granted Abernant, with its appendent chapel at Cynwyl Elfed, to Carmarthen Priory (Anon., 1915, 14); the grant was confirmed by Bishop Bek of St Davids in 1290 (ibid.). They had previously (c.1197), and illegally, been granted to the Priory by William de Braose (Evans, 1876, 98).

By 1720 Cynwyl Elfed had become a parish (Evans, 1921, 7), but in 1833 the living, a perpetual curacy, was annexed to the vicarage of Abernant and endowed, exclusively of Abernant, with only £3 per annum and £8 private benefaction (Lewis, 1833).

In 1998 St Cynwyl, Cynwyl Elfed, was a parish church. The living was a vicarage, held with Newchurch (Benefice no. 692) in the Archdeaconry of Carmarthen, Rural Deanery of Carmarthen (St Davids, 1997-8).

The church was dedicated to St Michael in 1833 (Lewis, 1833), but to St Cynwyl by 1855 (Glynne, 1898, 363) - secondary?.

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### **Map Evidence**

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Rees, W., 1932, South Wales and the Border in the XIVth century.

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**ST MARGARET,  
EGLWYS GYMYN,  
CARMARTHENSHIRE**

**Dyfed PRN 5059**

**RB No. 3230**

**NGR SN 2310 1065**

**Listed Building No. 9389**

**Grade B listed (1998)**

**SUMMARY**

Medieval church; 75% medieval core fabric.

A 3-cell church, small-medium sized. Consists of chancel, 2 bays; nave, 4 bays; south porch; all medieval. Limestone rubble construction. Internal walls with render/plaster. Slate gable roofs. Nave and south porch vaulting, chancel arch, some window openings and blocked door openings, medieval. Some 17<sup>th</sup> century window openings. Western single bellcote, 1850. All window surrounds from 1878-9 and neo-gothic, with yellow oolite dressings.

17<sup>th</sup> century wallpainting, overlying 14<sup>th</sup> century painting.

Roofs: Nave and south porch vaulting 14<sup>th</sup> century, chancel roof 1878-9. Floors: 1878-9. Finishes: 14<sup>th</sup> century - later 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Condition - good; some plaster damp.

Archaeological potential - very good. Churchyard secondarily truncated, with wide cutting around 100% of church containing drain; floor levels raised, but suspended over a void, in 50% of church.

Structural value (pre 19<sup>th</sup> century) - very good. 75% medieval core fabric; medieval vaulting, chancel arch, some window openings and blocked door openings; 17<sup>th</sup> century window openings.

Group value - high. Medieval landmark church; large circular churchyard, of prehistoric origin; ?EC burials; ECM; possible barrow site?.

**Phasing:**

Phase 1 - Nave west bays, C12i

Phase 2 - Nave east bays, C12ii.

(Phase 3 - Former chancel, C13).

Phase 4 - South porch and vaulted roofs, 14<sup>th</sup> century.

Phase 5 - Restored 1850, low impact; bellcote built.

Phase 6 - Restored 1878-9, high impact; chancel rebuilt.

Phase 7 - Restored 1900-1901, low impact.

## DESCRIPTION

### *The present church*

St Margaret, Eglwys Gymyn, is a 3-celled church, of small-medium size. It retains approximately 75% medieval core fabric.

The present church consists of a 3-bayed chancel, a 4-bayed nave and a south porch. Construction is in limestone rubble throughout; dressings are mainly yellow oolite and from c.1878-9. Pointing is largely from 1900-1901, with limited later 20<sup>th</sup> century repointing, and the interior is plastered; medieval wallpaintings overlain by 17<sup>th</sup> century wallpaintings beneath latest internal finishes. Roofs are slated gables.

The chancel was entirely rebuilt in 1878-9. The 3-light east window has simple uncusped tracery, and there are 2 uncusped single lancets in the south wall; all from 1878-9. A piscina lies in the south wall, a plain bowl in a cusped opening all from 178-9 but apparently copying the piscina in the medieval chancel. The plain chancel arch is low, narrow and semicircular-headed, probably dating from the earlier 13<sup>th</sup> century; immediately to its north and at a higher level is a blocked rood-loft doorway, medieval, blocked in 1878-9. The softwood roof is without trusses, all rafters having collars, from 1878-9; the matchboarding above may be from 1900-1901. The quarry-tiled floor is from 1878-9, as is the polychrome-tiled altar dais.

The western half of the nave north wall is thicker than the eastern half. Externally both north and south walls have a pre-19th century fillet/string-course at eaves level. There are simple, medieval raking buttresses at the east end of both walls, and a similar buttress in the middle of the south wall, function?. There is a single-light window at the east end of the north wall from the 15<sup>th</sup> century, rebuilt with a simple lancet in 1878-9. To the west, in the thicker section, is a blocked north door (re)built with a plain 2-centred head and a 4-centred rear-arch in the 15<sup>th</sup> -16<sup>th</sup> century, blocked before 1878; lying further west still is a blocked medieval slit-light rebated for a frame in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, also blocked before 1878. A 2-light window with a square surround from 1878-9 lies at the east end of the south wall, within a segmental 17<sup>th</sup> century opening; to the west of the buttress is a pre-1878 semicircular-headed window opening with a single lancet from 1878-9. The south door is a plain, 2-centred arch from the 14<sup>th</sup> century while to the west is a blocked south door with a low, semicircular head, 12<sup>th</sup> century, blocked in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. At the west end of the south wall is a window like that at the east end, in a segmental-headed 17<sup>th</sup> century opening, with a square single-light surround from 1878-9. The west wall has a slight external batter and an internal offset at a higher level. The west window is pre-1878 but was rebuilt as an uncusped 2-light window with simple 'Y'-tracery in 1878-9; above it is a crude, gabled single bellcote with a square opening, all from 1850 (Anon., n.d., 12). The nave is vaulted, with a tall 2-centred arch, from the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The passages are flagged, early 19<sup>th</sup> century flags re-used in 1878-9?, with suspended boarded floors. The floor level was raised in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. There is a 17<sup>th</sup> century painted text on the nave north wall, apparently the latest of 4 successive paintings here (Treherne, 1906, 181). In 1906 the remains of a wallpainting were apparently visible on the south wall (ibid.).

The south porch is medieval including the doorway, a plain 2-centred arch from the 14th century. The side walls have internal stone benching which is contemporary. The porch is vaulted as the nave, also 14<sup>th</sup> century. The floor is flagged as the nave, lying directly on the substrate.

The churchyard immediately surrounding the church was truncated in 1900-1901. A wide, 'V'-shaped cutting surrounds the church which may be primary in part, (re)excavated in 1900-1901 and the spoil dumped to the east; it contains a basal stone-lined drain. Internal floor levels were raised in the 14<sup>th</sup> century but have been subsequently constant; the floors are suspended over a void in the nave. No external memorials lie significantly close to the church.

### *Structural development*

The wider, western half of the nave, with the now-blocked south door, may date from the earlier 12<sup>th</sup> century; the eastern half may have been added as a chancel in the later 12<sup>th</sup> century. The church was extended eastwards in the 13<sup>th</sup> century with the addition of a chancel, on the site of the present chancel which is a copy from 1878-9; the chancel arch suggests a date within the first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The nave vault is from the 14<sup>th</sup> century and the north wall was thickened internally, to become flush, to receive it; this coinciding with the opening up of the present nave south door, in line with the north door, and the raising of internal floor levels. The south porch is from the same phase. Fragments of Perpendicular window tracery were apparently found within the church fabric during the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Treherne, 1924, 1).

There was one 'small bell' in 1552 (Wallcott, 1871, ii), referred to again as small in a presentment of 1790 (Evans, 1922, 44). The present bellcote was built in 1850, apparently to replace a timber turret (Anon., n.d., 12).

The church windows, and part of the roof, were 'out of repair' in 1672 (Anon., 1919, 210). By 1739 many of the windows had been blocked rendering the interior 'very dark' (Evans, 1917(ii), 47); the floors were not flagged but were 'even', and the roof required reslating. The medieval nave north wall window was still blocked in 1861, when the remainder of the windows were described as 'new'; they were square-headed and neo-gothic (Glynne, 1898, 365). The church had recently been reseated.

The north wall window had been unblocked by 1877 when a contemporary plan of the church (NLW, SD/F/149) shows a further single-light window at the west end of the nave south wall, a 2-light window at the east end of the same wall and a further 2-light window in the west wall. The chancel was like the present chancel but lit only by a 2-light window in the east wall, while the rood-loft door was open, and led to the pulpit.

The chancel was entirely rebuilt in 1878-9 to the designs of the architect Clapton Crabbe Rolfe (ibid.). At the same time, the nave south and west walls were refenestrated with the present windows, the rood-loft doorway was blocked, and the nave was reseated.

The church, and in particular the nave, was restored in 1900-1901 to the designs of the architects Philip Webb and William Weir (Anon., n.d., 12). The restoration was low impact, the work being largely superficial and confined to finishes and seating (Evans, 1913, 60-66).

The oak seating in chancel and nave, and the vestry enclosures, in the 'Arts & Crafts' tradition, are from 1900-1901 (ibid.); the softwood pulpit is from 1925 (NLW, SD/F/150) while the sanctuary fittings are later 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The limestone font has a square bowl and a circular stem from two entirely different fonts, both from c.1300.

In the church is an ECM with a Latin and Ogam inscription; it was found in the churchyard in c.1880 (Anon., n.d., 11).

The church was Grade B listed in 1998.



## **SITE HISTORY**

There is good evidence for the pre-conquest religious use of the site:-

Large circular churchyard, of prehistoric origin; ?EC burials; ECM; dedication originally Celtic; possible barrow site?.

St Margaret, Eglwys Gymyn, was a parish church during the medieval period (Rees, 1932), of the medieval Deanery of Carmarthen. It appears to have become a possession of the Benedictine Priory at Monkton, Pembroke, soon after the conquest (Treherne, 1906, 180). Monkton was suppressed as an alien priory by Henry V, and the patronage of Eglwys Gymyn was granted to his brother Humphrey Duke of Gloucester (ibid.), who in turn granted it the monks of St Albans, Herts.

At the dissolution the church fell to the crown, and in 1833 the living was a rectory in the patronage of the king, rated in the king's books at £8 (Lewis, 1833).

In 1998 St Margaret, Eglwys Gymyn, was a parish church. The living was a vicarage, held with Pendine, Llanmiloe and Marros (Benefice no. 641) in the Archdeaconry of Carmarthen, Rural Deanery of St Clears (St Davids, 1997-8).

Until rededicated the 14<sup>th</sup> century the church was referred to as 'Ecclesia de Sancta Cumano' (Treherne, 1906, 179), ie. St Cymyn or Cynin (cf. the nearby Llangynin, Carmarthen). The 14<sup>th</sup> century dedication is said to be to St Margaret of Scotland.

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NLW, SD/F/150, Faculty - New pulpit, 1925.

NLW, SD/F/151, Faculty - Monument in yard, 1926.

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CPR/55/8 - Photos etc re: 1900-1901 restoration.

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Treherne, G. G. T., 1924, 'Eglwys Cymmyn Church', Transactions of the Carmarthenshire Antiquarian Society Vol. 17.

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**ST DAVID,  
HENLLAN AMGOED,  
CARMARTHENSHIRE**

**Dyfed PRN 4967**

**RB No. 3188**

**NGR SN 1745 2660**

**Not listed (1998)**

**SUMMARY**

Medieval church site; 50% pre-19th century core fabric?.

A 3-cell church, small. Consists of nave, 3 bays, pre-19th century?. Chancel, 2 bays; south porch; vestry (north), later 19<sup>th</sup> century. Limestone rubble construction. Some pre-19th century pointing?, internal walls with render/plaster. Slate gable roofs; vestry with asbestos lean-to roof. Openings from the later 19<sup>th</sup> century, neo-gothic, with grey oolite dressings; western single bellcote, later 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Roofs: later 19<sup>th</sup> century. Floors: c.1820 and later 19<sup>th</sup> century. Finishes: pre-19th century? and later 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Condition - fair-good. Buttress poor, collapsing.

Archaeological potential - good-very good. Shallow external drain around 100% of church; floored over a void in 20% of church; external memorials significantly close to 40% of church.

Structural value (pre 19th century) - poor-fair. 50% pre 19<sup>th</sup> century core fabric?.

Group value - low. Large rural churchyard.

**Phasing:**

Phase 1 - Nave, pre C19?.

Phase 2 - Chancel, south porch, later C19.

Phase 3 - Vestry, c.1900?.

## DESCRIPTION

### *The present church*

St David, Henllan Amgoed, is a 3 celled church, of small size. It may retain 50% pre-19th century core fabric.

The present church consists of a 2-bayed chancel, a 3-bayed nave, a south porch and a single-bayed vestry north of the chancel west bay. Construction is in limestone rubble throughout. There is some pre-Victorian pointing, but the walls were largely repointed in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century, obscuring the facework in areas; the interior is plastered. Openings are mainly later 19<sup>th</sup> century, with grey oolite dressings; the windows are 'Early English' lancets. Roofs are slated gables; the lean-to vestry roof is asbestos-sheeted.

The chancel was entirely rebuilt in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century in snecked limestone rubble with ashlar quoins and a plain basal external offset. The uncusped triple-lancet east window is contemporary, as are the similar single lancets in the side walls. The moulded, 2-centred chancel arch was similarly inserted in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century. The softwood chancel roof is later 19<sup>th</sup> century and is without trusses, all common rafters being scissors-braced and with a crown plate, matchboarded above. The tiled floor is also later 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The nave facework is in very randomly laid limestone rubble, with crude quoins, that is earlier than the later 19<sup>th</sup> century but which lacks detail; the early, pinkish mortar is largely obscured by later 19<sup>th</sup> century pointing. The upper quarters of the side walls were rebuilt/heightened in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century, when low angle buttresses were added at the corners of the west wall. The south wall leans in noticeably. There are 2 single lancets in the south wall, and one in the north wall, like the chancel windows but with infill, and also later 19<sup>th</sup> century. The west window is a similar double-lancet, but with squared voussoirs and a circular port above. The south door has a 2-centred, chamfered surround from the later 19<sup>th</sup> century. The west gable was largely rebuilt in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century with a contemporary gabled single bellcote corbelled out from the wall face. The softwood roof is like that in the chancel and also later 19<sup>th</sup> century. The passages are fully carpeted but may be flagged, from c.1820?, with suspended board floors over.

The south porch is all from the later 19<sup>th</sup> century and has an external basal batter. The contemporary doorway has a 2-centred, chamfered surround, the roof is softwood, with common rafters and matchboarding and the floor has later 19<sup>th</sup> century flags laid directly on the substrate.

The vestry is somewhat later. It is entered from the chancel through a doorway with a 2-centred surround, and lit by a cusped, ogival lancet in its north wall. The lean-to roof is of corrugated asbestos sheeting, plasterboarded internally. The boarded floor is suspended over a void.

The church is surrounded by a shallow, concrete-lined drain. The flooring lies over a void only in the vestry. Some memorials lie significantly close to the south and west walls.

### *Structural development*

Jones, 1994, and RCAHM, 1917, regarded all elements of the church as being Victorian but it is apparent from the nature of the nave fabric that earlier work is present, but not closely dateable. There was much repair work in the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (see below), and the nave may belong to this period. The present chancel, south porch and vestry are later.

There were 2 bells in 1552 (Wallcott, 1871, 11) but only one by 1684 (Evans, 1915, 93). There is now a single bell.

The 'church wall' was out of repair in 1672 (Anon., 1919, 210), and the entire church was described as 'not in repair' in 1684 (Evans, 1915, 93). In 1705 'one side of the roof' was 'bad' and wanted 'tiling' and the bell wanted 'to be put in order' (Evans, 1921, 9). The church was 'dark' and the seats 'mean' in 1755 (Lewis,

1975, 156). The 'church, as well as the chancel as the body thereof', were in 'good and sufficient repair, except the floor and a pew' in 1790 (Evans, 1922, 44).

The church had recently been 'properly repaired, with... a new font, two new windows (and) the walls... plastered and whitewashed', in 1820 (Jones, 1937, 69). The floor had been 'newly made' and there were 'proper benches in the church'.

The church was again restored in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century when the chancel was rebuilt (and probably lengthened), and the south porch was (re)built; neither the date of the restoration nor the architect responsible are known. The church was refenestrated, reroofed and refloored, and the buttresses were added. The interior was reseated and replastered.

The vestry has different detail and was probably a later addition, of c.1900?

The softwood chancel fittings and the softwood pews are later 19<sup>th</sup> century. The oolite pulpit may be somewhat later.

The oolite font has a square bowl, stem and base, all from c.1820.

The church was not listed in 1998.

Documentary sources for the medieval church have the separate PRN 11667.

## **SITE HISTORY**

There is some evidence for the pre-conquest religious use of the site:-  
Celtic dedication; 'Henllan' place-name element.

St David, Henllan Amgoed, was not a parish church during the medieval period (Rees, 1932), but a chapelry of the medieval Deanery of Carmarthen. The benefice appears always to have been in the patronage of the freeholders of the parish, a 'Welshry' of the Lordship of St Clears (ibid.; Lewis, 1833).

Henllan Amgoed had become a parish by 1790 with a chapel-of-ease, now ruined, at Eglwys Fair a Churig (Evans, 1915, 44). In 1833 the living, a discharged rectory in the patronage of the freeholders, was rated in the king's books at £6 10s 5d (Lewis, 1833).

In 1998 St David, Henllan Amgoed, was a parish church. The living was a vicarage, held with Whitland, Cyffig and Llangan (Benefice no. 826) in the Archdeaconry of Carmarthen, Rural Deanery of St Clears (St Davids, 1997-8).

## **SOURCES CONSULTED**

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(CPR/52 - Henllan Amgoed)

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**ST MARY,  
KIDWELLY,  
CARMARTHENSHIRE**

**Dyfed PRN 1629**

**RB No. 3519**

**NGR SN 4084 0674**

**Listed Building No. 11878**

**Grade A listed (1998)**

**SUMMARY**

Medieval church; 100% medieval core fabric, largely unrestored.

A multicell cruciform church, large. Consists of a chancel, 3 bays; nave, 4 bays; vestry (north of chancel centre bay), 1 bay; north transept, 1 bay; south transept, 1 bay; tower (north of nave west bay), 3 storeys with a spire; south porch; medieval. Nave formerly longer. Mixed rubble construction. Most internal walls with render/plaster. Slate gable roofs. Many medieval features, with yellow oolite and ORS dressings, mostly from the mid 14<sup>th</sup> century; they include the chancel arch, windows with tracery, doorways, tower openings, vault and spire, buttresses, rood-loft stair turret, 3 further rood-loft stairs, sedilia, piscinae, stoups, squint, tomb recesses, corbelling for altar beam, rood-lofts and sconces. 18<sup>th</sup> century gallery corbelling. 19<sup>th</sup> century openings nearly all restorations of the above.

Roofs: late 18<sup>th</sup> century? - 1884. Floors: 1884 and 20<sup>th</sup> century. Finishes: 18<sup>th</sup> - later 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Condition - good. Some ivy.

Archaeological potential - very good. Deep, revetted cutting around 10% of church; levels unchanged; suspended floors over heating ducts in 50% of church; below-ground boiler in 5% of church; burials and vaults beneath 60% of church?; external memorials significantly close to 100% of church.

Structural value (pre 19th century) - excellent. 100% medieval core fabric; medieval chancel arch, windows with tracery, doorways, tower openings, vault and spire, buttresses, rood-loft stair stairs, sedilia, piscinae, stoups, squint, tomb recesses and corbelling. 18<sup>th</sup> century corbelling.

Group value - high. Large, important medieval landmark church with tower and spire; central location within historic town; associated castle; large churchyard with good memorials; urban amenity value.



Phasing:

Phase 1 - Chancel, nave and transepts (and south porch?), mid C14.

Phase 2 - Vestry, late C14?

Phase 3 - Tower and spire, c. 1400

Phase 4 - Nave west wall, earlier C16 (former nave west bays lost).

Phase 4 - South porch rebuilt late C18?

Phase 5 - Restored 1884, low impact.

## DESCRIPTION

### *The present church*

St Mary, Kidwelly, is a multicell cruciform church, of large size. It retains approximately 100% medieval core fabric and is largely unrestored.

The present church consists of a 3-bayed chancel, a wide, 4-bayed nave, a transeptal vestry/chapel north of the chancel centre bay, single-bayed north and south transepts, a 3-storeyed tower, with a masonry spire, north of the nave west bay, and a south porch opposite. The nave was formerly longer. Construction is in mixed rubble, mainly limestone and Old Red Sandstone, throughout. The tower ground floor is vaulted. The church displays a wealth of medieval features. There are extensive remains of late 18<sup>th</sup> - early 19<sup>th</sup> century external render, largely repointed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century; the interior is plastered except in the porch and areas within the chancel. Roofs are slated gables; the vestry has a slated lean-to roof.

External drainage is limited to a deep, revetted cutting around the south wall of the chancel east bay, the south transept east wall and the south porch east wall. There is no evidence for floor level changes. The flooring is suspended in the nave, transepts and vestry, over underfloor heating ducts. A boiler lies beneath the vestry. There are known burials in the nave and chancel including a vault at the west end of the nave, and there is a vault beneath the south transept. External memorials lie significantly close to all walls.

### *The chancel*

There are stepped cross-buttresses at the corners of the chancel east wall, from the mid 14<sup>th</sup> century. The 5-light east window has a 2-centred, wave moulded surround and drip-mould in yellow oolite from the mid 14<sup>th</sup> century, restored in 1884; the curvilinear tracery is all from 1884. Internal corbels either side of the window are 14<sup>th</sup> century and supported a former altar-beam, or statuary. In the north wall of the east bay is a blocked window with a moulded rear arch, and a dripmould on ballflower stops, in yellow oolite, all from the mid 14<sup>th</sup> century; the formerly 2-light tracery is obscured by the blocking, from 1769? (see below). Internally, the north wall exhibits a plain string-course at sill level, mid 14<sup>th</sup> century, and there is a tomb recess with a 2-centred surround beneath the blocked window, now empty but with sockets for former rails. Above lie 2 internal corbels, for former roof-timbers, or a screen?. The east bay south wall has been refaced in roughly squared and coursed rubble, in 1884?. To the west is a buttress, mid 14<sup>th</sup> century like those on the east wall. It is pierced by a 3-light window with a surround like the blocked north wall window and with Decorated tracery, featuring mouchettes, from 1884 but in imitation of the original, mid 14<sup>th</sup> century tracery. There is an internal string-course as in the north wall, and beneath the window is a triple sedilia, its triangular heads with sunk spandrels featuring depressed, truncated quatrefoils and carried on hexagonal free shafts, all mid 14<sup>th</sup> century. To the east is a piscina with an ogee-headed hoodmould on moulded, human heads, and a similar surround of 3 orders containing an octagonal bowl, all mid 14<sup>th</sup> century and featuring an integral scone bracket rising from the hoodmould. West of the sedilia is a tomb recess, and internal corbels, like those in the north wall, also mid 14<sup>th</sup> century.

The internal string-courses continue westwards. The central bay features a 2-centred doorway in each side wall, representing mid 14<sup>th</sup> century 'priest's doors', that in the north wall featuring a segmental rear-arch incorporating a moulded scone bracket. The south door has a 14<sup>th</sup> century surround restored in 1884. Above

the door is a 2-light window with a mid 14th century surround and drip-mould like the window to the east, and with flowing curvilinear tracery, from 1884, but in imitation of the original, mid 14<sup>th</sup> century tracery.

The west bay north wall features a blocked window, like that in the east bay but with a drip-mould on plain out-turned stops, post-14th century?, apex gone, and an ORS surround incorporating 2 lights with cusped, 4-centred heads, all weathered, post-14th century?, blocked in 1769? (see below). In the south wall is a 2-light window like that to the east, with a mid 14th century dripmould on moulded human heads, and rebuilt tracery.

The chancel arch is 2-centred but very depressed and segmental; it has 3 main orders with shallow wave-mouldings and a similar hoodmould, all in ORS, and without impostes or bases, all mid 14th century. The east face of the wall exhibits an offset at apex level, above which it is thinner; externally, north of the arch, the wall is coped back at eaves level. To the south of the arch, the west face features a low, 2-centred doorway with a mid 14th century wave-moulded limestone surround leading onto a spiral rood-loft stair housed in a semi-circular/semi-octagonal stair turret that projects externally from the angle between the chancel south wall and the south transept; externally, the base of the turret has a cut-out or has been robbed, its summit has been truncated and it now carries a slate roof back to chancel eaves level. Internally, the rood-loft door from the turret has been blocked and its surround has been robbed; above it is a ?secondary door with a plain, square head. A plain, 2-centred niche interrupts the chancel arch surround on this wall, now empty but formerly housing the alabaster Madonna? (see below).

The softwood chancel roof appears to be entirely from 1884 and features collar-rafter trusses arch-braced from wall--plates, matchboarded above. The floor is marble-flagged in the east bay, from the later 20<sup>th</sup> century. The remainder has a slate flagged passage, also 20<sup>th</sup> century, with concrete either side in the area of former suspended floors. Burial vaults lie below the floor.

#### *The nave*

The nave side walls each feature a central, external stepped buttress which appear to be secondary additions; that on the north wall appears to feature an arch respond that has been blocked with brick, while a further buttress lies in the angle between the nave and the south porch east wall. There are 2 windows in each side wall, without outer arches (which have been lost?); the infill, and the cusped 2-light windows with 2-centred surrounds, are from 1884, in yellow oolite, but are not copied from *in situ* medieval tracery. The north wall segmental rear arches have survived from the mid 14<sup>th</sup> century. Both the north and the south doors have a double wave-moulded, 2-centred surround and a hood-mould, from the mid 14<sup>th</sup> century; the north door features a draw-bar socket and now leads into the tower. Over the external face of the south door is a 2-centred recess that may be a blocked 14<sup>th</sup> century lancet but which, during the post-medieval period, housed an alabaster Madonna (see below); it is flanked by 2 corbels, also for statuary?. To the east of the south door, each wall face exhibits a stoup, represented internally by a plain square recess, and externally by a damaged hexagonal bowl in a chamfered, 2-centred recess from the mid 14<sup>th</sup> century?.

The nave was truncated in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century (see below) losing two of its western bays; the side walls continue beyond the present west wall but their truncated ends are finished as two massive raking buttresses, augmented by ?later crude stepped buttresses. The creasing for the longer nave roof can be seen on the south face of the tower. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century west wall is a large, contemporary but rather crude late Perpendicular window; it has a wide, 2-centred yellow oolite surround including a drip-mould on lozengic stops, partly rebuilt in 1884, and contains 5 lights with Perpendicular tracery, largely rebuilt in 1884.

Internally, there is an empty tomb recess in both nave side walls, like those in the chancel but badly weathered. At the east end of the south wall is a piscina with a plain, chamfered 2-centred head and a crude bowl, 14<sup>th</sup> century?. Centrally, the south wall houses a mural stair entered through a 2-centred doorway with a chamfered surround and leading up eastwards to a blocked rood-loft doorway obscured by a memorial from 1728: the stair is lit by an external lancet with an ogee-headed, wave-moulded surround, from the mid 14<sup>th</sup> century. The north wall displays a pattern of internal sockets, date?, function?. The west bay exhibits corbelling on all 3 walls, probably to carry a former 18<sup>th</sup> century gallery.

The nave has a collar-rafter roof, from 1887 and partly concealed by a softwood 'wagon-roof' ceiling, without panels. The concrete floor is 20<sup>th</sup> century, and overlies heating ducts and burials, including a vault from 1762 at the west end.

#### *The vestry*

The vestry occupies a medieval chancel transept, possibly originating as a sacristy or chantry chapel (see below). It was originally taller; the east wall continues as a scar up the chancel north wall. The common wall with the chancel is corbelled out to carry a stair which leads from a doorway high in the north face, with a later 14<sup>th</sup> century 2-centred surround, up towards the west, and is lit by a small later 14<sup>th</sup> century wheel-light onto the chancel - function of stair?, monastic?, secondary rood screen and loft?. Below the stair door is a plain, square squint into the chancel, also later 14<sup>th</sup> century, interrupting the head of an aumbry/stoup with a wave-moulded, mid 14<sup>th</sup> century surround. A similar aumbry/stoup may lie west of the 'priest's door' into the chancel but is now closed off.

The vestry is lit by square, late 20<sup>th</sup> century windows in the east and west walls with concrete surrounds and timber frames. To the north of the east wall can be seen the jamb and springer of the dressed rear-arch of a medieval window - later 14<sup>th</sup> century?; beneath it is a plain square medieval recess, possibly a sconce or piscina. A flue from the boiler projects internally from the north wall, terminating as a plain square chimney, all from the early 20th century.

The softwood roof is probably from 1884 and has collar-rafter trusses and plaster panels. The woodblock floor is early 20th century and overlies a boiler and heating ducts.

#### *The transepts*

The transepts appear to have been always transeptal chapels, and the south transept is referred to as the 'Lady Chapel'. Both transepts open to the nave through mid 14th century arches very similar to the chancel arch, and feature a rood-beam socket above their eastern springers. In the western stop of the north transept arch is a stairway up to the former rood-loft; it leads up from the transept via a crude doorway with a ?secondary chamfered limestone lintel, and the loft door is a plain square opening, probably mid 14th century but partially blocked by a memorial from 1829.

The north transept is lit by a window in the north wall with a 2-centred, wave-moulded surround and a dripmould on moulded human head stops like those in the chancel south wall, weathered yellow oolite, mid 14<sup>th</sup> century; the mullion(s) have gone and the present timber frames are 20<sup>th</sup> century. A tomb recess may lie below, obscured by present furnishings. The side walls both feature a blocked window; the west wall blocking follows a 2-centred profile but the outline of the east wall blocking is amorphous.

The south wall of the south transept is pierced by a window like that in the north transept but with a 3-light window featuring reticulated tracery, in yellow oolite, from 1884 and not copied from an original; this wall featured a blind, 2-centred recess in 1854 (see below). A cusped 2-light window with sunk spandrels in a square surround and cavetto-moulded drip-mould on lozengic stops, was inserted in the west wall in the later 16<sup>th</sup> century; it was restored in 1884. In the east wall is a blocked window that has retained part of its 2-centred ORS surround, 14<sup>th</sup> century?. The south wall features 2 empty tomb recesses like those in the chancel, mid 14<sup>th</sup> century, and a plain medieval piscina. There are a number of internal corbels, medieval and possibly sconce brackets.

The ?collar rafter roofs are concealed by plaster ceilings possibly from the earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century. The transepts are floored as the nave.

### *The south porch*

The south porch may also be from the mid 14<sup>th</sup> century but the upper halves of the walls were rebuilt in the post-medieval period including the south door which features a wide, 2-centred arch without a surround, later 18<sup>th</sup> century? The 'gate-posts' were inserted in the jambs in 1884. The side walls feature plain, square internal recesses, stoups? The softwood, collar-rafter roof is arch-braced from wall-plates; it may also be late 18<sup>th</sup> century and appears to be the same roof that is shown on a drawing of 1848 (Anon., 1912, 30). The slate-flagged floor lies directly on the substrate and is 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### *The tower*

The 3-storeyed tower lies on the north side of the nave west bay. It is most atypical of the region, having stepped cross-buttresses to full height, a polygonal spiral stair turret which is not full height, and carrying a contemporary masonry spire, all from c.1400. There is an external basal batter, and both faces display sockets throughout, putlog-holes?.

The ground floor has a quadripartite groined vault. It is entered from the churchyard through a doorway with a 2-centred surround of 2 chamfered orders and a dripmould on out-turned stops, all in weathered oolite, from the c.1400. The stair turret at the south-west corner is entered through a door with a segmental/2-centred surround from c.1400; it is lit by contemporary lancets and simple slit-lights, and is coped back to the cross-buttresses at the top of this stage. The interiors of all 4 walls feature a full-height, 2-centred recess, to increase the floor area. The floor is concrete, from the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The second stage is lit by simple 2-light windows in the north, east and west walls, with independent heads and dripmoulds, from c.1400.

The belfry stage has a simple, 2-light opening within a plain 2-centred surround in each of the 4 faces, again from c.1400. The summit terminates as a simple string course that formerly carried a crenellated parapet (see below); the stair turret rises from within the former parapet as a low square turret finished with a small octagonal broach spire. Surmounting the belfry stage is a tall, octagonal broach spire that is unique within the region; it is contemporary with the tower, c.1400 though much rebuilt in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and again in 1884.

### *Structural development*

The remarkably wide nave served as the parish church while the chancel was the monastic church for a Benedictine priory during the medieval period. The possible second rood-screen represented by steps in the chancel may reflect this dual role.

The chancel, nave and transepts display (or formerly displayed) a great stylistic unity and all appear to belong to the same building campaign. The work is predominantly Decorated, especially within the chancel even before restoration (Freeman, 1856, 244); it includes motifs such as ballflowers, wave-mouldings and depressed, truncated quatrefoils which are typical of mid-14th century work in South-west Wales (Griffiths, 1991, 194) being a favourite of the then Bishop of St Davids, Henry Gower. The south porch was partly rebuilt within the post-medieval period but it may be contemporary.

The tower has been regarded by most authorities to be contemporary with the mid 14<sup>th</sup> century work but the only opening showing any similarity to this work is the doorway from the nave. The remainder of the tower openings are simpler and the external doorway is dateable to c.1400, suggesting that it was added against an existing nave north door. The tower is atypical of the region in every respect but it is one of the earliest, and the spire is contemporary. It formerly carried a crenellated parapet; it was described as 'embattled' in 1833 (Lewis, 1833) but by 1854 the parapet had 'nearly all gone' (Scott, 1854, 113). There were '4 bells great and small' in 1552 (Wallcott, 1871, i).

The 1884 restoration was of low impact. It mainly comprised the restoration of the existing windows and their partial rebuilding; the nave windows were new insertions, and some of the transept windows remained blocked. The church was reroofed, except the south porch, and refloored; the interior was replastered and resealed.

The boiler beneath the vestry, and the heating flues were installed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the transepts may have been given their ceilings.

The vestry windows were inserted in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the north transept window was given its frame.

The oak belfry door is dated 1713 with a Latin inscription (Yates, 1974, 70-71; cf. the identical door to the south porch at Penbre, Carmis., dated 1717). The organ case is from 1762 (*ibid.*); the organ itself (in the north transept) is late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The free-standing softwood pews are from 1884. The belfry clock is later 19<sup>th</sup> century but replaces an earlier one. The pulpit is dated 1909. The oolite, neo-Perpendicular south transept screen is earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century. The neo-Perpendicular oolite reredos is from 1932 (*ibid.*), as are probably the oak stalls, the altar fittings and reredoses in both transepts, and the softwood, neo-Gothic south door lobby.

The oolite and Portland stone font is from 1884; the earlier font had been shattered by falling masonry in 1658 and a font was still 'as yet wanting' in 1705 (Evans, 1917, 51).

A late medieval stone coffin-lid was uncovered on the north side of the church in 1846 (Westwood, 1847, 147-8).

The church was Grade A listed in 1998.

## SITE HISTORY

There is some evidence for the pre-conquest religious use of the site:-  
Former Celtic dedication?

St Mary, Kidwelly, was a parish church during the medieval period, of the medieval Deanery of Kidwelly. Between 1107 and 1115 it was granted to the Benedictines of Sherborne Abbey by Roger, Bishop of Salisbury and Lord of Kidwelly, and became a priory (Williams, 1991, 191). The priory buildings appear to have lain to the west of the church (*ibid.*). In 1291 the tithes of the priory were valued at £13 6s 8d (*ibid.*) but it appears to have been always relatively poor: only 1 monk appears to have been present in 1377, it was exempt from tithes in 1513 and 1517 while in 1524 it was described as 'much bound in debt' and 'suffering from great and manifest decay' (*ibid.*). In 1536 its total income was £38 0s 0d per annum (*ibid.*). It was dissolved in 1539 and the patronage passed to the crown..

In 1833 the living was a discharged vicarage, rated in the king's books at £7 10s, and in the patronage of the crown (Lewis, 1833).

In 1998 St Mary, Kidwelly, was a parish church. The living was a vicarage, held with Llandyfaelog (Benefice no. 685) in the Archdeaconry of Carmarthen, Rural Deanery of Cydweli (St Davids, 1997-8).

It has been suggested (Williams, 1991, 189) that a pre-conquest church here was dedicated to St Cadog.

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