

**Site Name: CHURCH OF ST. DAVID.**

**Site File Ref. No.: LLTD/CHUR**

**Site Type: Church**

**N. G. Ref.: SN 1554 4193**

**Period: Medieval; Post-Medieval**

**History:**

In 1123 approval was given to the Cult of St David by Pope Calixtus II, from which date two pilgrimages to St David's equalled one to Rome. The church at Llantood may well date from soon after that time. The suggestion that an earlier church on the site was dedicated to St. Illtud seems to be derived from a spurious modern attempt to explain the name of the parish. On May 23<sup>rd</sup> 1208 the Pope banned church services, including marriages and consecrated burials, in England's territories in retaliation for King John's seizing of church revenue. John then confiscated all church property in retaliation. Discontent was surprisingly limited.

The church was recorded in 1291. In 1504 Hugo Harries may have been the Rector. In 1513 and 1517 the church was exempted from payment of the King's Tithes. On November 17<sup>th</sup> 1534 the Act of Supremacy was passed and King Henry VIII became the Head of the Anglican Church. In 1535 Thomas Lloid was the Vicar of "Llantwyd". The church was valued in 1537, together with Monington Church, at £6. 13s. 4d. In 1539 the Six Articles affirmed surviving Catholic dogma in English and Welsh churches. The Great Bible was distributed to English and Welsh churches that year and the services were modified following the creation of the new Anglican Church. In 1547 Edward VI became King and the Six Articles were repealed. English replaced Latin in English church services. On January 15<sup>th</sup> 1549 the first Act of Uniformity made the Catholic Mass illegal. The first Book of Common Prayer was published in June that year. In January 1550 Parliament encouraged iconoclasm – the destruction of Catholic icons, and the persecution of Catholics and heretics. In January 1552 the Second Act of Uniformity was passed and the Second Book of Common Prayer was published. On July 15<sup>th</sup> 1553 Mary became Queen and in September that year Protestant Bishops were arrested and Catholic replacements were appointed. On November 30<sup>th</sup> 1554 Parliament supported a return to Roman Catholicism and the Heresy Acts were revived. Many Anglicans and Protestants were burned for heresy the following year. On January 23<sup>rd</sup> 1559, after Elizabeth had become Queen, the Third Act of Uniformity and the Act of Supremacy settled the religious question. In 1563 the Anglican Church was officially founded. That year an Act of Parliament sought that all Welsh churches should be provided with a Welsh Bible and a Book of Common Prayer by March 1<sup>st</sup> 1567.

There is a chalice here, inscribed "+ POCVLVM – ECLESIE + DE + LLANTOT 1574." In 1603 the church was still valued at £6. 13s. 4d. together with the church at Monington. In 1614 reference was made to "*The church of St. David at Llantood*". On January 3<sup>rd</sup> 1624 Edward Provand became the Vicar of St. Dogmaels, Monington and Llantood – perhaps the first Vicar to have held all three parishes. From at least 1640 until 1662 the Vicar (of the three parishes) was the Revd. John Vaughan. Christmas Day 1644 was a fast day enforced by Parliament. On January 3<sup>rd</sup> 1645 the Directory for Public Worship replaced the Book of Common Prayer. It omitted Christmas, which was not observed that year. In October 1646 the Anglican episcopacy was abolished. In June 1647 the observance of Easter, Whitsun and Christmas was outlawed. In 1650 the church was stripped of decorations following an Act of Parliament favouring Puritanism. In 1654 it was decreed that all vacant Anglican positions were to be taken by Puritans. In November 1662 Rev. John Vaughan's Nonconformity led to the sequestration of his churches and he was ejected from his post after Puritanism was rejected following the return of the monarchy. Religious holidays were reinstated and a new Book of Common Prayer was published.

In 1674 Rev. Rice Howell was the Vicar. Rev. Thomas was the Vicar of St. Dogmaels, Monington and Llantood in 1675. From at least 1681 until 1687 the Vicar of the three churches was Rev. Owen Evans. In 1684 Mathias Philip and David Thomas were the churchwardens. In 1684 David Griffith of Tredefaid and

David Lloyd of Croesyforwyn were bickering over the use of one of the pews. William Thomas was excommunicated that year for non-attendance. In 1687 the Revd. John Evans succeeded Rev. Owen Evans as the Vicar. In May 1688 the Declaration of Indulgence was read out in the church, permitting Nonconformity. From 1699 until 1719 Rev. David Evans was the Vicar. By July 24<sup>th</sup> 1728 until 1737 Rev. David Lloyd, the second son of John Lloyd of Fagwrgoch, was the Vicar of St. Dogmaels, Monington and Llantood. From 1738 until 1748 the Revd. Morgan Gwynne was the Vicar of the three churches. From 1748 until 1768 the Revd. John Davies was the Vicar. On August 18<sup>th</sup> 1756 Rev. William Harries probably became the Curate of the three churches until about 1760. In 1769 the Revd. Lewis Walters became the Vicar of Llantood until 1772. From 1772 until 1774 the disreputable Rev. William Jones was the Vicar. On March 30<sup>th</sup> 1776 another Rev. William Jones, formerly the Curate of Newport, became the Vicar and held the three churches.

The church at Llantood was rebuilt in 1820-21. A small slate tablet in the vestry fireplace reads “...*Llantood rebuilt 1820 D GRIFFITH C-W...*” On October 31<sup>st</sup> 1825 the Revd. William Jones died aged 76 years. He left sons Thomas Morgan Jones, William Jones, Rev. John Jones, Daniel Jones and Rev. James Jones, and a daughter called Margaretta Catherine Jones. On August 1<sup>st</sup> 1826 the Revd. Henry James Vincent became the Vicar. The Parish Chest is inscribed “...*Llantwd Parish 1830 Rev. W H VINCENT, Vcr/JNO GWYNNE, Chch Warn...*” The church was said to have been re-erected in 1844, though in reality it probably underwent modest repairs. In 1851 there were 35 attendees on an average Sunday. In 1859, during a visit by the Cambrian Archaeological Association to Cardigan, a chalice dated 1574 and an ancient bell from the church, were placed on display in the town. In 1862 Rev. John Jones became the Curate. In the 1860's the following comments were written by the Revd. Henry James Vincent:

*“...The Church was rebuilt in 1821...It is a pity it was taken down as it must have been a great improvement on the present unsightly building which, however, contains some objects of interest, such as: The coffin lid with the beautiful cross place now supporting the communion rails. The Monumental tablet to the Memory of the Lewises of Tredefaid on the gable of the Chancel on the south side of the altar...The Communion Cup bears date 1578. There is also...[a stoup]...fixed in the wall near the place it originally occupied which, it is devoutly to be hoped, will not again be devoted to Romish purposes, although the writer has seen it spurning the office of the Pope, and made Keeper of the keys. Last not least is a small bell, a sanctus bell, or a bongu, used in Funerals...The trees in Llantood Churchyard were planted at the sole expense of Mrs R D Jenkins/Miss Bowen of Tredefaid...”*

In 1865 Rev. Henry James Vincent died. In 1865 Rev. B Shadrach became the Curate. On September 11<sup>th</sup> 1865 the Revd. Daniel Jones became the new Vicar of St. Dogmaels, Llantood and Monington until 1868. In 1866 Rev. John Williams became the Curate. In June 1868 Rev. Daniel Jones died aged 56 years.

On August 20<sup>th</sup> 1868 Rev. Henry Jones became the Vicar of Llantood, St. Dogmaels and Monington. Rev. Henry Jones was the Vicar from 1868 until 1875. On March 15<sup>th</sup> 1878 the Revd. Edward Thomas Jones became the Vicar of Llantood, St. Dogmaels and Monington. On September 29<sup>th</sup> 1882 it was proposed that the church should be restored. The church was entirely rebuilt in 1883-84, 7 feet northwards of the original structure, at a cost of £845. On January 3<sup>rd</sup> 1883 Rev. John Price Evans, the Curate, married Rebecca Lloyd, the daughter of the late Richard Lloyd of Panteg, St. Dogmaels. Rev. Edward Thomas Jones, the Vicar, presided. On October 19<sup>th</sup> 1883 Evan Evans of Eglwysrw, a builder, was seeking plasterers to plaster the interior of the church. It re-opened on August 14<sup>th</sup> 1884. Some old carved heads were retained in the porch. Evan Evans of Eglwysrw had been the contractor, and David Davies of Penrhiwllan, Llandysul, was the architect. On November 16<sup>th</sup> 1884 Rev. Edward Thomas Jones retired. In 1884 Rev. Thomas Jones became the Vicar. In 1890 buttresses were added to the building for structural reasons, to designs by architect George Morgan of Carmarthen. In January 1894 Mrs George of Rhydgarnwen donated a new altar cloth to the church.

Rev. Thomas Jones died on January 7<sup>th</sup> 1895. In March 1895 his successor was named as Rev. J Myfenydd Morgan. In 1896 Rev. T James became the Curate. On March 26<sup>th</sup> 1897 Mr. & Mrs. George of Rhydgarnwen and Mr W Phillips of Tredefaid donated a set of 16 lamps to the church. On March 17<sup>th</sup> 1899

Rev. J Myfenydd Morgan became a committee member of the new “Pembrokeshire Association for the Preservation of Ancient Monuments”. In 1899 Rev. John Williams became the Curate. In 1902 Rev. T Pugh became the Curate. In 1906 Rev. William H Davies became the Curate. In 1907 Rev. Daniel Williams became the Curate. In 1914 the R C A H M observed an impressive 14<sup>th</sup> Century sepulchral slab with an incised cross at the church – an impressive piece of work. On January 29<sup>th</sup> 1915 the Curate, Rev. W Edwards, announced his impending departure. On July 9<sup>th</sup> 1915 the following item appeared in the ‘Carmarthen Journal’:

*“...PRESENTATION. The Rev. William Edwards and Mrs. Edwards have been presented by the members of the parish churches of Llantood and Monington with a handsome eight-day timepiece in oak case suitably inscribed, gold cross with chain and silver teapot, also suitably inscribed. The churchwarden. Mr. Evan Davies. Tredefaid. presented Mr. and Mrs. Edwards on behalf of the members of Llantood and the churchwarden. Mr. David John Davies, and Miss Margaretta Davies, Blaenowen Issa, presented them on behalf of the members of Monington. The gifts were as a mark of high esteem and appreciation of their useful and active work during their stay of five years and a half at both parishes, and on the occasion of their departure for Tycroes, Llanelly...”*

On October 16<sup>th</sup> 1916 Rev. J Myfenydd Morgan died, aged 64 years. On November 24<sup>th</sup> 1916 his successor was named as the Revd. Jenkin Griffith Hughes (b.1877), and he was installed on January 21<sup>st</sup> 1917. In 1925 the R. C. A. H. M. published the following report, based upon a visit of 1914:

*“...The Parish Church...The church was entirely rebuilt in 1884, though doubtless on the old foundations. It now consists of nave, chancel, north porch and single bell-cote above the western gable. The font – an almost square basin (20 in. by 19 in. externally, and 14 ½ in. internally, exterior depth 19 in.) with slightly chamfered and curved angles, slopes off to a modern pillar and base. Erect against the west wall of the nave is a carved sepulchral slab bearing an incised cross, the arms of which are enclosed within a design of fleurs de lys. It is of 14th-century date. In its design, execution and excellent preservation, it stands out favorably amongst the mortuary monuments of the county. In the porch have been preserved two corbels bearing male masks, probably of the same period as the slab; also a plain stoup. - Visited, 30<sup>th</sup> July, 1914...”*

In 1926 the church was described:

*‘...The church of St Illtyd, erected in 1844, and rebuilt in 1883, at a cost of £845, is an edifice of local stone and freestone, in the Gothic style, consisting only of nave, north porch and a turret containing 1 bell: there are 126 sittings. The registers were stated on the return of 1831 to consist only of a few mutilated leaves, no date being given. The living is a vicarage, annexed with Monington, to that of St Dogmael’s, joint net income £325, with residence, in the gift of the Bishop of St David’s and the Board of Patronage, and held since 1917 by the Rev. Jenkin Griffith Hughes, BA of St David’s College, Lampeter, who resides at St Dogmaels...’*

Rev. Jenkin Griffith Hughes was still the Vicar here until 1931. In 1931 Rev T Twynog Davies, the Rector of Bridell, became the Vicar of Llantood in addition to his other parish. He left in 1934. In 1935 Rev. Jenkin Richards became the Vicar of Llantood and Bridell and remained so in 1943. At Easter 1939 there were 10 communicants. The church is marked on the 1951 O S map and others. In 1951 Rev. W T Gravell became the priest in charge of Llantood and Bridell. The building was listed in 1952, but was removed from the Historic Buildings Register in 1994. On October 31<sup>st</sup> 1960 Rev. W T Gravell, the Rector, died aged 49 years. In August 1974 the Revd. Meurig Davies became the Vicar. On February 16<sup>th</sup> 1984 the Revd. Euros L Thomas became the Rector and was the rector from 1984 until 2012. The church closed to services in 2012 owing to the dangerous condition of the bell-cote gable end. In 2016 the gable end was in a very dangerous condition, and the sale of the building was planned. Demolition plans were announced in June 2017, alongside rumours of a potential sale for re-use. On February 16<sup>th</sup> 2020 during high winds caused by “Storm Dennis” the upper portion of the west wall of the church collapsed. The building has since been sold for conversion into a private dwelling.

**Description:**

The following observations were made in 1999:

1883-4 small Anglican parish church in stone with pitched slate roofs with coped gables and cross finials. Three window nave with W end bellcote and 2-window lower chancel, buttresses between openings and to angles. Nave has stone N porch to W bay with gabled front, slate roof, pointed Gothic arch and retaining two re-set medieval stone carved heads flanking door. Small side lights. Remaining openings are lancet-type with pointed arched heads, smaller to chancel. W end has two tall lancets of equal height. Bellcote has shouldered base, arched bell opening and steep pitched capping.

**Sources:**

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