

Site Name: CHURCH OF ST. MARY.

Site File Ref. No.: CARD/CHUR

Site Type: Church

N. G. Ref.: SN 1810 4606

Period – Medieval

History:

It has been suggested by some writers that the Priory of Cardigan was founded in 1110. It is probably more plausible that Roger de Clare may have founded the present parish church as the secular church of Cardigan Priory, in 1158. The church owes its' existence to the presence of the statue of Our Lady of Cardigan, which may have arrived at about that time with the Flemish settlers and traders who came to Cardigan to settle and to trade in wool from the North Pembrokeshire staple. In 1165 Lord Rhys, having recently captured the town from the De Clare family, granted the Priory and its' associated church to Chertsey Abbey, probably confirming an earlier grant to the same. The Abbot of Gloucester made an unsuccessful attempt to claim possession of the church in 1175, but the documents that were produced to substantiate his claims are generally assumed to be contemporary forgeries. Reference was made to the presentation many years earlier of Cardigan Church to the Bishop of St. David's by Roger de Clare. Three burgages in the town had been given to the same. Despite the importance of the site as a church of pilgrimage, none of its' early records survive. The south side of the nave may contain some 12th Century masonry. There is a blocked door on the north side of the nave that may be of 13th Century date. On May 23rd 1208 the Pope banned church services, including marriages and consecrated burials, in England's Crown territories in retaliation for King John having seized church revenues. John then confiscated all church property. Pilgrims would only have been allowed in the building to pray, and possibly via a minor entrance rather than through the main door. Public discontent was surprisingly limited. Matters were resolved in 1213. In 1349 John de Whittle was the Vicar.

The chancel of the church was rebuilt in the early Fifteenth Century. Prior to 1411 John Barnett was the Vicar. Around February 21st 1411 the Pope summoned the Abbot of Chertsey to Rome. The Vicar of St. Mary's, Thomas Duy, had complained that of the annual income of 100 marks (£66. 13s. 6d.) made by the church, largely from the vast numbers of visiting pilgrims, he received only about 7/- a year. The Pope considered allowing him a staggering third - £22. 4s. 6d. - an enormous sum for a Vicar. Thomas Duy was still the Vicar of Cardigan in 1413. In 1434 John Thornbury was succeeded as Vicar by John Frodsham. In 1476 John ab Ieuan donated land in Cardigan town to support a Chantry in St. Mary's Church to pray for his soul. With the disappearance of Holy Trinity Church as a legal entity about the year 1485, St. Mary's Church formally became the Parish Church of Cardigan. In reality it had fulfilled this role from the 12th Century.

During the reign of King Henry VII the church received a new font carved with Tudor roses, and a new decorative piscina was also carved and placed on the south wall of the chancel. On May 22nd 1497 Richard Robyns became the Vicar of Cardigan. Hugh Weythe replaced him on June 1st 1502. In 1517 John Frodshame ceased to be the Vicar and Morgan Meredyth succeeded him as the Vicar of Cardigan that year. In 1524 Thomas Hore was installed as the Prior. On November 17th 1534 King Henry VIII became the head of the Anglican Church and the Pope's religious supremacy in England and Wales ended. In 1535 Morgan Meredith received an annual stipend of £10 as the Vicar of Cardigan. Nicholas Harry was the Master of Cardigan Chantry where he prayed for the soul of John ap Jevan. In 1537 the abolition of pilgrimages deprived the church of a profitable income from the Shrine of Our Lady of Cardigan.

On March 16th 1538 Thomas Barlow, the infamous Bishop of St. David's, visited what he called the "...*shamefull detestacion called Our Ladyes taper of Cardigan*..." in order to interrogate the Vicar of St. Mary's and the Prior of Cardigan regarding the shrine. The shrine itself consisted of a statue of the Virgin Mary with the Holy Child, which had once held a taper in her hand. Thomas Hore, who was to be the last Prior, related the story as he had heard it upon arriving in Cardigan five years earlier. Barlow summarised it in the following terms:-

“Item, that the image now situate in the church of Cardigane, which ys used for a greate pilgrimage to this present daye, was founde standing upon the ryver of Tyve, being and arme of the see, and her sonne upon her lappe, and the same taper burnynge in her hande.

Item, that the same ymage was caryed thens unto Christes Church of Cardigane, and the sayd ymage would not tarry there, but was found thre or fowre tymes in the place where now is buylded the church of Our Lady, and the taper brunnyng in her hande, which contynued styll burnynge the space of nyne yeres without wastynge, untill the tyme that one foresware hymselfe thereon, and then it extincted and never burned after.

Item, that sence the ceasinge of burnynge of the sayd taper, it was enclosed and taken for a greate relique, and so worshipped and kyssed of pylgremes, and used of men to sweare by in difficill and harde matters, wherof the advauntage admounted to greate sommes of money in times passed, payenge yerely of the same Xxti nobles for a pencion unto thabbot of Cheresey...”

Thomas Barlow’s concern was with the taper, rather than the statue itself, as this had long been venerated as a relic. The Prior had only ever seen the nether end, “...where it appeared wood unto his judgemente...”

Thomas Barlow also questioned the Vicar, Morgan Meredith, who had been the parish priest there for 21 years. He recalled the origin of the timber at the base of the taper:-

“...Item, that Prior [actually Vicar] John Frodshame tolde hym that because the people toke the waxe awaye, he put the tree beneth, that the people shulde not dymynesh the substance of the taper...”

This led to Thomas Barlow’s contemptuous dismissal of the taper as “...a pece of olde rottene tymber...” and he criticised the “...abominable idolatry and disceatfull jugglinge...” on the part of the Priors and Vicars down through the centuries. The taper was sent to Thomas Cromwell and the statue was burned in Chelsea, London, soon afterwards. Both the Prior and the Vicar were ordered to preach on the folly of idolatry worship. The associated Priory was closed and the building and its estates were sold off.

St. Mary's Church itself survived and remained the parish church of Cardigan. In 1538 the services were altered to reflect the creation of the new “Church of England”. In 1539 Cardigan Priory was granted to Sir William Cavendish, who converted it into a private house. That year the Six Articles affirmed surviving Catholic dogma in English and Welsh churches. The Great Bible was distributed to churches that year, and St Mary's is likely to have received its first English Bible that year. In 1546 there were 400 houseling people or communicants. Philip ap Howell, a priest, received 29s. 4d. for saying the Mass of Our Lady:-

“...There is within the said parish one service called Our Lady Service, wherunto there doith belong certain landes and Tenements the which of olde tyme were gyven to thentent to fynd a prest to sing Our Lady Masse in the parishe churche of Cardigane...”

The same year the Chantry Priest of Cardigan was said to receive 106s. 6d. from the annual income of the Chantry, which was 118s. 6d. Chantries were dissolved that year, and so John ap Ieuan's Chantry was dissolved. In 1547, after King Edward VI became the new Monarch, the Six Articles were repealed and English replaced Latin in all church services. During his reign stone altars and rood screens were removed from most churches. In 1548 it was noted that:

“...In the Chantry certificate of the Chauntrey of Cardigan called Mr John ap Evan his Chauntrey, there are lands given to the yearly value of £6. 5s. 8d to sing four masses in the week for his soul yearly for ever, and also there is, in said parish one service, called Our Lady Service, and lands given to the yearly value of 45s. for a priest to sing Our Lady Masse in the parish church of Cardigan, sung at this time by Sir Philipe ap Hoell, a very aged man. There belongeth also one challis of silver, valued at 60s. – being laid to gage for 53s. 4d. by the Stipendiarie Priest Wm. Morris, also lands for the benefit of the poor; Griffith Sporrier, Parish Clerke and Receiver wages 26s. 6d...”

On January 15th 1549 the first Act of Uniformity made the Catholic Mass illegal. The first Book of Common Prayer was published in June of that year. In January 1550 Parliament began to encourage 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 produced. On March 8th 1553 Edward Powell leased:

“...land called Sickmens lands, late occupied by a stipendiary clerk in the parish church of the town of Cardigan, 5s. 8D, land lately belonging to the chantry called Mr John ap Ieuan Chauntrey in the town of Cardigan...Lands granted to maintain a priest or chantor to say the Mass of St. Mary in the parish church of Cardigan, 2 parcels of 10s. 2d. and 6s. 10d....”

On July 15th 1553 Mary became Queen after deposing Lady Jane Grey, and in September of that year Protestant Bishops were arrested and Catholic replacements were appointed. In 1553 Griffin Williams was said to be the Vicar of St Mary's. On November 30th 1554 Parliament supported a return to Roman Catholicism and the Heresy Acts were revived. In 1555 many Anglicans and Protestants were burned for heresy. In 1555 the Crown paid a pension of £2. 0s. 8d. to Philip ap Hoell for “...lately celebrating in the parish of Cardygane...” and to Griffin Williams “...late incumbent in the parish of Cardigan...” £2. 0s. 8d. annually.

In early 1559 the Church became Protestant once more after Queen Elizabeth I succeeded to the throne. On January 23rd that year the Third Act of Uniformity and Act of Supremacy settled the religious question. The Elizabethan Book of Common Prayer was then published. In 1563 Rev. Peregrine Daindle was the Vicar of Cardigan. Rev. Nicholas Harry was either his predecessor or successor. That year the Anglican Church was officially founded. An Act of Parliament passed that year sought that all Welsh churches should be provided with a Welsh Bible and Book of Common Prayer by March 1st 1567. The new Welsh Bible appeared in 1567 and a copy would have been provided to St Mary's Church. In 1588 William Morgan's Welsh Bible was first published.

In 1601 Rev. Res Owen was probably the Vicar of Cardigan. Between 1607 and 1631 the Revd. Jevan (or Ieuan) Griffiths was the Vicar of Cardigan. The church was briefly mentioned in Camden's “*Brittania*” in 1607 and is illustrated on John Speed's map of Cardigan drawn in 1610. Rev. Evan Griffiths' son, Abel Griffiths, and grandson, Matthew Griffiths, became prominent figures in the town. In 1611 the King James version of the Bible was produced and was widely distributed – St Mary's would surely have held a copy soon afterwards. In 1618 Rev. William Morris possibly became the Curate of Cardigan. In 1623 the right of Sanctuary for criminals was abolished. According to a plaque, a porch was added in 1639 at the nave door – “*Janson Lewis, Arthur Griffiths, Church Wardens Anno 1639*”.

In 1644 when the Civil War reached Cardigan, General Rowland Laugharne and his Puritan troops came to the church:-

“...Then we did enter the church of St. Mary and did find it deserted. Straight away my men did set to work to destroy the many Popish adornments of the church, and especially one sergeant, who was a pious man, and visited by the Almighty in dreams. I did endeavour to restrain him but the sergeant did call aloud “shall we not utterly destroy the ornaments of Baal, that are in the Lord's house?” Nevertheless I did entreat them to spare the great window for its beauty sake, and I rejoice to think it is still unharmed, though it did portray divers idolatry figures and a representation of a priest all in red by an altar. My men did break much painted glass and heads of angels and other goodly matter for which I felt grieved, but God ordained that we should destroy them, indeed many did blame me, that I did spare the great east window. After the men had broken much in the church, we did sing psalms and pray unto God and then we left again by the porch...”

Christmas Day in 1644 was a fast day enforced by Parliament. On January 3rd 1645 the Directory for Public Worship replaced the Book of Common Prayer. It omitted Christmas, which was not observed that year. On January 22nd 1645 when the Parliamentary forces drove the Royalists from Cardigan, the latter force left behind two brass demy-culverine cannon at St. Mary's Church, having apparently defended the churchyard. In October 1646 the Anglican episcopacy was abolished. In June 1647 Christmas, Easter and Whitsun were abolished by Parliament. Between 1647 and 1649 Rev. John Barnwell was the Vicar of Cardigan. In 1650 a new priest was placed in charge and the church was stripped of its' decorations, following a new Act of Parliament favouring Puritanism. On November

24th 1655 Anglican services were banned by Cromwell. In 1660 Rev. William Owen held the position of Vicar of Cardigan. At the Restoration of King Charles II, the Anglican Church was reconvened. On August 24th 1662 the Act of Uniformity was passed, which led to the ejection of many of the clergy and thereby the start of Nonconformity. The Revised Prayer Book was imposed. The Rev. Charles Price, a native of Radnorshire, was ejected from his living as the Vicar of Cardigan for his Nonconformity, and in his place Rev. John Morgan became the Vicar of St. Mary's and Ferwig. Price was described as being

"...diligent in public work and edifying in private discourse..."

In 1666 Rev. Richard Harries became the Vicar of Cardigan and Ferwig. That year the Burying in Woollen Act insisted on British-made shrouds for bodies, most of whom were still not buried in coffins at that date. In 1674 the two smallest bells at the church were recast by two travelling bell founders named Robert Ingle and John Stadler, who were paid £8 for their work by the Mayor and Corporation of the town. They built their casting pits very close to the north side of the tower, perhaps weakening the foundations. In 1684 Rev. Daniel Gwynne was either the Vicar or Curate of Cardigan.

In 1685 the antiquarian Edward Lhuyd illustrated a monument here, which has long since vanished. On it was carved the figure of a priest in a cassock and cowl, with a Latin inscription, which translates as:-

"Here Lies Thomas Albermarle, rector of the church of Cardigan. I beseech you, brothers, pray for me as I shall for you, in so far as I am able..."

On May 4th and 11th 1688 the Declaration of Indulgence was read in all parish churches, including St Mary's. On September 2nd 1693 Rev. David Jenkins, the Vicar of Cardigan, married Janet Hughes. The nave of the church was substantially rebuilt in 1702-03 according to a plaque in the porch:

"The body of this church was rebuilt in the years 1702 and 3. Hugh Thomas and Thomas Bevan, Church Wardens."

Much of the north side of the nave may date from this time, the south side being much older. A copy of the list of benefactors at this time remains inside the church.

On August 11th 1705 the church tower collapsed. This may have been partially due to undermining from the casting pits dug close to the tower thirty years earlier or to the re-roofing of the nave two years earlier. In 1710 a brief under the Great Seal was obtained for rebuilding it, but only £400 was received, which was not enough to complete the job. On April 12th 1711 the foundation stone of the new tower was laid, but the work was halted on October 25th 1711 when the funds ran out with the tower standing at about forty feet in height. On October 30th 1714 Rev. Rice Griffith of Cardigan was the Vicar of St. Mary's and remained so until 1717. In 1717 Rev. Thomas Richards became the Vicar of Cardigan and Verwick until 1729. On May 5th 1729 Rev. Thomas Richards died and was buried in the churchyard on May 7th 1729. His successor as the Vicar of Cardigan was Rev. James Phillips, B. A. In 1729-30 Rev. James Thomas was the Curate (or Vicar?) of St. Mary's. In 1731 Rev. Rice Evans became the Vicar of Cardigan. The new Vicar in 1737 was Rev. Hugh Pugh, B. A., who was presented the position by the King, succeeding Rev. Rees Evans. In 1739 Rev. Morgan Gwynne may have been the Vicar of Cardigan. In 1742 Rev. David Jones was the curate of the church.

In 1743 Rev. John Davies became the Vicar of Cardigan until at least August 1777. In 1743 the church poor-box was robbed (as is revealed by an inscription seen by Samuel Rush Meyrick in 1808). On August 14th 1745 work was proposed to complete what was then a rather stumpy tower. The upper part of the church tower was finally completed in 1748. A plaque was unveiled that year commemorating all of the benefactors. The inscription stated:

"...The tower in St. Mary's Church in Cardigan, with five bells, chimes and clock therein, fell down the 11 Aug. 1705. In 1709 a brief under the great seal was granted for rebuilding it, but no more than £400 was received for that purpose from the Undertaker. 12th April 1711, the foundation of the new Tower was laid, and the building carried on to 25 of Oct. 1711, and being then 40 feet high above the ground, and the £400 fund exhausted, the work stopped. 14th Aug. 1745; a subscription for carrying on the building was chiefly therewith, but partly at the expence of ye Parishones carried on and

finished, Anno 1748. The Rev. Wm. Powell, A. M. Clerk, and the above named John Morgan Esq., church Wardens..."

The Parish Clerk of St. Mary's that year was Rev. William Powell and the churchwarden was John Morgan, who gave £10. 10s towards the work himself. John Lloyd of Peterwell, the M. P. for Cardiganshire, and John Symons of Llanstinan, the M. P. for the Cardigan Boroughs, gave £100 and £20 respectively towards recasting and setting up the church bells.

In the early-mid Eighteenth Century, one Rev. John Jones was, at some point, the Curate of Cardigan. In 1754 a clock was installed in the new tower for the first time. John Warner & Sons of London re-cast at least one of the bells that year. In 1759 Andrew Brice called the church "...a goodly structure..." On September 16th 1760 Rev. John Davies baptised Thomas Lloyd of Coedmore, Llechryd. In 1762 Herbert Lloyd of Peterwell granted a new clock to the church. In 1763 a monument was erected at the church to the memory of the late John Morgan of Cardigan, the former Sheriff of Cardiganshire. In June 1774 Thomas Lloyd was the Curate of St. Mary's Church. From July-August 1774 Edward Meyrick was the officiating Curate. Following the death or departure of Rev. John Davies, who had been the Vicar since 1743, in late 1777 Rev. David Davies was an officiating minister – perhaps the Curate from 1777 until 1794.

In March 1778 Rev. John Evans became the Vicar of Cardigan until 1800. During 1778 William Morris officiated at services here – perhaps as the Curate, though he was here at the same time as Rev. David Davies, so one of them may have been the Parish Clerk. In 1783 a new silver gilt service of Communion Plate was donated, together with a new altar piece – the gift of the late Lady Laetitia Cornwallis, who was buried in the churchyard. A pair of chalices, two Patens, an oval-shaped Alms-dish and huge tankard-shaped Flagon were all provided at this time, all made of silver-gilt. In 1784 Rev. William Nicholas became the Parish Clerk or Curate of St. Mary's. On February 20th 1786 Elinor Nicholas, the wife of Rev. William Nicholas, died aged 55 years. The church appears in a painting made on June 11th 1793 by Sir Richard Colt-Hoare. In 1794 Rev. John Evans prosecuted William Jonathan and John Jones, two labourers, on suspicion of their having robbed the poor box in the church. In January 1795 Rev. Sampson Owen was the Curate of St. Mary's. In 1800 Rev. John Evans (b.1724-d.1824) was the Vicar of Cardigan. On May 15th 1802 Rev. William Nicholas, the Parish Clerk, died aged 60 years.

On January 4th 1803 Rev. Sampson Owen, the Vicar of Cardigan, married Sarah Hughes of St. Mary's parish. On July 17th and 18th 1804 the Bishop of St David's visited St Mary's Church. In 1805 the church bells were damaged through over-zealous pealing to celebrate Nelson's victory at Trafalgar. In 1808 Samuel Rush Meyrick wrote the following description of the building:

"...THE CHURCH

is dedicated to the Virgin Mary; and is a venerable handsome building, consisting of a spacious nave, with a noble tower at its' western end, and a porch on its south side. But the most elegant and most ancient part, is its chancel, which is turreted, and strengthened with buttresses ornamented with light gothic pinnacles, and its windows of the ornamented pointed arch. The entrance of the porch is a flattened pointed arch, sometimes termed the gothic ellipse; and an inscription above it seems to indicate the date of its erection; it is as follows:- JANSON LEWIS ARTHUR GRIFFITHS CHURCH WARDENS ANNO 1639." Above this has been placed the following: "THE BODY OF THIS CHURCH WAS REBUILT IN THE YEARS 1702 AND 3. HUGH THOMAS AND THOMAS BEVAN CHURCH WARDENS."

"Over the western door of the tower is also an inscription, but it is now so entirely obliterated as to be altogether unintelligible. It probably relates to the building of the tower, which fell down in the year 1705; and was rebuilt chiefly at the expense of the gentlemen of the county, and those connected with it. It is a vicarage, and in the gift of the Lord Chancellor.

In the eastern window are some small remains of painted glass, among which may be discerned the arms of Edgar Atheling, and some others; a rose, a hand, wings, and six or seven heads of angels: formerly this window was wholly of painted glass. Eight grotesque heads support the rafters of the roof...and there were formerly six figures of men and women holding shields carved in wood, leaning by the wall of the chancel, which originally, perhaps, supported the roof. There is a fine

pointed arch, the upper part of a door in the northern wall, and a niche not far from it...In the south wall of the chancel is an ornamented niche very elegant and light. A screen over the altar, of the Ionic order, has been erected, but by no means corresponds with the rest of the building. The font is very much carved, and in shape octagonal, but much more modern than most in this county...On the south side of the nave, on a black mural monument, is the following:-

"Underneath lyeth the body of Mrs Dorothy Ashenvel who departed this life Jan. the 13th 1763 aged 52. Also The Body of Mrs Anne Lilly who departed this life February 12th 1766 aged 57. Also The Body of Elizabeth Daughter of the said Mrs Lilly and Wife of Mr. John Richds of this town, who departed this life Octr the 5th 1767 aged 29."

Next to this monument is the door from the porch, and beyond that the poor box, over which is a board, with the following inscription painted on it:-

"...This poor Box was broke and robbed of all yt had been put in by pious benefactors from Easter 1742 to Easter 1743. They have also stolen and dissembled also and have put it even amongst their own stuff: Therefore ye children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed, neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy ye accursed from amongst you. Josh: C 7, ver. 11, 12. He that hath pity on the poor lendeth unto the Lord, and look, what he layeth out, it shall be paid him again." Prov. 19, 17"

Between this board and the pulpit, on a black marble monument, is the following inscription:-

"Near this place lieth interr'd the Body of Elizabeth late Wife to David Jones of this town Alderman, and Daughter of Owen Picton Clark, who exchanged this life for a better ye 20th day of December Anno Domi 1703 Aged 45 years. Also ye body of ye above said David Jones deceased the 29th Day of April Anno Domini 1707 Aged 33 years."

In the chancel on a flat stone, upon the ground, and on the north side the altar is inscribed:-

HERE LIETH INTERR'D THE BODY OF EYNON PHILIPS ESQUIER WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE THE VII OF JUNE IN XXII YEARE OF OUR RENOWNED QUEEN ELIZABETH.
Here also lyeth ye body of George Miles Esq. Son to ye said Eynon who died mar 1627. Here also lyeth ye body of Hector Miles Esq: son of the said George who died ye 26th of...in the year 1657. Here also lyeth ye body of John Miles Esq son of the said Hector who dyed ye 6th day of...1623...buried at ye...7 years

On the north side of the altar is another flat tombstone but being covered by the chest, and almost obliterated, it was impossible to make out the inscription. On the north side of the nave, on a large board, is painted the following:-

"The tower of St. Mary's Church in Cardigan, with five large bells, chimes, and clock therein, fell down the 11 Aug. 1705. In 1709 a brief under the great seal was granted for rebuilding it, but no more than £400 was received for that purpose from the Undertaker. 12th April 1711, the foundation of the new tower was laid, and the building carried on to 25 of Oct. 1711, and being then 40 feet high above the ground and the £400 exhausted the work stopped 14th Aug. 1745; a subscription for carrying on the building was chiefly therewith, but partly at the expence of ye Parishoners carried on and finished, Anno 1748. The Rev. Wm. Powell, A.M. Clerk, and the above named John Morgan, Esq. Church Wardens. [List of subscribers follows].

Next to this is another board containing the names of those persons whose liberality induced them to contribute towards erecting the present church in 1703. [Further subscribers' list follows]

Near to this is a neat small marble monument to the memory of a gentleman who was travelling through Wales, and suddenly died in this town. It is an ellipse of black marble, and on it a white urn, on which is inscribed the following:-

To the Memory of Edw. Savage late of London who departed this life 30th of Nov. 1802 Aged 40 years.

The present incumbent is the Rev. John Evans...In the churchyard are several monuments; and there is a stone building erected near the south east angle of the church, in which are two arches, each containing a handsome marble monument. That on the south side has a shield...and under this is the following inscription:-

"Underneath lye interr'd the remains of Mary eldest daughter of Sr Francis Cornwallis of Abermarless in the County of Carmarthen Knight and late Wife of John Morgan of theis Town, Esq. Who caused this monument to be erected in Testimony of his just regard to the Memory of a wife of whose sincere affection tenderness and fidelity he had upwards of thirty years experience. She departed this life the 19th of Nov. 1741. Aged 77 years."

On the north side, the inscription is almost obliterated: all that can now be made out is, "Underneath lye interred the Body of Mary Lloyd wife of David Lloyd Surgeon...Town..."

Samuel R. Meyrick illustrated many of the features which he had described. In 1810 five new bells were cast for the church by John Rudhall of Gloucester. On August 21st 1810 there was a visitation to the church by the Bishop. By August 1812 "...a handsome pair of chandeliers..." had been gifted to the church by Colonel Vaughan. In January 1813 Rev. John Evans was the Vicar of Cardigan. On July 2nd 1813 Rev. Thomas Morgan, the Curate of St. Mary's and also the Rector of Bridell and the Master of the Cardigan Free Grammar School, died aged 34 years. He was succeeded as the Curate of St. Mary's and Master of the Cardigan Free Grammar School by the Rev. George Griffith. In 1814 it was noted that Rev. John Evans, the Vicar, was aged 83 years. In 1819 Rev. Watkin Thomas was the Curate of St. Mary's and gave £1. 1s. towards the Carmarthen Eisteddfod that year. On November 6th 1819 Rev. James Bowen, the Parish Clerk and Master of the Cardigan National School, died aged 32 years. In August 1820 there was a visitation to the church by the Bishop. In early 1821 Pryse Pryse, M. P., gave "...a gallery of free sittings..." to the church at a cost of £200. Although it increased the capacity of the church, the gallery was regarded by later writers as rather unattractive. On April 20th 1824 the Vicar, Rev. John Evans, died.

In 1824 Rev. Griffith Thomas became the Vicar of Cardigan until 1876. By September 14th 1827 Arthur Jones of Castle Green (Cardigan Castle), the Sheriff of Cardiganshire, had presented a new organ to the church. In June 1828 Rev. Griffith Thomas, the Vicar, married Hannah, the daughter of the late Richard Jones of Pantirion, St. Dogmaels. On July 30th 1828 the Bishop visited St Mary's Church. Abraham Thomas was described as the Sexton of Cardigan in 1829. In 1830 the Pryse family of Gogerddan presented the church with a barrel organ. The tower appeared in an illustration drawn that year. In 1830 Rev. William Lloyd was the Curate for St Mary's parish. On May 6th 1831 Pryse Pryse, M. P., was about to donate a new clock to the church. On February 20th 1832 Hannah Thomas, the wife of Rev. Griffith Thomas, died aged 46 years. Two days later their only child, Richard Griffith Thomas, died aged just five days. In 1834 the church was marked on John Wood's map of Cardigan. In 1844 Rev. Evan Lewis became the Curate of St. Mary's. In September 1844 the Bishop preached at St. Mary's Church – apparently the first Bishop to do so for centuries – the following report appeared in the 'Pembrokeshire Herald' on September 6th 1844:

"...CARDIGAN

On Saturday evening last, the Lord Bishop of St. David's arrived at the Angel Hotel, in this town, and upon his arrival having been made known, the Rev. Griffith Thomas, vicar of St. Mary's, waited upon his lordship, when he kindly consented to preach three times on the Sunday following: in English at eleven, in Welsh at three, and again in English at six. The congregations at each service (notwithstanding his lordship's visit being quite unexpected) were exceedingly numerous and highly respectable and at three o'clock, the time his lordship preached in Welsh, the church was crowded to excess. The sermons were most impressively delivered, and attended to with the profoundest attention and we believe that this is the only instance of a Bishop's having preached at St. Mary's Church for centuries. Certainly we are not aware of any record in Welsh history of a bishop preaching at Cardigan three times the same Sunday. We have read that "Dewi Sant" preached in a field on the Pembrokeshire side of the Tivy many many years ago. His lordship left the Angel Hotel on Monday morning, on his way to Dolgelly, and on leaving we understand he expressed his approbation of the entertainment he met at the above hotel..."

In June 1845 there were complaints made about the unsatisfactory way in which the Churchwardens' accounts were being kept. At the same meeting it was elected to enclose with a wall a piece of ground adjoining the churchyard which had been left to the church by the late Mr Miles of the Priory. On September 25th 1845 the Bishop was scheduled to visit the church. On June 11th 1847 the '*Pembrokeshire Herald*' referred to a new nave window near the pulpit which was being installed, considerably enlarged from its' predecessor to the design of Mr. Waugh, who also installed a larger pulpit and conducted other works. William Jenkins of Blaenbarthen, Llangoedmor, was the mason. The article reads:

“...CARDIGAN CHURCH.

We are glad to find that our much respected vicar, Rev. Griffith Thomas, has, at his sole expense taken out a small window near the pulpit, and introduced one of considerable larger dimensions, and the skilful manner in which it was executed reflects the highest credit upon Mr. William Jenkins, mason, and Mr. Waugh, designers of the same...”

On December 8th 1847 Rev. Griffith Thomas wrote a letter regarding the state of education in Cardigan. In 1848 Rev. Richard Lee Lewis was the Curate of St. Mary's and the Master of the Cardigan Free Grammar School. On September 26th 1848 the Bishop visited the church and opened the new National School nearby. The Bishop visited again in July 1849 and preached at the church on September 1st 1850. In April 1851 the Curate of St. Mary's, Rev. William Evans, left. On April 4th 1851 the following item appeared in the '*Welshman*':

“...CARDIGAN.

On Sunday morning last, the Rev. Griffith Thomas, Rector of Saint Mary's, Cardigan, in pursuance of Her Majesty's Letter, delivered an excellent sermon on behalf of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. The service was well attended and the collection liberal. At the evening service, the Rev. Wm. Evans, Curate, delivered his farewell sermon to a crowded congregation, On the occasion of his leaving the town, having been promoted. There was a strong feeling of regret amongst the parishioners at the rev gentleman's departure, his admirable qualities having gained general respect in the parish...”

In 1851 Rev. Thomas Harries became the Curate of St. Mary's. In July 1851 Rev. Griffith Thomas' 19 year old son, James Thomas, died. That year there were 274 attendees and 200 scholars at the church every Sunday morning and 161 attendees and 50 scholars in the evening. On October 21st 1851 the Bishop visited the church and did so again in April and August 1852. In July 1853 Rev. John Thomas Clarke, B A, became the Assistant Curate of St. Mary's. In September 1854 Rev. W. Thomas of Swansea became the Curate of St. Mary's. On October 5th 1854 the Bishop of St David's visited St Mary's Church. In 1855 Rev. David R. Davies became the Curate. On May 25th 1855 the following item appeared in the '*Welshman*':

“...CARDIGAN CHURCH.

In consequence of the serious inconvenience experienced from the defective manner in which the pews of this Church are arranged, it has been determined to re-seat the Church, in a style more suited to the requirements of the congregation, and also, to build a new Chancel and Vestry. The contract for the proposed alterations has been taken by Mr. David Morgan. The estimated expense of the improvement is about £500. Of this, the Lord Bishop of St. David's contributes a handsome sum. The Rev. R. H. W Miles, contributes £100, and numerous other gentlemen there a still a large deficiency of the sum required...”

On October 17th 1855 Mr. Henry Woodyer (1816-96), architect, was carrying out alterations to the church at a cost of £520, including new seating. David Morgan of St. Mary Street was employed here as a builder. In September 1856 Rev. Henry Hughes became the assistant Curate of St. Mary's. On December 19th 1856 the following report appeared in the '*Welshman*':

“...CARDIGAN.—RE-OPENING OF ST. MARY'S CHURCH.

On Thursday the 11th inst. this church was again opened for Divine service. The weather for some days previous had been extremely stormy and inclement, and fears were entertained that the day appointed for the opening would be equally unfavourable, but during the afternoon of Wednesday the atmosphere cleared and the rain and wind ceased, and throughout the whole of Thursday the weather was as genial and fine as could be desired for the season.

The appearance of the church on Thursday morning was particularly imposing in comparison with the heavy and monotonous interior previous to the alterations and repairs. Pews of modern design and construction are now erected. The chancel is entirely re-modelled, and the pews which were there are removed, and tastefully designed seats are placed. The Communion Table is enlarged and greatly improved in appearance, and is now covered by a most handsome velvet cloth, the gift of the Rev. R. H. W. Miles. The former pulpit and reading desk are removed, and a smaller pulpit erected, and a new reading desk placed on the north side of the church. The gallery has also been considerably improved, and the old organ removed, by which the full extent of the edifice can be seen without obstruction. The entire interior has been painted and varnished, and the floor tessellated. It is difficult to imagine a more complete alteration than that which has been accomplished in this building, unless the church had been entirely rebuilt.

The plan and specifications were furnished by Mr. Woodyer, of Guildford. Mr. David Morgan, of Cardigan, was the builder, and the efficient manner in which the work has been completed has obtained unqualified approbation from all persons who have seen it. The whole contemplated improvements in the building are not yet completed, as it is proposed to introduce a stained glass window at the east end, a new porch at the principal entrance, and other decorations.

On Wednesday evening the Bishop arrived at the residence of R. D. Jenkins, Esq., the Priory, where he remained until the following Friday. The Rev. Mr. Miles, of Bingham (the owner of the Priory estate), also came from Nottinghamshire to be present, and resided at the Priory during his stay in the town.

On Thursday, at an unusually early hour, the church was filled with a highly respectable congregation, many of whom came from distant places. The clergymen from the various parishes for miles round attended. The service commenced by a voluntary on the new harmonium, ably performed by Mr. Jenkins, master of the Boys' National School. The Rev. Griffith Thomas, vicar, said prayers, and the Rev. R. H. W. Miles read the lessons of the day. The Bishop selected his text from the 8th verse of the 3rd chapter of Ephesians, and was listened to with unabated attention throughout the whole of his able sermon. In the afternoon the service was conducted in Welsh. Prayers were said by the Rev. W. Hughes, the curate of St. Mary's, the lessons being read by the Rev. J. Rowlands, curate of St. Dogmells. The Rev. Mr. Griffiths, vicar of Llandilo, preached, and took his text from the last verse of the 2nd chapter of Saint Paul's epistle to the Ephesians. The church was crowded to inconvenience during the Welsh service, even standing room being difficult of possession. Liberal collections in aid of the church restoration fund were made at the termination of each service..."

New seats were being installed and other alterations conducted by David Morgan, builder, on August 23rd 1858. The *Cambrian Archaeological Association* visited the church in August 1859. On April 26th 1861 the following report appeared in the 'Welshman':

"...CARDIGAN.

On Sunday last, the Rev. Griffith Thomas, vicar of St. Mary's, Cardigan, made urgent appeals to his congregation in aid of the Indian Famine Relief Fund, and the churchwardens collected £ 9.

CARDIGAN CHURCH-

A very elegant altar piece was last week completed by Mr. John Miles, painter, of this town, the tablets are of zinc, and the writing and gilding exceedingly well executed. The tablets are from a design sketched by Mrs. Miles, and at the sole expense of the Rev. R. H. W. Miles, of Bingham, Notts, the owner of the Priory Estate in this neighbourhood..."

In 1861 Messrs. D. Jenkins of Cilgerran and J. Thomas of Llechryd built a new south porch to the church. On October 11th 1861 the following item appeared in the 'Welshman':

“...CARDIGANSHIRE. CARDIGAN CHURCH.

The congregation of this Church have for some time experienced great inconvenience from draught and cold owing to the removal of the Porch which was taken down when the Church was reseated, and had not been rebuilt. Accordingly a plan was adopted, and the contract for the work was taken by Mr. David Jenkins of Kilgerran, mason, and Mr. John Thomas of Llechrhyd, carpenter, who have completed the structure satisfactorily...”

In September 1863 Rev. William Rees became the assistant Curate of St. Mary's. In September 1867 Rev. W. Rees, the Curate, left for Aberporth. On January 17th 1868 Rev. John Rees became the Curate of St. Mary's. On 28th July 1869 the Cardigan Choral Union held a festival at the church. About the year 1870 it was proposed that the nave of the church should be rebuilt in order to accommodate more seats, but the idea was quashed on the advice of William Woodward. He removed all of the old seats and provided new and longer ones to increase the capacity. Between 1871 and 1875 Rev. Thomas Jones was the Curate of St. Mary's. On October 22nd 1875 an appeal was made for the acquisition of a new church organ. On April 28th 1876 John Thomas of Noyaddwilym, Llangoedmor, was the contractor for building a new organ chamber. Rev. Griffith Thomas, the Vicar of Cardigan, died on May 20th 1876, aged 87 years. On May 27th 1876 the following report appeared in the 'Aberystwyth Observer':

“...DEATH OF THE REV. GRIFFITH THOMAS.

The truly venerable vicar of Cardigan, the Rev. Griffith Thomas, expired at his residence at Pontyclifon, on Saturday morning, at the patriarchal age of 88. The rev. gentleman was ordained by the Bishop of Burgess in the year 1813, and appointed to the curacy of Llangoedmore; he afterwards became curate of Cardigan. and was collated to the living of St. Mary's in 1824, by the then Lord Chancellor, on the recommendation of Sir Pryse Pryse, of Gogerddan, during the whole of which time to his retirement in 1873. he officiated as chaplain of the county goal. He was also prebendary of Brecon, and at one time filled the post of domestic chaplain to the Duke of Clarence, afterwards to His Majesty King William the Fourth. The deceased gentleman failed in his ministerial duties the beginning of the past winter, and expired in exactly six months to the day from the time he took to his bed. He was greatly beloved by all classes of his parishioners, and his meek and Christian spirit, and venerable appearance will long be kept in remembrance by them he was in every sense of the word the father of his flock, and departed from our midst as resignedly and peacefully as he had lived. The benefice, which is the gift of the Lord Chancellor, is worth about £ 157 a year. During the illness of the late vicar, the laborious work of the parish has been most successfully and energetically carried out by the Rev. T. Jones, B.A., curate, to whom the deceased was greatly attached...”

The Curate of St. Mary's, Rev. T. Jones, acted as a temporary successor until the new Vicar of St. Mary's, Rev. William Cynog Davies, B D, took over the post on November 24th 1876, remaining the vicar until 1900. On November 25th 1876 the following report appeared in the 'Aberystwyth Observer':

“...FAREWELL SERMONS OF THE REV. T. JONES B. A.

Owing to the preferment of the Rev. W. Cynog Davies to the living of Cardigan, the Rev. T. Jones, who has officiated as curate for the last seven years. preached his farewell sermons in St. Mary's church on Sunday afternoon and evening last. The church was crowded on each occasion, and both preacher and people were deeply affected at the separation, Mr. Jones having endeared himself to the parishioners by his amiable and kindly disposition. For the past two years the rev. gentleman had, owing to the illness of the late Vicar sole charge of the parish, as well as the chaplaincy of the county gaol, under his care the Church in Cardigan has greatly increased and prospered. For the present Mr. Jones still retains his appointment as chaplain of the county prison. We understand that a testimonial to the rev. gentleman is in progress, which has met with ready support from the church congregation and others...”

In February 1877 an illuminated address and a silver tea and coffee service was presented to Rev. Thomas Jones, the Curate, upon his departure to Pembroke Dock. The following year he married Mary Anne James, the daughter of ironmonger Levi James. In early 1877 Rev. David Richards became the Curate of St. Mary's. On March 3rd 1877 the following item appeared in the 'Aberystwyth Observer':

"...THE CHURCH IN CARDIGAN.

Under the lead of the Rev. W. Cynog Davies, the new vicar, the church in this town has commenced an improved existence. It used to be said that the town bell at the Guildhall was always in use, but its tongue is now eclipsed by that of the church of St. Mary's. At 8.15 every morning the bell rings for daily prayers. There are services every Wednesday and Friday evenings, and on Saints day throughout the year. On Sundays services are held at 10 and 11.30 a.m., and 6 and 7.15 p.m.. the afternoon being reserved for the Sunday school. On Ash Wednesday a celebration of the Holy Communion took place..."

On April 20th 1877 the following item appeared in the '*Pembrokeshire Herald*':

"...CARDIGAN.

A magnificent new Organ has just been completed by Messrs. Foster and Andrews, of Hull, for St. Mary's Church, Cardigan, in a chamber erected on the north side of the chancel. There are two manuals, the great organ with 7 stops, and the swell with 8 stops. There are 30 notes of separate pedal pipes (16ft.), and 7 composition couplers and pedals. The front pipes are disposed on a projection, which has a most imposing appearance. It will be formally opened in May..."

On June 7th 1877 the Bishop dedicated the new church organ by Foster & Andrews of Hull, which had cost £440. A luncheon was given at the Guildhall on that occasion. In 1877 Rev. William Cynog Davies married Miss Mary E. Jenkins, the eldest daughter of Jonathan Jenkins of Cilbronnau, Llangoedmor. In August 1880 Dr John H Gower gave an organ recital at the church. On November 26th 1880 the fourth bell of the church was being repaired. It had been badly damaged after falling from its' bearings whilst being over-enthusiastically pealed for a wedding. From 1880-1900 William Lewis of No. 6 Church Street was the Sexton of St. Mary's Church. In December 1880 a bazaar was held at the Guildhall to raise money for the Church Bell Fund, a 1754 bell having been re-cast that year. This caused some considerable annoyance to the Nonconformists in the community as it was attended by the Mayor and Corporation in full regalia. In 1881 Rev. T. Williams became the Curate of St. Mary's.

The cemetery of St. Mary's Church was closed on May 2nd 1881. That year several organ recitals by Dr. John H. Gower were performed in the church. A surprise religious census in 1884 showed that 139 persons attended the morning service and 239 attending in the evening. The church is indicated on the 1886 O. S. map and others. In 1887 Rev. William Cynog Davies calculated the average Sunday attendance as being 242 persons in the mornings and 347 in the afternoon. On March 22nd 1888 Mary Elizabeth Davies, the wife of Rev. William Cynog Davies, died aged 56 years. In August 1888 the annual church outing was to Poppit Sands, where they held a picnic and sports. In 1890 Rev. Thomas Jones became the Curate of St. Mary's until 1899. On July 29th 1892 it was complained that the churchyard had become very overgrown. On May 3rd 1894 David Davies of Stanley House, Pendre, became a church warden. In June 1894 a Church Choral Festival was held here. In April 1895 David Griffith Davies of Castle Green (Cardigan Castle) became a warden. On March 20th 1896 tenders were sought for conducting minor repairs and redecorating at the church, which work was carried out by William Charles Wilson & Sons, Pendre, to the specifications of Richard Thomas, Cardigan architect. In February 1897, owing to a mix-up regarding times, a funeral cortege was left waiting for twenty minutes without a clergyman to deliver the funeral service. In April 1898 the Vicar appointed Savile Henry Miles of the Priory as his warden, and the Vestry appointed flour merchant R W Woolcock as the Parish Warden. John Evans and B Peregrine were re-elected as Welsh warden. On September 26th 1898 the following sad story appeared in the '*Evening Express*':

"...DOUBLE ACCIDENT IN CARDIGAN CHURCHYARD. ONE LAD KILLED AND ANOTHER INJURED.

Alfred Davies, aged ten, Arthur Davies, aged twelve, sons of Mr. William Davies, manager for Mr. T. M. Daniel, of the Tivy Cycle Works, who resides at Tintern Cottage, met with serious accidents in Cardigan Churchyard on Friday morning. They had climbed a tree in search of horse chestnuts, when the branch on which was the younger lad gave way, and he fell on a tombstone. During his descent he collided with his brother, who also fell to the ground. Alfred sustained a fracture of the

skull, and was otherwise so seriously injured that he died early on Saturday morning. Arthur had his arm broken, and received a number of scratches..."

In March 1899 the Curate, Rev. Thomas Jones, left, after nine years at St. Mary's, for the curacy of Monkton. The Cardigan Town Guide of that year describes and illustrates the church. At that time the new Curate of St. Mary's was Rev. J. Rowland Thomas. In 1900 the striking weights of the clock broke. On February 19th 1900 William Lewis, the Sexton of the church for twenty years, died aged 68 years. In April 1900, at the Easter Vestry, David Davies of Stanley House was appointed as the Vicar's Warden and Mr Parkinson, supervisor of Inland Revenue, was elected as the Parish Warden. Mr Henry Evans of Napier Street and Mr W Samson-Davies of Old Castle Farm, were elected as the Welsh wardens. On 29th November 1900 Rev. William Cynog Davies, the Vicar of Cardigan since 1876, died aged 67 years. On December 8th 1900 the 'Cambrian News' printed the following item:

"...DEATH OF THE VICAR OF CARDIGAN.

After a very long and lingering illness, the Rev. W. Cynog Davies, B. D., vicar of Cardigan, peacefully passed away about midnight on Thursday at the Vicarage, the dwelling he was mainly instrumental in creating, and which adds much to the value of the living. The rev. gentleman had held the appointment since 1876, having previously been the perpetual curate or Felinfoel, Llanelly. He was a native of Bronllys, Breconshire, and received his early college training at Brecon College, but afterwards went to Lampeter, where he took his degree in 1868, and was ordained deacon in 1868 and priest in 1869. He was some time curate of St. John's, Cardiff, and also of Dafen, Llanelly. At Cardigan he made himself thoroughly endeared to his parishioners, both Church and Nonconformist, owing to his kindness of heart and promptitude to help in all good causes. He had been a member of the school board for three years, and was again nominated last week for re-election. The Rev. W. C. Davies was the author of many published sermons, and was always an earnest and telling preacher, much sought for some few years since for harvest thanksgiving and special services, at which his homely eloquence was always convincing and appreciated. The living of Cardigan is in the gift of the Lord Chancellor, and is of the net value of £192. Since the death of his wife the rev. gentleman had led a somewhat secluded life, but his ear and purse were always open to appeals in distress.

THE FUNERAL.

Tuesday at Cardigan was one of the most gloomy of days in more respects than one, and the whole town appeared to be mourning the occasion being the interment of the Rev. W. Cynog Davies, the beloved and revered vicar of the parish. The Rev. Rhys Jones Lloyd, R.D., the vicar of Troedryaur, was to have officiated, but the terrible news of the death of his son in South Africa prevented that arrangement being carried out. and the Rev. J. Rowland Thomas, the curate of St. Mary's, had to take the whole duty upon himself..."

On December 22nd 1900 the following item appeared in the 'Weekly Mail':

"...THE NEW VICAR OF CARDIGAN.

The Rev. D. J. Evans, M.A., curate-in-charge of All Saints' (Mr. Arthur Gilbertson's church), Pontardawe. has been appointed to the living of Cardigan, was educated at Llandovery School and Clare College, Cambridge. He served for many years as curate of St. Peter's, Carmarthen, under the Bishop of Swansea, and was English chaplain from 1897-8 at Orotava, Teneriffe. and has held his present curacy just twelve months. Although he is nominally a curate of Clydach, he has been practically in sole charge of the Church at Pontardawe. Mr. Evans is an able man, and has greatly increased the congregation at All Saints' Church and placed the Sunday School on a satisfactory footing. He will be greatly regretted at All Saints'..."

On March 28th 1901 Rev. David John Evans, M A, R D, was inducted as the new Vicar of Cardigan. The Churchwardens at that time included David Davies (Stanley House), B Parkinson, and Henry Evans. On April 9th 1901 Rev. David J. Evans married Miss Laura Dorothea Hughes. On May 17th 1901 the following item appeared in the 'Cardigan & Tivy-Side Advertiser' regarding the old barrel organ at the church:

"...THE OLD BARREL ORGAN IN ST. MARY'S CHURCH..."

This old instrument of singular appearance was located mid-way in the gallery, and what a huge structure to look at in front. Its wings spread to right and left on an extensive scale, and the decorator's art had been called into requisition to emblazon its face with gold leaf and royal blue, to imitate its mute pipes. And to his credit the work was accomplished with mathematical precision. The body was of rather small dimensions compared with the magnitude of its wings, and not very attractively designed, yet it was supplied with all the facilities for musical enjoyment which ingenuity could devise in a barrel organ of the period. Within this piece of furniture, which was partitioned off on either side into several receptacles, the musical barrels were placed. The description of those barrels were but little known, except to the organist. On an elevated seat at the back, sat the grinder of the instrument Mr. David Roberts, familiarly known as "Roberts White Hart", a stout and red-faced gentleman, with dignified appearance. Now-a-days the manipulator sits in a conspicuous place in front of the organ. In those days he had be contented with a "back seat," and was hid from view with a curtain suspended by brass rings from an iron bar bent into semi-oblong shape, which extended fully five feet to his rear. Often on Sunday mornings we cast a hurried glance round when the curtains were drawn aside, to catch a glimpse of the organist changing the barrels – this was indispensable through the change of tunes – which art he skilfully performed, and we surveyed with an indescribable curiosity. On a panel in front of the gallery under the organ was an inscription as follows:- Presented To St. Mary's Church by Pryse Pryse, Esq., M. P., Gogerddan. A. D. MDCCCXXVII...David Roberts...successor at the organ was Evan Evans, known as "Evan Shal", junior, which office he retained until the demolition of the old instrument..."

In June 1902 a special service was held to celebrate the end of the Boer War. In April 1903 the Easter Vestry was attended by the Vicar, Rev. D J Evans; the Curate, Rev J E Thomas; Messrs H Parkinson, Henry Evans and W S Davies, church wardens; and Mr W Joseph, Vestry Clerk. Reference was made to a lectern given to the church that year by Miss Howell, and a Pulpit Frontal given by Mrs Pritchard of the Priory. The Vicar nominated David Davies, Stanley House, as his warden. On June 3rd 1904 there were proposals to enlarge and beautify the church. Tenders were sought for redecoration, removal of the ceilings and enlargement of the nave. Lewis Lewis of Cardigan, architect, was the contractor and the work took place between 1904 and 1906. Herbert Millingchamp Vaughan, earlier in 1904, had queried the tradition that Thomas Johnes of the Hafod had removed the Norman East window in the 1770's. He said of the church, that:

"...the whole chancel has a bare and dreary aspect, thanks to the low dismal stucco ceiling which has replaced a fine old timber roof that was highly ornate with carving..."

In March 1905 Rev. David Bankes Evans succeeded Rev. T. J. Evans as the Curate of St. Mary's. Three new stained glass windows were installed in the chancel in 1906. In 1906 Rev. David J. Evans was the Vicar of Cardigan and Rev. D. Bankes Evans remained the Curate until 1914. Lewis Lewis' renovations were completed at a cost of over £700 and the church re-opened on November 7th 1906. David Miles and Thomas Evans had been the builders employed. On November 9th 1906 the 'Cardigan & Tivy-Side Advertiser' commented:

"...The massive and beautiful tower has been restored, and while maintaining all its antiquity, modern improvements have been introduced by the conversion of the basement into a commodious vestry room, with new approaches to the gallery and belfry. A new roof has been placed on the chancel, and while its outside work has been strengthened, all the beautiful workmanship of nearly 900 years ago has not been disturbed. The grand original Norman Chancel Arch still remains in all its pristine beauty, the chancel itself being paved with richly coloured encaustic tiles, laid out in panels, and approached by a white marble step. The original frame work of the windows are intact, but they have all been releaded, and furnished with Cathedral glass, the upper sections bearing emblems of the Trinity and other sacred symbols, in coloured glass. The chancel windows are particularly effective, the Cathedral glass being interspersed with panels of coloured glass bearing fleur-de-lys and lilies. The nave is paved throughout with a flooring of oak blocks on the inter system, forming comfortable and silent walking. The ventilation has been thoroughly looked to, and the heating of the church improved...The whole of the restoration was entrusted to, and has been very ably carried out by Messrs. J. Williams and Sons, Felingynllo, the contractors...Mr. L. Lewis, as architect, and the contractors are to be congratulated on their successful work. Coming to the interior decorations, the contract of which was secured by Messrs. David Miles and Thomas Evans, it may at once be said they are chaste and ornate in the extreme, and carried out under designs prepared by the architect..."

In April 1909 the Easter Vestry was held. It was noted that Mr R W Woolcock had resigned as the People's warden after four years' service. Mr Arthur Clougher was appointed to serve as the Vicar's Warden and Mr Timothy Sambrook, jeweller, was elected as the People's Warden. Messrs. Henry Evans and W S Davies were re-elected as Welsh Wardens – Henry Evans having already completed twelve years in that office. In June 1909 the Church Choral Festival was held at St Mary's Church. On January 21st 1910 the following item appeared in the '*Cardigan & Tivy-Side Advertiser*':

"...FIRST MEMORIAL WINDOW IN ST MARY'S CHURCH, CARDIGAN.

UNVEILING CEREMONY BY THE LORD BISHOP OF ST. DAVID'S.

An unique ceremony in connection with church decoration in Cardigan took place on Monday morning last, the occasion, as announced by us last week, being the unveiling of a memorial window, presented to the Church by Mrs Davies, The Castle, for her late husband, Mr David Griffith Davies. The ceremony was looked forward to with considerable interest, and the Church was fairly well filled. A shortened morning service was read by the Rev. D J Evans, M A, vicar, and the lesson by the Rev. D Bankes Evans, curate. The surpliced choir were in attendance, and suitable hymns, responses, etc, were nicely rendered. After the singing of the hymn before the sermon, the Bishop proceeded to the window, which is next the pulpit on the south side, and after a prayer dedicatory to the glory of God and the memory of David Griffith Davies, he unveiled the window, embracing in his prayer the hope of the acceptance of this offering at their hands for the adornment of the Church of God...

...The window itself is a beautiful specimen of church decoration by the well-known firm of Messrs. Clayton & Hill. Its subject is Israel blessing his grandchildren, taken from the 14th verse of the 48th chapter of Genesis - "And Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hand wittingly, for Manasseh was the firstborn". The inscriptions set forth that the window was erected to the memory of David Griffith Davies, Esq..."

In February 1911 Mr T Sambrook, Bridge Street, and Mr John Evans, High Street, were the English wardens of the church. Later that month the members of the St Mary's Church Choir were entertained to supper at the Victoria Restaurant by the Churchwardens. On January 25th 1912 it was revealed that Rev. David Timothy Alban would succeed Rev. David J. Evans as Vicar of St. Mary's, and Rev. David J. Evans left for Llangynidr after delivering his Farewell Sermon on April 14th 1912.

On June 20th 1912 there was a theft of money and items from the church, though the thief was apprehended soon afterwards. On July 7th 1912 Rev. David Timothy Alban B A, R D's induction as the new Vicar of Cardigan by the Bishop of St. David's took place at St. Mary's Church. An oak lectern was later presented to the church in memory of Rev. David J. Evans. In February 1913 a plaque was unveiled at the church in memory of Rev. William Cynog Davies. On February 27th 1914 two cottages on Pontycleifion were acquired through the efforts of John Evans, church warden, for demolition in order to improve the church entrance from the north. On March 27th 1914 Rev. George Thomas Walters was appointed to be the new Curate of St. Mary's, succeeding Rev David Bankes Evans, who had accepted the livings of St. Nicholas and Grandston in Pembrokeshire. By May 15th 1914 two more cottages had been purchased and later that year they were demolished and a new dwarf wall and railings were constructed. In mid September 1914 Rev. George Thomas Walters, B A, Lampeter, (b.1888) became the new Curate. In 1915 an article entitled "*Stained Glass at Cardigan Church*" by Prof. E. Tyrrell Green appeared in the *Cardiganshire Antiquarian Magazine*. On November 19th 1915 tenders were being sought for building walls and railings at the north side of the churchyard. Two of the largest trees in the avenue here were uprooted by a severe gale on December 27th 1915. Several headstones and monuments were damaged as a result. On January 28th 1916 Rev. George Thomas Walters, the Curate of St Mary's, announced his imminent departure. Rev. Benjamin J. Jones became the new Curate of St. Mary's in March 1916. On October 1st 1916 Rev. David Timothy Alban announced his forthcoming departure as Vicar, to take a new position in Lampeter. A farewell presentation meeting was held in November at the National Schoolroom. Mrs Davies of Castle Green made the presentation of a pedestal desk.

By December 15th 1916 Rev. David Morgan Jones, B A, R D, of Aberporth had become the new Vicar of Cardigan – he was officially inducted by the Bishop on January 21st 1917 and remained

the Vicar until 1931. On May 2nd 1917 the Curate of St. Mary's, Rev. Benjamin J. Jones, married Miss Margaret Francis Harris of Carmarthen. In October 1917 a presentation was made to Rev. Benjamin J. Jones at the National Schoolroom to mark his recent marriage. On 23rd May 1918 David Bateman, writing in the '*Cardigan & Tivy-Side Advertiser*', recorded the inscriptions on the church bells:

"...The inscriptions on these bells, placed just below the "shoulder" angle, are as follows:

- 1 – Treble - "JOHN RUDHALL, GLOUCESTER, FECT. 1810 (scroll)"*
- 2 - "I R FECT. 1810 MUSIC THE FIERCEST GRIEF CAN CHARM."*
- 3 – I. RUDHALL, GLOUCESTER, FECT, 1810 (scroll)."*
- 5 - "I RUDHALL. FECT 1810 (scroll).*
- 6 – Tenor - "JOHN RUDHALL, GLOUCESTER FECT. 1810 (scroll)..."*

...In 1880 the fourth bell, the remaining Lester bell of 1754, which some years previously had fallen owing to the breaking of the cannons (i. e. the metal loops which attach the bell to the wooden stock), was re-cast, and greatly to the credit of those concerned the inscription on the old bell was reproduced on the "waist", or middle of the new bell.

"VIVAT REX FLOREAT GRIX ANNO DOMINI 1754"

Below this is the new inscription:

*"PROSPERITY TO THE TOWN AND CORPORATION OF CARDIGAN.
RECAST – WM CYNOG DAVIES, VICAR, LEWIS EVANS, MAYOR 1880.*

*A superscription just beneath the "shoulder" angle proclaims that the bell was cast by
"JOHN WARNER AND SONS, LONDON."*

All the bells except the sixth, which is hopelessly cracked at the rim, are of excellent tone..."

In January 1919 Rev. Benjamin J. James, the Curate, left Cardigan for Morriston and in April there was a presentation made to him of a wallet full of bank-notes. Rev. Evan Glanrid Jones (b.1888) became the new Curate in May 1919. A Memorial Window commemorates George Stuart Berrington Davies (of Castle Green), 2nd Lieutenant, 5th Battalion Rifle Brigade, who died aged 20 years from an illness contracted whilst on active service in North Russia. In 1920 Rev. David Morgan Jones, B. A., was the Vicar of Cardigan; Rev. Evan Jones, M. A., was the Curate; and Rev. Gilbert Basil Jones was the Honorary Curate. On June 23rd 1920 a memorial tablet to Major R. W. Picton Evans was unveiled here. On June 14th 1922 a Church Choral Festival was held here, conducted by Sir Walford Davies.

On November 2nd 1923 the Vicar of Cardigan, Rev. David Morgan Jones, proposed renovations to the church including a new East Window. Work commenced in 1924 including the removal of the Nineteenth Century gallery and low stucco ceiling and the installation of a new memorial East window inscribed: - "*In grateful memory of the men and women of this parish who gave their lives for their country 1914-18*". The same year Rev. E. Glanrid Jones was succeeded as Curate of St. Mary's by Rev. James Lewis Davies (b.1886). On December 14th 1924 a Dedication of Colours of the 1st Cardigan Company of Girl Guides, was held at the church. In 1925 a stained glass window was installed in memory of the late Arabella Ann Davies of Castle Green. Restoration work was still in progress at the church that year. In May 1926 a Fancy Fair was held at the town's Upper Market to raise money for the church restoration fund. In 1926 a new vestry was erected and a new pulpit and reredos installed. A new panelled ceiling was installed that year, with all of the restoration work by W. D. Caroe. The church was re-opened and dedicated on March 25th 1927. On April 1st 1927 the following article appeared in the '*Cardigan & Tivy-Side Advertiser*':

"...DEDICATION

RE-OPENING OF ST MARY'S CHURCH, CARDIGAN, AFTER RESTORATION.

MEMORIAL WINDOW TO FALLEN HEROES.

BISHOP'S FIRST OFFICIAL VISIT.

A CIVIC WELCOME.

An event which had been long looked forward to by the Churchpeople of Cardigan and indeed by the whole inhabitants of the town, took place on Friday last, when the ancient and historic Church of St Mary was re-opened after restoration and dedication by the Lord Bishop of St David's (the Rev. D L Prosser), whose first official visit to the town after his elevation to the Bishopric it was. Townspeople and others, irrespective of sect or creed, attended the ceremony, although the weather was not all that could be desired, and the church was crowded with a reverent congregation when the dedication ceremony, simple yet deeply impressive, took place. Prior to the dedication the Lord Bishop was befittingly welcomed at the National School by the Mayor (wearing his chains and robes of office) and the members of the Corporation). The Lord Bishop was received at the vestry by the Vicar and Churchwardens, who preceded him, carrying Churchwardens' wands to the National School. The Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors marched from the Guildhall, headed by the Mace-bearers Messrs John Williams and Peter Davies, as follows: The Mayor Mr John Evans, CM; Aldermen David Davies, David Charles and Dan Williams; Councillors W Charles Davies; John Evans, J P; Samuel Young, M A; Hugh Ladd; Griffith Jenkins; Capt. James Davies; Tom Jones; David Williams; Sim Evans; J E Jones; S T Jones; with the Town Clerk (Mr D Morgan Jones); the Magistrates' Clerk (Mr W J Williams) and Mr D T James, J P, and Mr A Clougher, J P. In the schoolroom also were the Revs. John Williams, and T Esger James, Capel Mair.

CIVIC WELCOME

The Lord Bishop, who was in full ceremonial vestments and carried his Pastoral Staff, was surrounded by the surpliced clergy of the district. The Mayor, addressing the Lord Bishop, said that as the Civic Authority representing the very ancient borough of Cardigan, the congratulated him on his preferment to the important bishopric of the diocese of St David's – a high, noble and dignified position, although carrying with it special responsibilities and heavy duties. It was an honour indeed to occupy such a position in the Master's vineyard. They desired to extend to His Lordship a most cordial welcome on his first official visit to Cardigan. It was his (the Mayor's) privilege to be personally acquainted with His Lordship's predecessor, the late Bishop Owen, a gentleman who was held in great respect and admiration – in fact he might say almost loved – in Cardigan, and indeed throughout Wales. From what he had heard of Bishop Prosser, and if he might say so, from what he knew of his highly respected family (being an old Carmarthen boy himself) he felt quite sure His Lordship would command the same respect and admiration as his illustrious predecessor. Although a Nonconformist he (the Mayor) was proud to think of the efforts of the worshippers at St Mary's Church led by their enthusiastic, zealous and earnest Vicar, the Rev. D M Jones, in renovating, improving and restoring the old and historic Church, and that they were as zealous for their spiritual welfare as for their material comforts. He trusted that the Dedication services would have a lasting effect upon them all and that His Lordship's visit would be ever remembered. "May God's blessing rest upon you", concluded the Mayor "and may you have health, strength, grace and wisdom to carry out your heavy and responsible duties for many years." The Vicar (Rev. D M Jones, B A, BD) then presented to His Lordship the Revs. John Williams, Bethania, and T Esger James, Capel Mair, as Nonconformist leaders in the town.

THE BISHOP'S REPLY

The Lord Bishop, in reply to the civic welcome, said he was very thankful for their kindness in coming there to welcome him. He was quite sure that when the ancient Church was consecrated many centuries ago the townspeople of that day took as great an interest in the ceremony as they did that day. He was sure the Church was very near and dear to all the townspeople of Cardigan of whatsoever sect. He hoped that in the future they would draw together closer and understand each other better and that they would work together for the good of all. He would look back with pleasure on that, his first official visit to the town, and he thanked them again for their very kind welcome. The Vicar then said a prayer before the procession left for the Church. The procession leaving for the Church was headed by the Crosier (the Rev. George Roberts, Vicar of Crickhowell), followed by the Churchwardens Messrs D B James, W Charles Davies, Enoch Rees and William Griffiths; the surpliced choir; the Vicar of Cardigan, the Rev. D M Jones, B A, BD, and the following clergy: Revs J Lewis Davies (Curate of Cardigan); M J Marsden, Capel Colman; J G Hughes, St Dogmaels; J Jones, Mount and Verwig; E A Davies, Llandissilio; O J Thomas, Clynderwen; F Jones, Llanycefn; W Edwards, Clydey; D R Enoch,

Llandyfriog; T M James, Meline; E W Evans, Tremain; J Harries Williams, Manordeifi; J R Jones, Cenarth; J E Jones, Whitland; T Harries Williams, Swansea; D J Evans, Aberporth; W George, Curate of Llandyssul; L J Edwards, Curate of St Dogmaels; D D Jones, Penbryn; J J Lewis, Llandygwydd; Lloyd Jones, Bettws Evan; J Lloyd, Llechryd; Ivor Roberts, Priest-in-Charge, Bridell; T D Evans, Llanwinio; D L Daniel, Eglwysrwrw; and A H Jones, Henry's Mote. Then followed the Lord Bishop, accompanied by the Rev. Dr. Llewellyn Davies, Rector of Llangoedmore (Examining Chaplain to the Bishop), and the Rev. Gruffydd Evans B D, R D, Vicar of Newcastle Emlyn and Rural Dean of Emlyn, who acted as Chaplains, and the Mayor and Corporation; and the following ministers: The Revs. John Williams, Bethania; T Esger James, Capel Mair; E J Lloyd, Capel Degwel; J Price, Verwig; and E Garnon Thomas, Cilbronnau. The procession entered the Church by the South Door, the processional hymn being: "Come, ye faithful, raise the anthem." The Bishop and his Chaplains proceeded within the sanctuary, the Clergy and Choir into the chancel, and the Mayor and Corporation to seats in the nave.

THE DEDICATION

Standing at the Altar, the Bishop said the dedication prayers...Following the dedication of the Altar came the dedication of the memorial window...

...THE RESTORED CHURCH. DESCRIPTION OF THE WORK ENTAILED.

It is rather difficult to describe the work of renovation and restoration done to the Church because so much has been done in the way of preservation that does not meet the eye of the average visitor to the edifice...The chancel of the Church is certainly 13th Century work, beautifully restored in the 15th Century. The nave was partially rebuilt in the 17th Century and re-timbered in the early 19th Century, the floor of the chancel being then raised nearly three feet in the chancel and slightly less in the nave. The tower fell and was rebuilt in two stages in the earlier part of the 18th century. The chancel was re-roofed in 1906 and considerable expense was then incurred in improving the conditions.

The work just undertaken under the direction of Mr. W. D. Caroe, Westminster, the well-known ecclesiastical architect, began with the erection of a memorial East window to the men and women of the town, and especially the men and women of the congregation of St. Mary's who died on active service in the Great War. This window is a beautiful piece of work designed by Mr. Horace Wilkinson, the well-known artist of 101 Gower street, London, W. C. 1. This window, which contains all the existing fragments of the old glass found in the Church, depicts in the long central light Christ Crucified, and the figures of His Mother and St. John in the central side lights. In the two outer lights Archbishop Baldwin and Geraldus are shown. All the figures stand beneath canopies of 15th Century type. Angels are shown above and beneath the figures, holding shields – which reading from left to right, are:- The Archdiocesan Shield of Canterbury, in the base beneath, the Arms of Richard I. Above the figure of the Blessed Virgin is the shield of the late Bishop of St. David's, beneath are the Arms of Rhys ap Tewdwr. At the base of the central light is the Diocesan Shield of St. David. Above the figure of St. John is the Seal of Cardigan, and beneath, the Shield of Wales. Above the figure of Giraldus is the Seal of the Ecclesiastical Province. Beneath is Giraldus's own Shield – six argents, and gules. On the ground at Giraldus' feet lies a bishop's mitre pointing to the fact that he was twice chosen Bishop of St. David's but not consecrated, and an ink-well showing that he was the historian of his time. The old glass portions in the tracery openings above are the Shield of St. Edward the Confessor and emblem of the Holy Trinity, one of the wheels on which the seraphim stand and various portions of ornament in the triangular shapes. Are the side of the four seraphim are "The Four Winged Creatures" representative of the four Evangelists.

THE SOUTH WINDOW.

The South Window in the Sanctuary continues the scheme. On the dexter side Archangel Gabriel, who holds the Lily of Annunciation, is shown, balanced with the Archangel Uriel who holds a scroll on which is painted 'The Angel that was sent unto Me.' In the centre is the figure of St. George. A label at the base is shown stating that this window was given by "D. Berrington G. Davies, Esq., to the Memory of George Stewart Berrington Davies, 2nd Lieut. 5th Batt. The Rifle Brigade, born January 31st 1890, died October 26th 1919 from illness contracted on active service in N. Russia during the Great War. And to the memory of his Grandmother, Arabella Ann Davies, of The Castle Green, born January

9th 1843, died June 25th 1923." A design has been prepared for the North Window to conclude the series of Angelic Hierarchy. In the long lights beneath will be represented St. David of Wales with St. Michael and St. Raphael.

The condition of the chancel arch was such, and the need of preserving the ancient place so great, that the Parochial Church Council were led to extend the work. The floor has been reduced in the chancel to within a few inches of the original floor, and in the nave to the actual level of the old. The fine and beautiful chancel arch is now exposed and gives the idea of great space looking down the Church. A new Altar and Reredos (with a representation of Christ the King in the centre panel). Sanctuary panelling, communicants' kneelers, choir stalls and priests' desks have been provided. These are in oak, magnificently carved and a beautiful addition to the ornamentation of the Church. The ceiling of the chancel has been panelled in oak and the organ has been restored and set back into the chamber. The old gallery has been removed and seating of like capacity has been provided by the opening of the tower wall, where there is seating for 40 people...A pulpit (in memory of the late Mrs. Davies, Claremont) will complete the chancel furnishing, and an oaken tablet will be affixed in the north wall containing the names of the fallen heroes. Numerous and serious defects in the structure of the Church have been completely corrected...The cost of the whole is approximately £5000...The builders engaged were Messrs. Booth & Son, of Banbury (under the superintendence of Mr. Murray) and the exquisite oak work in the sanctuary and chancel is the work of Messrs. Lort & Francis, Ecclesiastical Craftsmen, Crediton. These firms, together with the Architect Mr. W. D. Caroe, and the artist, Mr. Horace Wilkinson, deserve sincere congratulations upon the manner in which the restoration scheme has been carried out..."

In 1928 Rev. David John Davies succeeded Rev. James Lewis Davies as the Curate of St. Mary's. About that year a new oak pulpit was donated to the church in memory of Mrs. Mary Davies of Claremont, Cardigan, who died on November 18th 1927. In July 1930 Rev. David John Davies, the Curate, left for Cross Hands, and in 1931 J. D. Bartlett was the Curate of the parish. In December 1930 Canon D M Jones announced his intention to leave Cardigan.

In March 1931 Rev. Canon David Morgan Jones moved to Llanelli and Rev. Edward Lee Hamer, B. A., the former Vicar of Llanegwad, Nantgaredig, Carmarthenshire, succeeded him as Vicar of Cardigan on April 17th 1931, remaining as Vicar until 1950. On December 18th 1931 it was agreed to erect a memorial gate dedicated to the Misses North. That same year Alban Caroe and E. A. Hall designed a new lectern for the church in Alban Caroe's style. Nathaniel Hitch carved the angels. New windows were designed by Walter Wilkinson and installed here. On February 25th 1932 the Bishop visited the church. On April 27th 1932 the Bishop visited St Mary's Church and dedicated a memorial tablet to those fallen in the 1914-18 War, a carved oak lectern in memory of Rev. D. J. Evans, and a carved oak pulpit in memory of Mrs. Davies, Claremont. It was claimed that this was the first visit to the church by a Bishop in 40 years! On July 6th 1932 the Vicar's only son, John Albert Lee Hamer, died aged 17. On January 5th 1933 the North Memorial Gate – dedicated to the memory of the late Miss Eleanor North, was dedicated by the Bishop. In August 1934 Rev. William John Davies became the new Curate of St. Mary's. In 1936 Rev. Benjamin Alec Lewis of No. 22 St. Mary Street, became the Curate after Rev. William John Davies, the previous Curate, left for Tumble. At Easter 1939 there were 391 communicants. On December 19th 1940 the children evacuated from Liverpool's Oulton High School to Cardigan held a Carol Service at St Mary's Church. On February 15th 1940 the Oulton High School pupils held a Recital of Music at the church. In August 1940 Rev. E. Walter Evans became the Curate of St. Mary's, succeeding Rev. Benjamin Alec Lewis. A memorial window on the north side of the church bears the inscription:

"To the glory of God and in everlasting memory of Sgt. Pilot Desmond Thomas, R. A. F., beloved eldest son of David William Charles and Eleanor May Stephens of Pantgwyn, Cardigan, a devoted member of this Church, who made the Supreme Sacrifice, July 12th 1941, aged 19 years."

On 19th April 1942 the Bishop of St David's preached here. In September 1942 the Curate Rev. E. Walter Evans left and Rev. H. G. Beynon Hopkins became the new Curate. In November 1944 Rev. E. Lee Hamer was appointed a Canon. On September 28th 1945 Rev. H. G. Beynon Hopkins ceased to be the Curate of St. Mary's and was succeeded by Rev. David Donald Roberts. A new altar was donated circa 1946 in memory of Mrs. Anne Llywelyn Peregrine of Oaklands, St. Mary Street, Cardigan, who had died on February 17th 1946. In August 1946 the Curate, Rev. David Donald Roberts, married Miss Annie Howells of Llandybie. On July 4th 1947 an electric organ-blower was

installed. On September 10th 1947 the memorial window to Desmond Thomas was unveiled. On March 26th 1948 the Curate Rev. David Donald Roberts left. At Easter 1948 Rev. Alun E. Davies of Treharris became the Curate of St. Mary's. In 1949 Rev. Canon E. Lee Hamer was the President of the Cardigan Auxiliary Bible Society. On June 12th 1949 Lizzie Hamer, the wife of Rev. Canon E. Lee Hamer, died aged 63 years. About 1950 Rev. William David Maldwyn Griffith succeeded Rev. Alun E. Davies as the Curate. In April 1950 Rev. Canon E. Lee Hamer announced his forthcoming retirement due to ill health.

On January 23rd 1951 Rev. David Thomas Price, B A, was installed as the new Vicar of Cardigan. The church clock was repaired in 1952. The flagstaff on the tower was struck by lightening and destroyed on June 27th 1953. The weather-cock was repaired that October and the flagpole replaced. D. J. M. Peregrine wrote a booklet about the church in 1954. In October 1954 the Curate of St. Mary's, Rev. Maldwyn Griffiths, left for Aberaeron. In 1955 Rev. David Thomas Price and his wife, Nana Price, lived at the Vicarage. Rev. David Thomas Price died aged 56 years on September 26th 1955 and on October 28th 1955, Canon T. E. Jenkins was confirmed as the new Vicar of Cardigan. The church's west gate still had a cast iron overthrow at that time.

The Bishop of St. David's installed Rev. Canon T. E. Jenkins as the new Vicar of Cardigan on January 25th 1956. On September 14th 1956 the Archbishop of Canterbury visited the church. On February 8th 1957 Rev. James Ernest Jones, the vicar of Llanfihangel Ystrad Felinfach, became the new Vicar – inducted early in April that year and remaining Vicar of Cardigan until 1974. On August 30th 1957 it was revealed that the Curate, Rev. D. L. B. Evans, was about to leave Cardigan. On June 6th 1958 the Bishop dedicated a new pair of doors at the church in memory of Dr. W. T. Havard. In September 1958 the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Geoffrey Fisher, and his wife, together with their son and his family, visited St. Mary's Church and attended a service there. In December 1958 Rev. John Carew Thomas became the new Curate of St. Mary's. On March 6th 1959 the former Vicar, Rev. Canon E. Lee Hamer, died aged 75 years. On June 19th 1959 a new west door (in memory of Miss M. Gwladys R. Peregrine of Claverley, North Road) and floodlights were donated to the church and were dedicated on December 15th that year. By August 21st 1959 volunteers had begun tidying up the churchyard. In October 1959 a repairs fund appeal was launched. By October 21st 1960 the bells were undergoing repair. In late May 1961 a successful Choral Union Festival was held at the church. On September 9th 1961 the Bishop of St David's dedicated the restored bells. The church was made a listed building that year. According to another source, Rev. Ernest Jones had the bells re-cast in 1964. On April 27th 1969 Prince Charles made a surprise appearance at a Sunday morning service. In 1969 the headstones were removed from parts of the churchyard, and placed around the cemetery walls. In 1969 Rev. J. Parsons was the Curate and Mr D P Griffiths was the Lay Reader. The Church Wardens that year were Lt-Col Ben Jones, Hendy; Mr G Davies, Cwmeos; Mr W J Williams, Y Nyth, and Mr C Lloyd, Cotswold. The organists were Mr A Owen of Penparc and Miss G George of Cilgerran. The caretaker was Miss M E Davies of Greenfield Row. On 22nd June 1969 the Annual Festival of the Church Choral Union was held here, as it was again on June 21st 1970, June 13th 1971 and May 28th 1972.

On January 31st 1974 Rev. Alfred Joseph Davies was inducted as the new Vicar of St. Mary's and remained so until 1987. On September 21st 1974 Rev. Michael Ll. Rees was ordained a Deacon at St. David's Cathedral and became the Curate of Cardigan, Mwnt and Ferwig under Rev. Alfred Joseph Davies, Vicar. On December 21st 1975 he was Ordained a Priest at St. Mary's Church by the Bishop of St. David's, the Rev. Eric Roberts. The Guest Preacher was Dean Jenkins. This may have been the first Priest Ordination at the church. In 1976 Canon Rev. T. B. Jones may have been the temporary Vicar. On January 1st 1977 the Curate, Rev. Michael Ll. Rees, moved to St. David's Cathedral as a Minor Canon. In late January 1977 there was an organ recital at the church, commemorating the fact that the instrument had recently been re-built. In December 1978 Cllr. D. Percy Griffiths was ordained here by the Bishop. Between 1979 and 1983 the Very Rev. T. E. Jenkins was the Honorary Curate. In 1983 Mr A Wainwright, Mr R Walter, Mr C Lloyd and Mr D R Jones were the church wardens. Between 1984 and 1986 Rev. D. J. Clarke was the Curate. In 1985 Mr J S M Davies, Mr C Davies, Mr C Lloyd and Mr D R Jones were the church wardens. On 7th February 1986 Cantorion Tyddewi performed The Messiah at the church.

In December 1988 Rev. Canon William Hughes Richards became the Vicar of St. Mary's until 2001. In 1992 some stained glass at the church was smashed by vandals. That year Mr V Richards, Mr G Thomas, Mr I Parsons and Mr J Jenkins were the church wardens. In September 1992 Rev. Philip

Johnes became the Curate. Between 1992 and 1994 Rev. Philip S Johnes was the Curate. In 1995 the wardens were Mr G Thomas, Mrs P Williams, Mr J Jenkins and Mr J Lewis. A brief history and description was compiled for visitors to the church in 1996. In 1996 Rev. Peter A. Lewis was the Curate. Illustrations of portions of the church by Geoff Scott were used in the 1998 '*Cardigan Town Trail*'. Between February 1999 and 2001 the Rev. Dr. Gerald A. Sykes was the Curate. Illustrations of part of the church were used in the '*Pilgrims & Preachers*' trail leaflet in 2000. In July 2000 an appeal was made for funds to restore the church organ. That year Mr V Richards, Mr J Rees, Mr J Lewis and Mrs B Lewis were the church wardens. There were then 210 parishioners. In December 2000 a damaged church bell was repaired by Dan Bancroft, Bob Williams and Zoe Learoyd – three trainees at DERA Engineering Training, Blaenannerch, under the tuition of Les Broughton. In July 2001 the Curate of St. Mary's, Rev. Gerry Sykes, left for Brechfa. In October 2001 Rev. Canon William H. Richards retired. In January 2002 the parish purchased the old National School. At that time there were 207 parishioners.

In September 2002 Rev. John Powell became the Vicar of St Mary's and was inducted at St. Mary's Church in December by the Bishop. He was the Vicar from 2002 until 2010. In 2003 the Rev J Roger Thomas became the Curate and remained so in 2004. That year Mr J Rees, Mr B Griffiths, Mrs B Lewis and Mr M Radley were the church wardens. In 2004 T J Lewis was the vergier. There were 207 members that year, compared with 205 the previous year. There were 105 communicants at Easter – a fall of 23 from the previous year. The Christmas service was attended by 171 persons – an increase of 69 on the previous year. In October 2006 it was estimated that there were about sixty regular members in the congregation. In December 2008 a further appeal was launched for the restoration of the church organ. In August 2009 the church was awarded a £45, 000 repairs grant. Rev. John Powell retired and left in September 2010.

On 13th September 2011 Rev. John Bennet was installed as the new Vicar and remained as such from 2011 until 2021. In 2011 Dave Griffiths, Mrs Jane Hazzelby of Ger-y-lan, Llangoedmor and Mrs Louise O'Neill of Felinwynt were the wardens. A refurbishment of the building in 2012 included new nave and chancel roof coverings and the re-instatement of the pinnacles on the chancel. Sadly, vandals had stolen lead from the roof twice by mid-September. In December 2012 a Christmas Tree Festival was held at the church. In July 2013 the South Porch doors were restored and re-hung by Mark Havard. On 15th August 2015 about £4, 000 was raised towards the purchase of a grand piano by a sponsored abseil down the tower by sixty volunteers. From March to June 2020 the church was temporarily closed owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Description:

The church was described by CADW in 1992:

HISTORY – C12 origins, C15, C18 and C19 parish church in blue lias stone, ashlar for west tower, chancel and organ chamber, rubble for nave. Slate roofs, hipped to chancel east end. West tower, broad aisleless nave with south porch and embattled chancel with north organ chamber and low vestry. Nave is medieval but substantially rebuilt according to plaque in porch in 1702-3. Windows, much renewed in later restorations, are of flat-headed mullioned type with arch-headed lights typical of C17 and south door has post Reformation segmental-pointed head. Another plaque in porch of 1639 may refer to alterations or to a new porch. Present porch is early C20, Gothic, with carved heads of Archbishop Davidson and Bishop Owen. Tower fell in 1705, was rebuilt up to 40ft in 1711 and completed in 1748, and is large with minimal Gothic detail, single bell-openings and low west door. Big diagonal stepped buttresses to front angles. North east stair tower. Chancel is of exceptional quality for West Wales, C15, Perpendicular style with ashlar traceried 3-light windows, 3-bay, buttressed, embattled and pinnacled (most of pinnacles taken down) with north east corner stair. North side has High Victorian organ chamber of 1877, extensively dressed in red brick and low flat-roofed vestry probably of c1926. One original window is lost to organ chamber.

RESTORATION – Restoration history is unclear, 1702-3 plaque says that 'body of the church' was rebuilt. Engraving in Meyrick (1810) shows nave south windows of early C19 type, yet existing mullioned windows look earlier. The C15 chancel roof was already removed by 1810. In 1847 easternmost nave south window was enlarged to designs of Mr Waugh; alterations including reseating are recorded in 1855 by H Woodyer, architect; the organ chamber dates from 1877; small ICBS grants are recorded from 1882-6; a restoration occurred in 1904-6 by L Lewis of Cardigan. Then from 1924-

7 a further restoration was undertaken under W D Caroe when chancel ceiling was replaced and progressively the chancel was refurnished (reredos and pulpit 1926, lectern 1931).

INTERIOR – Plastered nave with C18 5-sided plastered ceiling. Two sections of corbelling in nave walls and moulded pointed niche, possibly a door-head in north wall. North east rood stair door. Chancel arch C15, blue lias with chamfered piers and moulded arch. Chancel has 2 surviving finely carved stone roof corbels (of 8 illustrated by Meyrick 1810) and 1926 panelled timber ceiling. Fine ogee-headed crocketed piscina. Extensive early-mid C20 pale oak furnishing and 2 stained glass windows, east and south of 1924-5 by Walter Wilkinson. East window preserves some fine fragments of C15 glass, sole survivors of the outstanding medieval glass window removed by T Johnes to Hafod and burnt in the 1807 fire. Three 1906 stained glass chancel windows with floral plaques and one nave stained glass window of 1910. Chancel north window of c1950. C15 panelled font. Some marble plaques of late C18 to mid C19 by Wood of Bristol, Phillips of Haverfordwest and W Behnes of London.

GATES AND GATEPIERS – Early C19 tall gate piers in blue lias ashlar, corniced with stepped caps and cast-iron urns. Piers are panelled. Iron gates with top rails ramped down, quatrefoil middle rail and dog-bars.

ADDITIONAL (1994) – there is evidence for a blocked door to the NW side of the nave and another blocked door head to the SE side of the chancel, with another near the SE angle, set higher up, probably the reredorter [photographic evidence held].

Marked on 1834 map. Similar to entrance gate piers to Castle Green House.

Sources:

Cardigan Shire Map, John Speed 1610
NLW Allt-Llwyd MS 1
Drawing – Thomas Akbmarle Inscription, Edward. Lhuyd c1685
Kendal Presbyterian Chapel Accounts 1711
Carmarthenshire Record Office: Coedmore MS 38
Parish Registers – St. Mary's, Cardigan
The History & Antiquities of the County of Cardiganshire, Samuel Rush Meyrick 1808
Carmarthen Journal 1812
Cambrian 1813
Pigot's Directory of South Wales 1830
Ledger of David Davies, Bridge, Cardigan 1830
Carmarthen Journal 06/05/1821; 14/09/1827; 06/05/1831; 23/08/1858
Map of Cardigan, J Wood 1834
Pembrokeshire Herald 06/09/1844; 11/06/1847; 04/04/1851; 20/04/1877
The Religious Census of 1851
The Welshman 25/05/1855; 19/12/1856; 26/04/1861; 11/10/1861; 1863
Archaeologia Cambrensis III Vol. V 1860
A History of Cilgerran, John Roland Phillips 1867
Slater's Directory of South Wales 1868
A List of the Sheriffs of Cardiganshire, John Roland Phillips 1868
Cardigan & Tivy-Side Advertiser 1868; July 1869; 1870; 10/03/1871; 1875; November 1876; 1877; 1880-81; 30/05/1885; 05/02/1887; 11/08/1888; 1892; 07/04/1893; 15/06/1894; 1895-96; 19/02/1897; 22/04/1898; 1899; 07/12/1900; 04/01/1901; 29/03/1901; 17/05/1901; 13/06/1902; 17/04/1903; 1904-05; 09/11/1906; 23/04/1909; 25/06/1909; 21/01/1910; 23/02/1911; 19/04/1912; 26/04/1912; 21/06/1912; 05/07/1912; 12/07/1912; 07/02/1913; 11/04/1913; 18/07/1913; 02/01/1914; 06/02/1914; 27/03/1914; 03/04/1914; 01/05/1914; 02/10/1914; 1915; 18/02/1916; 18/02/1916; 23/06/1916; 24/11/1916; 12/10/1917; 16/11/1917; 07/12/1917; 07/12/1917; 23/05/1918; 07/06/1918; 25/04/1919; 1920-21; 19/10/1923; 02/11/1923; 1924; 21/05/1926; 01/04/1927; 30/09/1927; 26/09/1930; 19/12/1930; 13/03/1931; 17/04/1931; 24/04/1931; 22/04/1932; 08/07/1932; 06/01/1933; 17/11/1933; 1935-36; 1938; 1940; 1942; 1944-45; 15/11/1946; 1947; 30/01/1948; 21/04/1950; 08/12/1950; 1951; 01/10/1954; 07/10/1955; 30/12/1955; 03/02/1956; 14/09/1956; 22/02/1957; 12/04/1957; 26/09/1958; 13/03/1959; 09/10/1959; 16/10/1959; 28/10/1960; 30/12/1960; 02/06/1961; 15/09/1961; 1963-67; 29/09/1968; 1969-1974; 03/01/1975; 21/02/1975; 21/03/1975; 30/05/1975; 01/08/1975; 26/12/1975;

1976; 28/01/1977; 11/02/1977; 06/05/1977; 22/12/1978; 30/05/1980; 11/07/1980; 04/09/1992; 25/09/1992; 1994; 1997; 16/09/1998; 10/11/1999; 19/07/2000; 29/11/2000; 20/12/2000; 07/03/2001; 18/07/2001; 05/09/2001; 28/11/2001; 11/12/2002; 15/12/2004; 10/10/2006; 10/10/2008; 02/12/2008; 21/04/2009; 04/08/2009; 29/12/2009; 09/03/2010; 20/04/2010; 27/04/2010; 07/09/2010; 08/02/2011; 06/09/2011; 11/09/2012; 27/09/2011; 19/06/2012; 02/10/2012; 13/12/2012; 25/12/2012; 05/02/2013; 14/05/2013; 16/07/2013; 23/07/2013; 26/11/2013; 29/04/2014; 23/12/2014; 16/06/2015; 18/08/2015; 12/04/2016; 10/05/2016; 13/12/2016; 29/12/2016; 18/04/2017; 01/08/2017; 26/06/2018; 20/11/2018; 18/12/2018; 30/04/2019; 17/09/2019

Post Office Directory 1871

Aberystwyth Observer 27/05/1876; 25/11/1876; 03/03/1877

Illuminated address – Rev. T Jones, St Mary's Church, February 1877

Luncheon Ticket – Dedication of Organ, St. Mary's Church 07/06/1877

Analysis of Collections – St. Mary's Church 1876-77; 1878-79

Cardigan Observer 14/04/1877; 01/01/1881; 1884

Posters & Tickets – Organ Recitals by Dr John H Gower, Cardigan Parish Church 1881

Kelly's Directory of South Wales & Monmouthshire 1884; 1914; 1926

O. S. Map 1887 etc.

Evening Express 26/09/1898

A Guide to Cardigan & District, William Edward Yerward James 1899

Cambrian News 08/12/1900

Weekly Mail 22/12/1900

Walks & Wanderings in County Cardigan, E Horsfall-Turner 1903

Cardiganshire & Its' Antiquities

Cardigan Priory In The Olden Days, Emily M Pritchard 1904

Postcard – Interior of St Mary's Church, T F Baldwin 1910

Transactions of the Royal Historical Association, H E Malden 1911

Historical Society of West Wales Transactions Vol. I, 1911

Cardiganshire Antiquarian Society Magazine 1915

Programme – Dedication of Colours, Cardigan Girl Guides, St Mary's Church, 14/12/1924

Postcard – Cardigan Church From Priory, Squibbs 1920's

Postcard – Memorial Window, St. Mary's, Cardigan c1927

Episcopal Registers of St. David's

History of Abbeys Vol. II, Browne Willis

Statement of Account – St Mary's Church 31/12/1938; 31/12/1969; 31/12/1979; 31/12/1980; 31/12/1981; 31/12/1982; 31/12/1983; 31/12/1984; 31/12/1985; 31/12/1986; 31/12/1987; 31/12/1988; 31/12/1991; 31/12/1996; 31/12/1999

Easter Communion Cards, St Mary's Church, 09/04/1939

Rota of Sidesemen, St Mary's Church, 1939-40, 10/05/1939

Altar Guild, St Mary's Church, Cardigan 1939-40

Programme – Oulton High School Carol Service, St Mary's Church, Cardigan 19/12/1939

Poster – Oulton High School Recital of Music, St Mary's Church, Cardigan, 15/02/1940

Letter from Rev. E Lee Hamer, St Mary's Church, Cardigan, 15/02/1940

My Prayer Book, David Vivian Davies 20/02/1947

Christmas Greetings Card, Rev. Canon & Mrs E Lee Hamer, St Mary's Church, 02/12/1948

Accounts – Cardigan Auxiliary Bible Society 1949

Call to Worship, St Mary's Church, March 1950

Order of Service, St Mary's Church, September 1950

A Brief Historical & General Survey of St. Mary's Parish Church, Cardigan, D J M Peregrine 1954

Programme – Mayor's Sunday, St Mary's Church, Cardigan, 05/06/1955

Programme – Memorial Service, Rev. David Thomas Price, St Mary's Church, Cardigan, 30/09/1955

Programme – Institution & Induction, Rev. Canon T E Jenkins, St Mary's Church, Cardigan,
25/01/1956

Postcard – St. Mary's Church, Valentine's c1960

Welsh Saints & Shrines Vol. 2 : Our Lady of Cardigan, Rev Silas M Harris 1964

The Church Bells of Cardiganshire, Frederick Sharpe, 1965

Altar Guild, St Mary's Church 1969-70; 1970-71; 1971-72; 1972-73

Poster – Church Choral Union Annual Festival, St Mary's Church, Cardigan, 22/06/1969; 21/06/1970;
13/06/1971; 28/05/1972

Ticket – Archdiaconal Missionary Festival, St Mary's Church, Cardigan, 16/06/1970

Notice – Holy Week & Easter, St Mary's Church, Cardigan, 1973

Programme – Induction of Rev. Alfred Joseph Davies, St Mary's Church, Cardigan, 31/01/1974
 Service Programme – St Mary's Church, Cardigan, Easter 1974; Easter 1975; Easter 1976; Easter 1977
 Letter – Fund-raising, St Mary's Church, Cardigan 16/05/1974
 Ceredigion 1976
 Poster – Festival of Flowers, St Mary's Church, August 1978
 The Journeys of Sir Richard Colt Hoare Through Wales & England 1793-1810, M W Thompson 1983
 Poster – The Messiah by Cantorion Tyddewi, St Mary's Church, Cardigan, 07/02/1986
 A Guide to Cardigan 1989
 The Gateway to Wales, W J Lewis 1990
 The 1992 Cardigan Guide
 Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest – Cardigan, CADW 1992
 The 1993 Guide to Cardigan
 The Cardigan Guide 1994
 St. Mary's Church – A Brief History c1994
 Civic Service Invitation, St Mary's Church, Cardigan 21/05/1995
 Card – Canon William H Richards c1995
 Cardigan '95 1995
 Christmas Card – St. Mary's Church c1995
 The Cardigan Guide 1996; 1997
 The Official Cardigan Guide 1998; 1999
 Cardigan Town Trail 1998
 Christmas Card – St. Mary's Church, Llwyd Edwards, December 1998
 Memorial – Derek Richard Gadsby 29/07/1999
 Card – Canon William H Richards, St Mary's Church, 1999
 Princelings, Privilege & Power, Leslie Baker-Jones 1999
 Pilgrims & Preachers 2000
 The Cardigan Guide 2000; 2001
 Greetings Card – Elijah at St. Mary's Church, Llwyd Edwards 15/04/00
 Cardigan – Official Guide, Western Mail 2002.
 Invitation to Mayor's Sunday, St Mary's Church, Cardigan 19/05/2002; 18/05/2003; 22/06/2004
 Poster – Flower Festival, St Mary's Church, Cardigan, May 2004
 Poster – Night of 100 Drums, St Mary's Church, Cardigan, 18/05/2004
 Parish News – St Mary's Church, Cardigan, 01/09/2009
 Programme – Mayor's Civic Service, St Mary's Church, Cardigan, 23/09/2012
 Poster – Christmas Tree Festival, St Mary's Church, Cardigan, December 2012
 Poster – I Spy Christmas, St Mary's Church, Cardigan, 30/11/2013
 Poster – Music For Advent, St Mary's Church, Cardigan, 09/12/2017
 Poster – Concert, St Mary's Church, Cardigan, 16/08/2018
 Poster – Requiem, St Mary's Church, Cardigan, 30/03/2019
 Poster – The Crucifixion, St Mary's Church, Cardigan, 12/04/2019

CHURCH OF ST. MARY – JOHN AP IEUAN CHANTRY.

In 1476 John ap Ieuan donated land in Cardigan town to St. Mary's Church in order to support a chantry there to pray for his soul. In 1535 Nicholas Harry was the Master of the Chantry. Reference was made in 1537 to a burghage in Cardigan belonging to the Chantry, perhaps near the cemetery of the church. A deed of the 25th April 1545 suggests that the "cantors" held a burghage on High Street. In 1546 came the survey and dissolution of the chantries. The Chantry Priest of Cardigan had annually 106s.6d.. The income of the Chantry amounted to 118s.6d.. The King's Tenths amounted to 12s.. It was said to have been in decay "...of old time..." In 1548:

"...In the Chantry certificate of the Chauntrey of Cardigan called Mr. John ap Evan his Chauntrey, there are lands given to the yearly value of £6.5s.8d. to sing four masses in the week for his soul yearly for ever..."

The Act for the Dissolution of Chantries was passed in November. On 8th March 1553 Edward Powell attempted to lease "...land lately belonging to the chantry called Mr. John ap Ieuan Chauntrey in the town of Cardigan...". The same year, former incumbent, Griffin Williams, received a pension of £5, which he still received in 1555. On 22nd June 1581 Edward Powell held Chantry Lands, which were recorded again as "Tir y Chauntry", enclosures belonging to the Crown, on 8th October 1583. On 23rd

June 1593 the lease was held by Edward Powell's son – also Edward Powell. On 25th October 1620 the property belonged to Sir John Lewis of Abernantbychan and Coedmore, Llechryd, who leased it on that date to William, Edmund and James Bradshaw of St. Dogmaels Abbey.

Description

None available

Sources:

Cardigan Priory in the Olden Days, Emily M Pritchard 1904

History of Abbeys Vol. II, Browne Willis

Records of the Court of Augmentations Relating to Wales & Monmouthshire, E A Lewis & J Conway
Davies 1954

Welsh Saints & Shrines No 2 : Our Lady of Cardigan, Rev Silas M Harris 1964

Conquerors & Conquered in Medieval Wales, Ralph A Griffiths 1994.

© Glen K Johnson 14/01/2021