

= St Mary 's Church , Llanfair @-@ yng @-@ Nghornwy =

St Mary 's Church , Llanfair @-@ yng @-@ Nghornwy is a medieval parish church in the north @-@ west of Anglesey , north Wales . The date of foundation of the church , which is in the village of Llanfair @-@ yng @-@ Nghornwy , is unknown , but the oldest parts date from the 11th or 12th century . It has twice been enlarged : in the 15th century , when the chancel was rebuilt , and in the 16th century , when a chapel was added to the south of the chancel , separated by three arches . The tower at the west end is from the 17th century . A south porch of unknown date has been converted into a vestry , and the church is now entered through the tower .

St Mary 's is a Grade I listed building , a national designation given to buildings of " exceptional , usually national , interest " , in particular because it is regarded as " a fine rural parish church , incorporating significant early Medieval fabric " . Writers in the 19th century commented on the " lofty square tower " , the " very good " east window , and the " many elegant monuments " ; the clergyman and antiquarian Harry Longueville Jones called St Mary 's " one of the best specimens of an old parish church in the island " . In the 21st century , one writer has noted the " impressive lychgate " and a guide to the buildings of the region calls it " the most important church in north west Anglesey " .

The church is still used for worship by the Church in Wales , one of nine in a combined parish , although as of 2013 there has not been an incumbent priest since September 2009 . People associated with the church include James Williams , a 19th @-@ century rector who was awarded a gold medal for his efforts to save lives at sea , and his great @-@ grandson , the artist Sir Kyffin Williams . Both are buried in the churchyard .

= = History and location = =

St Mary 's Church is the parish church for the village of Llanfair @-@ yng @-@ Nghornwy in the north @-@ west of Anglesey , north Wales . It is set in a churchyard at the side of a minor road , in the south @-@ east of the village . The area is near the coast , about 8 miles ( 13 km ) from the port town of Holyhead . Llanfair @-@ yng @-@ Nghornwy takes its name in part from the church : the Welsh word llan originally meant " enclosure " and then " church " , and " ? fair " is a modified form of the saint 's name ( Mair being Welsh for " Mary " ) . The parish 's coastal position is reflected in its full name , which means " St Mary 's in the promontory " , or " St Mary in the angle of the waters " .

It is uncertain when the first church was constructed on the site . There was a church in Llanfair @-@ yng @-@ Nghornwy before 1254 , mentioned in the Norwich Taxation of that year . The oldest parts of the present structure are the nave walls and the arch between the nave and the chancel ( to the east of the nave ) ; these date from the 11th or 12th century . In the 15th century , the chancel was reconstructed and enlarged ; in the following century , a chapel was added to the south of the chancel , separated by an arcade of three arches . In her 1833 history of Anglesey , Angharad Llwyd said that the south chapel " belongs exclusively " to one of the local landed estates , and the chancel belonged to another .

A tower was added at the west end in the 17th century , perhaps in 1660 according to a 2009 guide to the buildings of the region . At some stage , a porch was added to the south @-@ west corner of the nave , but it has " no datable features " . In the middle of the 19th century the porch entrance was blocked off and replaced by a window , and since then access to the church has been through a door on the west side of the tower . Some restoration work was carried out in 1847 by the Sheffield @-@ based architects Weightman and Hadfield . Their plans included a proposal to add a chapel to the north side , but this did not happen . Further work was undertaken in 1860 , and some repairs were carried out in the chancel and south chapel in the 1930s under the architect and historian Harold Hughes .

St Mary 's is still used for worship by the Church in Wales . It is one of nine churches in the combined benefice of Bodedern with Llanfaethlu . It is within the deanery of Lliffon and Talybolion , the archdeaconry of Bangor and the Diocese of Bangor . As of 2013 , there is no incumbent priest at

the church , and there has not been one since September 2009 .

James Williams , rector of St Mary 's from 1821 to 1872 , helped to establish the Anglesey Association for the Preservation of Lives from Shipwreck in 1828 , in the wake of a storm that caused a boat to sink with 140 deaths . He was awarded a gold medal by the Royal National Institute for the Preservation of Life from Shipwreck ( later renamed the Royal National Lifeboat Institution ) in 1835 , for his efforts in the rescue of a boat during a gale . Angharad Llwyd , writing when Williams was at St Mary 's , noted that " this benevolent gentleman , aided by his lady , ever alert in the cause of humanity , are generally among the first on the shore , in case of accident , well supplied with restoratives , and other necessities , to comfort and protect the suffering mariners . " The artist Sir Kyffin Williams ( 1918 ? 2006 ) was a great @-@ grandson of James and his wife Frances . At his request , a memorial to them was put up on the south wall of the chapel . James , Frances and Kyffin are buried in the churchyard . The churchyard also contains the Commonwealth war graves of a Royal Navy sailor of World War I and another from World War II .

= = Architecture and fittings = =

= = = Structure = = =

St Mary 's is a medieval church , built using rubble masonry dressed with freestone and displaying Perpendicular details . The roof is made of slate with stone copings . Internally , the timbers of the roofs of the nave , chancel and chapel are exposed . The beams running the length of the nave are decorated at intervals by painted plaster shield designs . The chancel roof is from the late 15th century , and the chapel roof is from the early part of the following century .

= = = Interior = = =

The church is entered through the door at the west side of the tower , with modern double doors between the tower and the nave set into a plain square doorway dating from the 17th or 18th century . The nave is 27 feet 9 inches by 13 feet 8 inches ( 8 @. @ 5 by 4 @. @ 2 m ) . Between the nave and the chancel there is a plain round arch , from the 11th or 12th century , a step up , and a rail . At the east end of the chancel , there is a further step up from the chapel into the sanctuary , which has some 18th @-@ century gravestones set into it . The late 15th @-@ century chancel , which measures 32 feet 6 inches by 14 feet ( 9 @. @ 9 by 4 @. @ 3 m ) , has some memorials from the 18th and early 19th centuries . One is to a bonesetter called Evan Thomas ( died 1814 ) , erected by Thomas Bulkeley , 7th Viscount Bulkeley ; another , to Emma Viscountess Bulkeley Williams , is made from ornately decorated marble .

The three arches between the chancel and chapel rest on octagonal columns . One of the arches has inscribed upon it , in early 16th @-@ century lettering , SCA MARIA ORA PRO ME DAVID A JACO ( " Saint Mary pray for me David ap Iago " ) ; another has a stone with a roughly carved face . There was once a rood screen across the chancel , as shown by markings on the north wall and on the westernmost of the arches . It was still in position in 1867 , when one visitor mentioned it in his notes on the church . Panelling has been fixed to the east and south walls of the sanctuary in the chapel as a reredos . The chapel measures 32 feet 6 inches by 14 feet 6 inches ( 9 @. @ 9 by 4 @. @ 4 m ) .

The font is at the rear of the nave on the north side . It is octagonal on the outside , with a circular bowl inside . A survey of church plate within the Bangor diocese in 1906 recorded : a large silver chalice , inscribed with the donor 's name and the year 1713 ; a plain silver paten , dated 1724 ? 25 ; and a pewter flagon , from about 1710 .

= = = Windows = = =

The nave has two windows . The south window , to the east of the vestry , is from the 14th century .

It has two lights ( sections of window separated by mullions ) with flat tops and is decorated with stone tracery . A survey of the church in 1937 by the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales and Monmouthshire noted the window ? s " crude workmanship and design . " The window on the north nave wall has three lights with rounded tops . It too has been dated to the 14th century , but other sources say that it is from the 16th century . A 2009 guide to buildings of north @-@ west Wales says that the window is " typically 16th @-@ century " .

The 15th @-@ century window at the east end of the chancel has three lights topped with cinquefoils ( a pattern of five joined circles ) . The lights are decorated with tracery , and set in a pointed arch frame with a hood mould . Stained glass from 1850 depicts ( from north to south ) Christ with children , Christ at a table , and the cross . The north window in the chancel is a 19th @-@ century copy of the north nave window . There are two windows in the chapel , each with three lights ; one in the east wall from the 16th century set in an arch with a hood mould , the other in the south wall set in a flat @-@ headed frame .

= = = Tower and porch = = =

The tower has external buttresses and the door on the west side is set in a pointed arch frame with a hood mould . The buttresses and door were added to the tower after it was built ; the 1937 Royal Commission survey described them as " modern " . There are two stages ( levels ) to the tower ; the tall upper stage is slightly narrower than the base , which measures 8 feet 6 inches by 8 feet 9 inches ( 26 by 2 @.@ 7 m ) . The tower has simple rectangular openings in the north , east and south walls . There is a 17th @-@ century bell in the west wall of the tower in a plain arch opening ; the top of the wall is crenellated . Behind the parapet at the top of the tower , there is a short spire in the shape of a pyramid , made from wood and covered in slates .

The south porch has been described as " unusually long " ; it measures 11 feet 6 inches by 8 feet 9 inches ( 3 @.@ 5 by 2 @.@ 7 m ) and has been used as a vestry since the external doorway was blocked off and converted into a window . The 14th @-@ century doorway from the nave into the vestry has a pointed head in a square frame , and was described in the 1937 survey as having an " unusual design " . The porch roof may be from the late medieval period .

= = Assessment = =

St Mary 's has national recognition and statutory protection from alteration as it has been designated as a Grade I listed building ? the highest grade of listing , designating " exceptional , usually national , interest " ; fewer than 2 per cent of the listed buildings in Wales are in this category . It was given this status on 12 May 1970 , as " a fine rural parish church , incorporating significant early Medieval fabric , including a 12th @-@ century chancel arch " . Cadw ( the Welsh Government body responsible for the built heritage of Wales and the inclusion of Welsh buildings on the statutory lists ) also notes the " good late Medieval additions , including a fine 16th @-@ century arcaded chapel ? , and says that St Mary 's is of " special interest " because of its early date , " and for the quality of its later detail " .

Writing in 1833 , before the restoration of 1847 , Angharad Llwyd described the church as " a spacious ancient structure , partly in the Norman style , with a lofty square tower , of rude architecture " . She noted the " massive circular pillars and arches " in the chancel , and the " peculiar good taste " of the architecture of the recently rebuilt rectory . The 19th @-@ century writer Samuel Lewis remarked upon the " many elegant monuments " in the church .

Writing in 1862 , the clergyman and antiquarian Harry Longueville Jones said that it was " one of the largest churches in this division of Anglesey " He said that it had recently been " judiciously repaired and restored " by James Williams and was " now one of the best specimens of an old parish church in the island " , adding that the east window was " good in detail and in execution " .

The Welsh politician and church historian Sir Stephen Glynne visited the church in 1867 . He said that the east window was " a very good Perpendicular one of three lights , early in the style . " He described the churchyard as " secluded , and shaded by fine trees " and the tower as " rude and

plain " , noting that the " open bell arch " on the west side was comparable to the one at St Mary 's Church , Llanerchymedd .

A 2006 guide to the churches of Anglesey describes the " fairly large church " as standing in a " quiet wooded location " . It also comments upon the " impressive lychgate " at the entrance to the churchyard and the " squat pyramidal structure " on top of the tower . A 2009 guide to the buildings of the former county of Gwynedd calls St Mary 's " the most important church of north @-@ west Anglesey " and says that it has " an unusual plan " .