

= St Mary 's Church , Pentraeth =

St Mary 's Church , Pentraeth is a small medieval parish church in the village of Pentraeth , in Anglesey , north Wales . The date of construction is unknown , but is probably from some time between the 12th to 14th centuries . A church dedicated to St Mary was recorded here in 1254 , but there is a tradition that there was an older church dedicated to St Geraint , an early British saint . Some medieval stonework remains in three walls of the building ( the west wall , and parts of the north and south walls ) . A chapel was added to the south side in the 16th or 17th century . The church was altered and refurbished during the 19th century , including an extensive rebuilding by Henry Kennedy , the architect for the Diocese of Bangor , in 1882 . St Mary 's is still used for worship by the Church in Wales , and is one of three churches in a combined parish . Its conservation is specifically included in the aims of a Chester @-@ based charity that promotes health and the arts in Anglesey and the north @-@ west of England .

It is a Grade II listed building , a national designation given to " buildings of special interest , which warrant every effort being made to preserve them " , in particular because of the retention of medieval fabric in a predominately 19th @-@ century building , and its " fine " memorials . It is built from rubble masonry with a slate roof , and part of a font thought to date from the 12th century has been reused as a water basin in the porch . St Mary 's has a number of memorials from the 18th and 19th centuries , some commemorating residents of a nearby manor house . There was once a tradition of decorating the interior with paper garlands , although writers differ on whether this was to celebrate parishioners ' weddings or to mark the death of unmarried women . It was one of only two churches in Anglesey included by the 18th @-@ century writer Francis Grose in his multi @-@ volume guide to English and Welsh antiquities .

= = History and location = =

St Mary 's Church is in the middle of Pentraeth , Anglesey , about 4 miles ( 6 @.@ 4 km ) from the town of Menai Bridge . It is situated at the junction of the A5025 and the B5109 roads . The date of the foundation of the first religious building on this site is unknown . There is a tradition that there was originally a church here dedicated to St Geraint , an early British saint , since the old name for the village was Llanfair @-@ Bettws @-@ Geraint . However , a Pentraeth church dedicated to St Mary was recorded in the Norwich Taxation of 1254 . The present building probably dates from sometime between the 12th and the 14th centuries , with the nave and chancel being medieval in origin .

A chapel was added to the south side of the parish church at the end of the 16th century or the early part of the 17th century . A restoration of the interior took place in 1821 with further changes in 1839 . Henry Kennedy , the architect of the Diocese of Bangor , oversaw a partial but extensive rebuilding in 1882 , which included reconstruction of the east wall and the addition of the porch on the south side . He also added an internal arch to mark the sanctuary as part of rebuilding or extending of the chancel . A reredos and some other fittings were added in the first part of the 20th century .

St Mary 's is still in use for worship and belongs to the Church in Wales . It is one of three churches in the combined benefice of Llanfair Mathafarn Eithaf with Llanbedrgoch with Pentraeth . The church is in the deanery of Tindaethwy and Menai , the archdeaconry of Bangor and the Diocese of Bangor . As of 2012 , the position of rector is held by the Venerable R P Davies , Archdeacon of Bangor .

The " conservation , protection and improvement " of St Mary 's are included in the aims of the Tyrer Charitable Trust , a Chester @-@ based charity that promotes health and the arts in Anglesey and north @-@ west England ; it is the only church so specified in the charity 's aims and objectives .

= = Architecture and fittings = =

The church is built from irregularly positioned pieces of rubble masonry , and Kennedy added red

sandstone dressings in his 1882 work . The nave measures 50 feet 3 inches long by 17 feet 3 inches wide ( about 15 @. @ 3 by 5 @. @ 3 m ) ; the chancel is the same width , and about 7 feet ( 2 @. @ 1 m ) long . The chapel is 17 feet by 20 feet 6 inches ( about 5 @. @ 2 by 6 @. @ 25 m ) . There is medieval masonry in three of the walls : the west wall , and the lower parts of the north and south walls . The roof is made of slate , with a stone bellcote containing one bell at the west end . Inside , the wooden trusses of the roof are visible . The trusses were re @-@ used when the roof was reconstructed . The church is entered through a porch on the south side , added in the 19th century , and a Tudor arch doorway ; the porch contains a stone piscina ( a water basin ) , said to be part of a font dating from the 12th century . An old entrance in the north wall of the nave has been blocked up . Two of the three windows in the north wall are from the 19th century . The third , nearest to the east end , is from the early 17th century and has a square frame . The eight @-@ sided font also dates from the 19th century . The 1937 survey by the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales and Monmouthshire also recorded the existence of an oak poor box , with iron straps , bearing the date of 1740 , and a plain silver cup from about 1685 .

The chancel and the south chapel are each separated from the nave by arches ; the chancel arch , which was added by Kennedy in 1882 , is decorated with carvings of an eagle on one side and a lamb on the other . Steps lead up from the nave to the chancel , with a further step marking the sanctuary . The east window dates from the late 14th or the early 15th century , although it has been rebuilt , with three lights ( vertical sections separated by mullions ) . These are topped with tracery ( decorative stone work ) and cinquefoils ( a five leaf pattern ) . It contains stained glass depicting St Mary and St John , added in 1890 . The east window in the chapel is of similar design to the 17th @-@ century window in the north wall of the nave , and dates from the late 16th or early 17th century ; restoration work has been carried out on it . The south window has a pointed arch with two lights topped by cinquefoils ; it is above a sill for an older window . There is also a window in the west wall of the chapel .

St Mary 's contains a number of memorials from the 18th and 19th centuries . Members of the families associated with Plas Gwyn , a nearby manor house , have their memorials in the chapel . John Jones , who was Dean of Bangor Cathedral from 1689 to 1727 , was born at Plas Gwyn , and is commemorated with a stone tablet on the south wall of the chancel . Another native of Pentraeth , the cleric and writer Thomas Owen , who died in 1812 , also has a tablet in the chancel . Charles Vivian , 2nd Baron Vivian ( who died in 1886 ) , and his wife Mary are remembered with a bronze tablet on the east wall of the chapel . There are other memorials on the walls of the chapel and the nave . The south window of the chapel has stained glass in memory of Claud Panton Vivian , of Plas Gwyn , who died at the age of 24 during the Second World War . The churchyard has a number of graves for members of the Vivian family , and their plot contains " four beautifully @-@ carved Celtic crosses . " The churchyard also contains two Commonwealth war graves , of a South Lancashire Regiment soldier of World War I and a Royal Navy sailor of World War II .

The church used to be decorated with paper garlands . This tradition was noted in the 18th century , when a writer thought that they symbolised the " hymeneal union " ( i.e. marriage ) of parishioners , because the garlands each had a pair of hands in the centre . In 1833 , another writer said that the garlands marked the death of unmarried women , but the tradition was no longer observed .

= = Assessment = =

St Mary 's has national recognition and statutory protection from alteration as it has been designated as a Grade II listed building ? the lowest of the three grades of listing , designating " buildings of special interest , which warrant every effort being made to preserve them " . It was given this status on 30 January 1968 , and has been listed because it is " a predominantly late 19th @-@ century church which retains some Medieval fabric " . Cadw ( the Welsh Government body responsible for the built heritage of Wales and for the inclusion of Welsh buildings on the statutory lists ) also notes " some fine 18th @-@ century and 19th @-@ century memorials . "

The 18th @-@ century writer Francis Grose , who wrote a multi @-@ volume guide to the antiquities of England and Wales , included St Mary 'a in his survey of Anglesey , one of only two

churches on the island that he featured ( the other being St Cybi 's , Holyhead ) . He said that this " little edifice is more remarkable for its simplicity , and the beauty of the rural scene by which it is surrounded , than for any matters of antiquity or curiosity in its construction , or contained within its walls " . The Welsh antiquarian Angharad Llwyd and the writer Samuel Lewis ( both writing in the 19th century before the 1882 alterations ) each described St Mary 's as a " small neat edifice " . They particularly noted the internal and external monuments to members of various local families .

Writing in 1847 , the clergyman and antiquarian Harry Longueville Jones said that St Mary 's was " remarkable for being in one of the sweetest spots in the isle of Anglesey " The interior , he said , was " greatly blocked up with pews " , but was in " excellent repair " , with " a degree of neatness and comfort about it quite unusual in this district . " The roof timbers , he commented , were " closely set together , light in section , but producing a good effect . " The Welsh politician and church historian Sir Stephen Glynne visited a couple of years later , in 1849 . He described St Mary 's as being in a " pretty " situation , " surrounded by trees " . He noted the " fair " east window and the " rude timber framework " of the roof . In 2006 , a guide to the churches of Anglesey noted that the red sandstone used in the windows and in the bellcote was showing signs of " severe weathering " in places .