

= St Iestyn 's Church , Llaniestyn =

St Iestyn 's Church , Llaniestyn is a medieval church in Llaniestyn , Anglesey , in Wales . A church is said to have been founded here by St Iestyn in the 7th century , with the earliest parts of the present building dating from the 12th century . The church was extended in the 14th century , with further changes over the coming years . It contains a 12th @-@ century font and a 14th @-@ century memorial stone to Iestyn , from the same workshop as the stone to St Pabo at St Pabo 's Church , Llanbabo .

The church is still in use , as part of the Church in Wales , and is one of seven churches in a combined parish . It is a Grade II * listed building , a national designation given to " particularly important buildings of more than special interest " , because of its age and retention of many original features , including the Iestyn effigy .

= = History and location = =

St Iestyn 's Church stands in a churchyard in a rural part of eastern Anglesey , near the village of Llanddona . The church gave its name to the area of Llaniestyn : the Welsh word llan originally meant " enclosure " and then " church " , with the saint 's name as a suffix . The date of foundation of the church is unknown . Geraint Jones , author of a 2006 guide to the churches of Anglesey , notes that it is thought that St Iestyn , a nephew of the Anglesey saint St Cybi , established a religious community in this place in the 7th century . It was the last of the churches that he established .

According to the 19th @-@ century writer Samuel Lewis , the church was donated by Llywelyn the Great (c . 1172 ? 1240) to the priory he had established at Llanfaes . It is known that there was a church here before 1254 as it is recorded in the Norwich Valuation of that year . The oldest parts of the building , including the blocked west door , date back to the 12th century . There was an extension to the chancel , probably in the 14th century ; the east window is 15th @-@ century , and the south door dates from about 1500 . The 16th century saw the addition of the south transept . Restoration work took place in 1865 (renewing the roof and adding the north window) and in 1954 , when the west door was discovered .

St Iestyn 's is still in use for worship and belongs to the Church in Wales . It is one of seven churches within the combined benefice of Beaumaris with Llanddona and Llaniestyn . It is within the deanery of Tindaethwy and Menai , the archdeaconry of Bangor and the Diocese of Bangor . As of 2012 , the rector is the Reverend Neil Fairlamb .

= = Architecture and fittings = =

The church was built using rough rubble masonry with stone copings , with some parts covered in render . The chancel and nave together measure 38 feet 3 inches by 15 feet 6 inches (11 @. @ 66 by 4 @. @ 72 m) ; the south transept is 18 by 15 feet (5 @. @ 5 by 4 @. @ 6 m) . The internal walls have been whitewashed . The roof is made of slate . There is no change in the structure to denote the internal division between the nave , which is the oldest part of the building , and the chancel . There is a bellcote at the west end of the roof . The church entrance is through a porch on the south side ; it has been rebuilt , with some of the material dating from the 15th century . There is a round @-@ headed door inside a square door frame , with the date 1764 on the hinge .

The east window in the chancel is in the shape of a pointed arch and dates from the 15th century ; it has three lights topped with cinquefoils and a hood mould . On the north side of the nave there is a rectangular window from 1865 . The 16th @-@ century south transept has windows in the south and east walls : the south window has three lights topped with trefoils in a 16th @-@ century arch , and the east window is small and rectangular , using some dressings from the 14th century . The wide opening between the transept and the rest of the church is spanned with a large wooden beam .

The west wall of the south transept holds a late @-@ 14th @-@ century carved effigy stone of St Iestyn ; he wears a hooded cloak with a brooch , holding a staff in his right hand and an inscribed

scroll in his left . He is bearded and has the appearance of a hermit , or of a Franciscan monk (Samuel Lewis commenting that the cord and tassel hanging from the girdle around his waist were similar to those worn by monks in that order) . There are flowers in the background . The historian Peter Lord has written that the depiction of the staff and brooch is so accurate that it suggests that " these artefacts , which were already objects of veneration , survived for the sculptor to copy " . The inscription reads H [I] C : JACET : SANGTUS : YESTINVS : CVI : / WEN [LLIA] N [F : MADO] C : ET : GRVFFVT : AP : GWILYM : O [BT] VLIT : IN OB / LACOEM : ISTAM : IMAGIN / NE : P : SALVTE : ANIMARVM : S (" Here lies Iestyn to whom Gwenllian ferch Madog and Gruffydd ap Gwilym offered this image for the health of their souls ") . It is made of grey sandstone , from Flintshire in north @-@ east Wales ? an area where the donor of the effigy , Gruffudd ap Gwilym , had land . He also had land at Llaniestyn , and it is probable that he paid for rebuilding work at the church . The woman appearing in the inscription was Gruffudd 's aunt . The stone originates from the same workshop as similar memorials in the area : there is one at Bangor Cathedral , and one to St Pabo at St Pabo 's Church , Llanbabo (also on Anglesey) . The stone may originally have been used as part of a shrine for the saint . It was positioned in front of the altar in the 18th century , but was thereafter moved to its present location .

The cylindrical font , at the west end of the nave , is from the 12th century . The outside of the font is decorated with carvings in three bands . The bottom band contains round @-@ headed arches , the middle band has a series of chevrons , and the top band has various crosses , chequerwork patterns and other decorations . It has similarities of design and style with the font at St Peulan 's Church , Llanbeulan . There is an 18th @-@ century stone tablet recording benefactions to the poor of the parish on the north wall of the chancel . The communion table and rails date from the late 17th century .

The churchyard contains the war grave of an airman of World War II .

= = Assessment = =

The church has national recognition and statutory protection from alteration as it has been designated as a Grade II * listed building ? the second @-@ highest of the three grades of listing , designating " particularly important buildings of more than special interest " . It was given this status on 30 January 1968 , and has been listed because it is a " good Medieval rural church which retains many original and early features " . Cadw (the Welsh Government body responsible for the built heritage of Wales and for the inclusion of Welsh buildings on the statutory lists) particularly notes the " fine 14th @-@ century effigy memorial " of St Iestyn .

Writing in 1847 , the clergyman and antiquarian Harry Longueville Jones said that the church was one of the " plainest " in Anglesey , but had " two treasures " . He described the font as " remarkably curious " , and said that there were " few monumental effigies in Wales of a higher antiquarian value " than the image of St Iestyn . A 2009 guide to the buildings of the region notes the " barn @-@ like " entrance of the porch , and describes the effigy of St Iestyn as " surprisingly accomplished " .