

= St Beuno 's Church , Aberffraw =

St Beuno 's Church , Aberffraw is a 12th @-@ century parish church in Anglesey , north Wales . A church was established in Aberffraw in the 7th century by St Beuno , who became the abbot of Clynnog Fawr , Gwynedd . St Beuno 's may have been used as a royal chapel during the early Middle Ages , as the princes of Gwynedd had a court in Aberffraw . The oldest parts of the church date from the 12th century , although it was considerably enlarged in the 16th century when a second nave was built alongside the existing structure , with the wall in between replaced by an arcade of four arches . Restoration work in 1840 uncovered a 12th @-@ century arch in the west wall , which may have been the original chancel arch or a doorway to a western tower that has been lost . The church also has a 13th @-@ century font , some memorials from the 18th century , and two 18th @-@ century copper collecting shovels .

The church is still used for worship by the Church in Wales , one of four in a combined parish . As of 2013 , the parish is without an incumbent priest . St Beuno 's is a Grade II * listed building , a national designation given to " particularly important buildings of more than special interest " , in particular because it is a " rare Anglesey example of a double @-@ naved church " , with elements including the " unusually fine " 12th @-@ century arch . A 2009 guide to the buildings of the region says that St Beuno 's contains " some of the most significant Romanesque work on the island " .

= = History and location = =

St Beuno 's Church is in Aberffraw on the south @-@ west coast of Anglesey , north Wales . It is set within a large churchyard in the south @-@ west of the village , on the south side of Church Street . The first church community was established in Aberffraw in the 7th century by St Beuno (a Welsh holy man who became the abbot of Clynnog Fawr , on the Llŷn Peninsula in Gwynedd) . No part of a structure from that period survives ; the oldest parts of the present building are the south wall of the nave and some parts of the west wall , which are from the 12th century .

Some work was carried out in the late 13th or the 14th century , which is the period ascribed to the doorway on the south side . The church was enlarged in the 16th century when a second aisle was erected on the north side of the church , running the length of the building , with an arcade of four arches added between the old and new parts of the building . Some restoration was undertaken in 1840 , under the Chester @-@ based architect Thomas Jones . During this work , the rector Hugh Wynne Jones discovered a blocked 12th @-@ century arch set into the west wall . It is thought by some writers to be the original chancel arch , but it has also been suggested that it was the entrance to a tower at the west end , which was said in 1833 to have once existed .

In 1868 , the chancel and north aisle walls were rebuilt , a porch was added on the south side and a vestry added on the north side in place of one within the north aisle that Thomas Jones had created in 1840 . The work was carried out by Henry Kennedy , the architect of the Diocese of Bangor .

Aberffraw became the principal court of the princes of Gwynedd in the early Middle Ages , and St Beuno 's may have been used as a royal chapel . It is still used for worship by the Church in Wales , and is one of four churches in the combined benefice of Trefdraeth with Aberffraw with Llangadwaladr with Cerrigceinwen . It is within the deanery of Malltraeth , the archdeaconry of Bangor and the Diocese of Bangor . As of 2013 , there is no incumbent priest in the parish .

= = Architecture and fittings = =

The church is built in Late Decorated style from rubble masonry dressed with sandstone , with rendering on the outside of the wall at the west end . Each wall has an external buttress in the centre . The gabled roofs above the nave and north aisle are made of slate with stone copings ; there is a stone bellcote with two bells at the west end between the two gables . Both bells are dated 1896 and inscribed with the name " Charles Carr @-@ Smethwick " ; they are hung one above the other rather than side by side . There is a stone cross on top of the bellcote and each gable .

St Beuno 's is entered through the porch in the south @-@ west corner of the nave , which leads to

an inner doorway set in a pointed arch . The 19th @-@ century vestry is reached through a doorway in the north @-@ west corner of the church . The nave , which measures 30 by 16 feet (9 @. @ 1 by 4 @. @ 9 m) , and the north aisle each have roofs of 6 bays with exposed rafters . The central arcade has four arches supported by octagonal piers . The two arches to the east are to the north side of the chancel , which is slightly smaller than the nave at 25 by 16 feet (7 @. @ 6 by 4 @. @ 9 m) ; the other two are on the north side of the nave . The reset 12th @-@ century arch in the west wall is decorated with chevrons and the heads of 25 rams and bulls . There is no structural division between the nave and the chancel , but the south sanctuary (at the east end of the chancel) is raised by two steps and is marked out by a communion rail . The sanctuary floor is decorated with encaustic tiles , and panelling has been placed behind the altar as a reredos . The sanctuary at the east end of the north aisle also has two steps leading up to it , but its floor is wooden . The altar in the north sanctuary is from the early part of the 20th century , and has a copper panel depicting the Last Supper .

The windows in the north and south walls are set in square frames , and are either two or three lights (sections of window separated by mullions) decorated with tracery at the top ; they date from Kennedy 's work in 1868 . The window at the eastern end of the south wall has three lights with tracery , set in a pointed arch frame with a plain hoodmould around it . The two windows at the west end have single lights topped with tracery ; the windows at the east end have three lights , tracery and hoodmoulds . Five of the windows , including the main east window , have stained glass by the London artist E. R. Suffling ; the east window in the north aisle , by C. A. Gibbs (1849) depicts the Good Samaritan .

The large octagonal font dates from the 13th century . The south side of the church has memorials from the 18th century to Henry Morris , Rector of Llanfachraeth , and his sons Richard and Owen , and also some 19th @-@ century memorials . A survey in 1937 by the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales and Monmouthshire also noted a memorial to Hugh Wynne , who died in 1714 : he was Chancellor of Bangor Cathedral and rector of Aberffraw and Trefdraeth . Two copper collecting shovels with wooden handles were given to St Beuno 's in 1777 by Hugh Williams , the rector .

A survey of church plate within the Bangor diocese in 1906 recorded a plain silver chalice dated 1866 ? 67 , and a silver paten with an inscription recording that it was a gift from Sir Arthur Owen in 1753 . The author commented that the nearby church of St Cadwaladr , Llangadwaladr had an " exactly similar dish " from the same donor . He also noted that church records from 1793 , 1801 and 1808 showed that a silver chalice belonging to the church had been lost , as had a pewter paten and flagon .

= = Churchyard = =

Against the west boundary of the churchyard are situated the Commonwealth war graves of a Royal Welsh Fusiliers soldier and two merchant seamen of World War I.

= = Assessment = =

The church is 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 5 April 1971 , and has been listed because it is " a rare Anglesey example of a double @-@ naved church " . Enlargement by adding a second nave was not as common in Anglesey as elsewhere in Wales : St Beuno 's is one of three examples on the island (the others being the old church of St Nidan , Llanidan and St Cwyfan 's , Llangwyfan) . Cadw (the Welsh Government body responsible for the built heritage of Wales) notes that while St Beuno 's is " largely of late Medieval character " , it retains " significant elements of a much earlier building including an unusually fine 12th @-@ century chancel arch . " It also comments that restorations have respected the " predominantly 16th @-@ century character " of the church .

Writing in 1846 , the clergyman and antiquarian Harry Longueville Jones said that " the whole

edifice has been lately repaired , new @-@ roofed , and in various respects altered , so that some of its original features are now scarcely to be conjectured . " He compared the arches in the arcade to those of two other churches in the vicinity , St Cwyfan 's and St Morhaiarn 's , and suggested they were both the work of the same architect . He also said that the doorway (as he described the arch in the west wall) was " richly ornamented " , and commented that it had been " most judiciously uncovered " during the 1840 repairs .

The Welsh politician and church historian Sir Stephen Glynne visited the church in September 1848 . He said that parts of the church were " late and poor " , the roofs were " poor and open " and the woodcarving was " inferior " . In 1849 , the writer Samuel Lewis described the church as an " ancient structure " , and noted in particular its two " spacious parallel aisles " .

A 2006 guide to the churches of Anglesey comments that the church has a long history and " is an interesting one to view " . A 2009 guide to the buildings of the region says that the church , which it describes as a " wide rectangle " , contains " some of the most significant Romanesque work on the island " . The memorial to Henry Morris is described as " beautifully lettered " .