

= St Mary 's Church , Tal @-@ y @-@ llyn =

St Mary 's Church , Tal @-@ y @-@ llyn is a medieval church near Aberffraw in Anglesey , north Wales . It was originally a chapel of ease for the parish church of St Peulan 's , Llanbeulan , but the township that it once served , Tal @-@ y @-@ llyn , no longer exists . It was declared a redundant church in the early 1990s , and has been in the care of the Friends of Friendless Churches since 1999 . Services are held once per month during part of the year .

The date of the church is unknown , but the oldest parts could be from the 12th century . The chancel was rebuilt in the 16th century , and a side chapel added in the 17th century . The church furnishings , such as pews , pulpit and communion rails , were added in the 18th century , although some of the pews are modern replacements after vandalism . It is a Grade I listed building , a national designation given to buildings of " exceptional , usually national , interest " , because it is " a very rare example of a virtually unrestored Medieval church of simple , rustic character . "

= = History and location = =

St Mary 's Church is in a rural and thinly populated part of Anglesey , about 4 @.@ 25 kilometres ( 2 @.@ 6 mi ) northeast of Aberffraw and about 3 @.@ 75 kilometres ( 2 @.@ 3 mi ) southwest of Gwalchmai . It stands on a low mound with a circumference of approximately 120 yards ( 110 m ) ; the wall around the churchyard , which contains no gravestones , follows the shape of the mound to some extent . Its original purpose was to serve as one of five chapels of ease for the local parish church , St Peulan 's , Llanbeulan , about 1 @.@ 5 miles ( 2 @.@ 4 km ) to the north ; St Peulan 's itself has now closed . The township that St Mary 's served , Tal @-@ y @-@ llyn , has now disappeared , although before the time of the Black Death there were 22 houses here .

The date of foundation of the church is unknown . The nave is the oldest part of the church , possibly built in the 12th century . Later changes saw the rebuilding of the chancel ( in the late 16th century ) and the addition of a chapel on the south side of the building ( in the 17th century ) . It was used for services until the early 1990s , and was then made a redundant church in about 1992 . It was placed in the care of the Friends of Friendless Churches in 1999 , who hold a 999 year lease effective from 19 November 1999 . Services are held in the church on one Sunday afternoon per month between May and October .

= = Architecture and fittings = =

The church was constructed using rubble masonry with boulder quoins . The floor is laid with flagstones throughout , and the roof has modern slates . The nave measures 25 by 13 feet ( 7 @.@ 6 by 4 @.@ 0 m ) , the chancel measures 16 feet 6 inches by 11 feet ( 5 @.@ 03 by 3 @.@ 47 m ) , and the chapel adjoining the chancel on the south side is 9 by 8 feet ( 2 @.@ 7 by 2 @.@ 4 m ) . Between the nave and chancel is a pointed arch , with some 13th @-@ century elements but probably reconstructed in the 16th century . The side chapel has rectangular windows in the east and west walls from the 17th century ; a narrow stone bench runs along the west and south walls of the chapel . The roof trusses , which date from the 15th and 17th centuries , are visible inside the building and the undersides are chamfered . There are two rectangular windows in the north wall of the nave ( 20th century additions ) , matching the window in the north wall of the chancel . The east window , in the chancel , has three rounded lights set in a square frame ; it dates from the latter part of the 16th century . The windows still have their clear leaded glass but are now boarded up . There are no windows on the south side , which is the most exposed side . There is an empty bellcote on the roof at the west end of the nave . The entrance is also at the west end , where there is a rounded arch doorway set deep into the thick wall , possibly dating from the 14th century .

The 12th @-@ century font was removed when the church was made redundant ; it is now in the nearby church of St Maelog , Llanfaelog . The church now houses a 15th @-@ century octagonal font made of gritstone , positioned on an octagonal stem . The communion rails are dated 1764 and is of a simple design ; the pulpit , also 18th @-@ century , has recessed panels .

There are stone benches along the north and south walls of the nave . Many of the pews , which dated from the 18th century , were vandalised or stolen after the church was made redundant . Replacements were made by a local craftsman as part of the restoration project carried out in 1999 and 2000 by the Friends of Friendless Churches .

= = 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 buildings of " exceptional , usually national , interest " . Fewer than 2 % of the listed buildings in Wales are in this category . It was given this status on 5 April 1971 , because it is " a very rare example of a virtually unrestored Medieval church of simple , rustic character . " Cadw ( the Welsh Assembly Government body responsible for the built heritage of Wales and the inclusion of Welsh buildings on the statutory lists ) also note as a reason for listing " the retention of a complete set of 18th century fittings , including simple benches " , although this comment predates the 1990s vandalism . One modern guide to the buildings of the region comments that it has " the vernacular character of Anglesey 's country buildings , which survives scarcely at all in the churches . " The 19th @-@ century writer Samuel Lewis , however , took a different view of the building , calling it " a small edifice of no interest " .