

= Llantwit Major =

Llantwit Major ( Welsh : Llanilltud Fawr ) is a small coastal town and community in the Vale of Glamorgan , Wales , lying on the Bristol Channel coast . It is one of four towns in the Vale of Glamorgan and the third largest by population ( 13 @, @ 366 ( 2001 ) ) after Barry and Penarth , and ahead of Cowbridge , which lies about 4 @. @ 5 miles ( 7 @. @ 2 km ) to the northeast . The town centre of Llantwit Major lies about 9 miles ( 14 km ) southeast of the centre of Bridgend , 10 miles ( 16 km ) west of the centre of Barry , and about 15 miles ( 24 km ) miles south @- @ west of the centre of the Welsh capital of Cardiff .

The town 's name in Welsh , Llanilltud Fawr , is derived from the name of Saint Illtud , who came to the area from Brittany , Gaul . He founded the monastery of Illtud and the college attached to it , Cor Tewdws , which would grow into one of the most esteemed Christian colleges of the times . At peak it attracted over 2000 students , including princes and numerous eminent clergymen , some now revered as saints . Destroyed by the Vikings in 987 , the monastery was rebuilt in 1111 and continued to be a centre of learning governed by Tewkesbury Abbey until it closed in 1539 during the Dissolution of the Monasteries . The 13th @- @ century St Illtyd 's Church , built near the ancient monastery , today is a Grade I listed building and one of the oldest parish churches in Wales .

The modern town of Llantwit developed rapidly in the 20th century to accommodate Royal Air Force personnel from the base built at nearby St Athan , but it retains its medieval cobbled streets and buildings of the 15th and 16th centuries . Llantwit Major railway station on the Vale of Glamorgan Line was reopened in June 2005 . Collugh Beach is a popular surfing venue and has the remnants of an Iron Age fort and some of the finest examples of Jurassic @- @ period fossils in Wales . The pebble beach and its dramatic clifftops are part of a 14 miles ( 23 km ) -long coastline protected under the Glamorgan Heritage Coast , which stretches from Gileston in the east to Newton Point beyond Southerndown in the west .

= = Name = =

Although the parish church glosses the name of the town rather literally as " Illtud 's Great Church " , both the Welsh placename and its English form do not properly call the place " great " but rather " greater " : the epithet distinguishes this Llantwit from Llantwit Fardre ( Llanilltud Faerdref ) near Pontypridd and Llantwit Minor ( Llanilltud Fach ; also known as Llantwit @- @ juxta @- @ Neath and Lower Llantwit ) near Neath . The Welsh placename element llan , meanwhile , is related to English lawn ( which was borrowed into Middle English from French , which borrowed it from Gaulish ) and referred to the sanctified community around early Christian settlements in Wales and its parish rather than merely the church itself ( eglwys ) .

= = History = =

Llantwit Major has been occupied for over 3000 years and archaeological evidence has shown it was occupied in Neolithic times . The remains of an Iron Age fort lie in the beach area . Excavations at the Roman villa at Caer Mead have revealed that this area was occupied during Roman times for around 350 years ; its bathrooms and the mosaic pavements date from the mid 2nd century AD .

In the 5th century , after the withdrawal of the Roman legions , Saint Illtud came to the Hodnant valley from Brittany and founded the monastery of Illtud on the Ogney Brook , and a college , in close proximity to the current St Illtyd 's Church , about a mile from the sea . The exact date of its founding is unknown , but some sources indicate around the year 500 AD ; the blue plaque on the church today also gives this date . Because of its monastery and teaching centre it became a major centre for education and Celtic Church evangelism , attracting scholars from across Wales , Devon , Cornwall and Brittany and the wider world . The college of Llantwit , known as the College or Seminary of Theodosius ( Cor Tewdws in Welsh ) or College of St. Illtyd , at its peak reputedly had seven halls , over 400 houses and over 2000 students , including seven sons of British princes , and scholars such as St. Patrick , St. Paul Aurelian , the bard Taliesin , Gildas the historian , Samson of

Dol , Paulinus , Bishop of Leon , and St. David is believed to have spent some time there . Samson was known to have been summoned by Dyfrig to join the monastery in 521 and he was briefly elected abbot before leaving for Cornwall . King Hywel ap Rhys ( d . 886 ) was buried at the monastery .

The college suffered during the invasions of the Saxons and the Danes and was destroyed by the Vikings in 987 and the Normans in the late 11th century . However , in 1111 , it is documented as being restored but likely in a lesser state than the original . It is known to have continued to function as a monastic school until the 16th @-@ century Reformation . The ruins of the original school house are located in a garden on the northern end of the churchyard and the monastic halls were located in a place called Hill @-@ head on the north side of the tithe @-@ barn . Although nothing of the original monastery remains , the present church was originally built between 950 and 1400 and its earliest existing secular buildings date from the 15th century . The church and school became the property of Tewkesbury Abbey around 1130 after becoming part of the Norman kingdom of Glamorgan .

After the dissolution of the monasteries by king Henry VIII during the Reformation , it became independent from Tewkesbury in 1539 . St Donat 's Castle , 1 @.@ 5 miles ( 2 @.@ 4 km ) to the west , was built in the 13th century .

In the 20th century , Llantwit developed into a dormitory town and grew about 15 times in size to accommodate the Royal Air Force at St Athan . Despite its modernization and rapid growth , it retains its pre @-@ modern feel with its narrow winding streets , high walls , old town hall and gatehouse , and several inns and houses dated to the 16th century . Llantwit Major railway station on the Vale of Glamorgan Line was reopened in June 2005 . In 2014 , it was rated one of the most attractive postcode areas to live in Wales .

= = Geography = =

Llantwit Major is located in southeast Wales and mid @-@ west along the coast of the Vale of Glamorgan . The town can be accessed from the north directly by the B4268 road and indirectly by the B4270 road ( St. Athan road ) stemming from the A48 road , and directly by the B4265 road which leads to Bridgend in the northwest and Cardiff Airport and Barry in the east . It is one of four towns in the Vale of Glamorgan and the third largest by population after Barry and Penarth , and ahead of Cowbridge , which lies about 4 @.@ 5 miles ( 7 @.@ 2 km ) to the northeast . The town centre of Llantwit Major lies about 9 miles ( 14 km ) from the centre of Bridgend , 10 miles from the centre of Barry and about 15 miles ( 24 km ) from the centre of Cardiff which lies further to the east . Boverton is an eastern suburb of Llantwit .

A small stream , the River Ogney , runs through the town and joins the streams [ Hoddnant and Boverton Brook ] which flow in from Eglwys Brewis in the northeast ; these then merge and become the Afon Colhuw which meanders down the Colhuw meadows before discharging through an outfall into the sea . The Llantwit Major area is built on a range of different levels and the town itself is sloping . At the lower coastal level is the flat , glacial Collugh Valley , marked by steep cliffs on both sides , leading to a pebble beach . The beach , located to the south of the town ( 51 @.@ 396667 ° N 3 @.@ 500833 ° W ? / 51 @.@ 396667 ; -3.500833 ) , has the remains of an ancient old stone wall from the large Iron Age hill fort , Castle Ditches , which was once located here . The steep cliffs at Llantwit which allow walks along the coast to St Donat 's Castle and Atlantic College have undergone dramatic erosion in recent years with the result that , in many places , the rock structure has collapsed in piles , particularly on the eastern face .

The cliff path , once set approximately 100 yards ( 91 m ) from the edge is now within metres of the nature pathway , causing the installation of extensive new barriers by the Vale of Glamorgan Council to prevent fatalities . The 14 miles ( 23 km ) of coastline from Gileston in the east to Newton Point and in the west , passing through St Donat 's and Southerndown is protected under the Glamorgan Heritage Coast . Tresilian Bay is situated between Llantwit Major and St Donat 's . Along this stretch of coast the cliff path winds through numerous valleys . Llantwit Major beach has one of the finest sites in Wales for Jurassic fossils , including corals , giant brachiopods , gastropods and the bones

of Ichthyosaurus . In the early 1990s the beach flooded with the tide rising beyond the beach wall and inundating the surrounding pasture in the valley , which is now used as a campsite .

The beach is a popular tourist destination during the summer months and has a campsite on the nearby fields . The beach has a snack bar and restaurant and associated amenities to cater for the increased public demand in recent years . The beach at low tide is an expansive rocky beach with a stretch of sand towards the far west , offering dramatic views of the Bristol Channel and the coastline of Somerset , England , with the landmark white roof of Butlins , Minehead .

= = Economy and local government = =

Llantwit Major is a small town which is largely dependent on local retail and earnings from further afield . The majority of the inhabitants commute to work elsewhere , especially Cardiff or Bridgend . During the summer months tourism is important to the town which has " The Precinct " , Rainbow Plaza and several pubs and restaurants . Of note are the Old Swan Inn , Old White Hart Inn , The Tudor Tavern , and the 17th century West House Country Hotel Heritage Restaurant .

Llantwit Major has considerable renown in South Wales as a surfing location , although it is much less known than Porthcawl further down the coast . The beach has a lifeguard station funded by the Vale of Glamorgan Council , built in the late 1990s , functioning during the summer months . There is a surf shop in the town catering to surfers and several others selling items related to surfing fashion . During the summer months the local government often charges visitors to the beach for parking and further income is obtained from the beach cafe and organised walks .

The Victorian Fair Day , established in 1983 , is usually held in June on the Saturday nearest to the 22nd of the month , with a Victorian theme which attracts people from across southern Wales . The town has several supermarkets including Somerfield and Filco , and a town library . At least three pharmacies and two banks ( HSBC and Lloyds TSB ) located in the central shopping area along Boverton Road . The local artistic community supports a number of arts and crafts shops , some selling locally made pottery and other ceramics .

An electoral ward of the same name exists . This ward covers Llantwit Major community but also stretches west to St. Donats . The total population of this ward at the 2011 census was 10 ,@ 621 .

The town is governed by the Llantwit Major town council consisting of fifteen councillors . There are fifteen independent councillors . The current Mayor is Councillor Mick Mason . It also comes under the administration of the Vale of Glamorgan unitary authority . Llantwit Major is twinned with Le Pouliguen , France .

= = Notable landmarks = =

= = = Roman villa = = =

The Roman villa at Caermead ( 51 @. @ 4192 ° N 3 @. @ 4989 ° W ? / 51 @. @ 4192 ; -3.4989 ) remains as faint earthworks in a field , near the 13th century parish church of St Illtud . The L @-@ shaped courtyard villa was discovered in 1888 . Records from 1893 suggest that one room was used as a praetorium , another as a workshop ; and there was a 5th @-@ century adjoining sacristy , simple in style , which featured a chancel , nave , and stone altar . Found remains included Brachycephalic and dolichocephalic skulls , as well as horse bones . Fine mosaic floors are a notable feature of the villa . The tesserae included blue and crystalline limestone , green volcanic stones , brown sandstone , and red @-@ brick cuttings , encircled with a red , white , blue and brown border . A record from 1907 described the relics as Samian ware pieces ; bronze coins of Maximinus Thrax , Victorinus , and Constantius Chlorus ; as well as roofing materials .

The site was again excavated between 1938 and 1948 . It may have been first settled in the 1st century , but the first stone structure was not erected until a hundred years later . The site developed slowly and , it has been suggested , was even abandoned for a while during the 3rd

century . By the 4th century , there was an L @-@ shaped villa with a large , aisled building possibly for farm workers and a number of smaller agricultural structures almost enclosing a central courtyard . The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales has associated collection records of the site , including drawings of other remains such as statues and tessellated pavement , as well as documentation of a 1971 excavation . An early @-@ medieval @-@ period cemetery is in evidence. as are earthworks , traces of walling , a bank and a ditch . Pieces of pottery have been found .

= = = Listed buildings = = =

= = = = St Illtyd 's Church and monastery = = = =

The town grew up around Cor Tewdws , a monastery and divinity school , alternately named Caerworgorn , or Bangor Tewdws ( College of Theodosius ) , or later Bangor Illtyd ( " Illtyd 's college " ) . Saint David , Saint Samson , Saint Paul Aurelian , Saint Gildas , Saint Tudwal , Saint Baglan and king Maelgwn Gwynedd are said to have studied at the divinity school. Cor Tewdws was destroyed in AD 446 and re @-@ founded in AD 508 by St Illtyd as a centre of learning . The ruins of the school are in a garden on the north side of the churchyard ; and the monastery was situated north of the tithe barn on Hill Head .

The elongated church ( 51 @.@ 4081 ° N 3 @.@ 4878 ° W ? / 51 @.@ 4081 ; -3.4878 ) , a conglomeration of distinct buildings , is divided into two areas by a wall , a 13th @-@ century monastery church , and the Norman parish church . The eastern section contains interesting medieval wall paintings with religious themes , and a fine reredos . The western section , a Lady chapel , 40 @.@ 5 feet ( 12 @.@ 3 m ) in length , has an inscription to King Rhys ap Ithael of Morgannwg who died in the mid @-@ 9th century . The church contains a curfew bell and medieval priest effigies . The older church is 64 feet ( 20 m ) long ; the newer church was built by Richard Neville .

St. Illtyd 's church predates the Age of the Saints in early Welsh Christianity and thus by its very existence provides evidence of continuity with sub @-@ Roman Christianity . The churchyard contains three ancient relics , a pillar and two inscribed stones ; one dates from Saint Samson 's time . The grounds also include a 13th @-@ century gatehouse , a monks ' pigeon @-@ house , ruined walls in a garden area , and mounds near the vicarage .

= = = = Town Hall = = = =

Manorial records indicate that the Town Hall ( 51 @.@ 4076 ° N 3 @.@ 4848 ° W ? / 51 @.@ 4076 ; -3.4848 ) dates to the 15th century but it is often attributed to Gilbert de Clare , Lord of Glamorgan , who died much earlier in 1295 . It then functioned as a manor and a meeting venue for the court to organise duties and collect rents and at weekends held fairs . It was renovated in the late 16th century and over the years the lower floor functioned as a school , a slaughterhouse and a jail and the top floor a venue for church meetings , leased to Oddfellows in the 1830s . Aside from fairs it also held plays , concerts and dances . It became a Grade : II \* listed building on 22 February 1963 . It features a bell with the inscription , Sancte Illtute , ora pro nobis ( " Saint Illtyd , pray for us " ) . It is reached by a flight of steps .

= = = = Great House = = = =

The Great House ( 51 @.@ 412361 ° N 3 @.@ 488173 ° W ? / 51 @.@ 412361 ; -3.488173 ) , located along the road to Cowbridge , on the northern outskirts originally dated from the 14th century when it consisted of just a square central section , but significant additions have made it an excellent example of a Tudor " Ty mawr " ( Great House ) . A northern wing with a stable and dovecot were amongst the added parts . The house was occupied by the Nicholl family for centuries

but by the 1920s it had been abandoned and fell into a heavily dilapidated state . The building was bought and restored to its former glory in the 1950s .

===== Dove cote and gatehouse =====

Covered by a domical vault , the Dove Cote ( 51 @. @ 406414 ° N 3 @. @ 48913 ° W ? / 51 @. @ 406414 ; -3.48913 ) is a Grade II \* listed tall 13th @- @ century cylindrical column in a middle of the Hill Head field , which lies in close proximity to St Illtuds Church , next to the site of the old tithe barn , built for the monks at the St. Illtud 's monastery . Another site on Hill Head is the ( 13th ? 14th century ) gatehouse , now belonging to St Illtyd 's Church , Llantwit Major . Today these are the only remaining buildings which at one time belonged to Tewkesbury Abbey . There is a plaque on the gatehouse , telling of its history .

===== The Old Place =====

The Old Place ( 51 @. @ 407665 ° N 3 @. @ 489745 ° W ? / 51 @. @ 407665 ; -3.489745 ) is a ruin of an Elizabethan manor house , built by Griffith Williams for his daughter and son @- @ in @- @ law Edmund Vann in 1596 . It is often mistakenly called Llantwit Castle . The Williams family were successful lawyers and part of the rising minor gentry who were loathed by the Seys of Boverton and the Stradlings of St Donats . Vann was fined over £ 1 @, @ 000 for being involved in a scuffle in central Llantwit on a Sunday which led him to take on the Sey family and seek his revenge .

===== Old Swan Inn =====

Records state that a building was located here from the 11th century and during medieval times it is believed to have been a monastic or manorial mint. but the current Grade II \* listed inn ( 51 @. @ 408341 ° N 3 @. @ 486029 ° W ? / 51 @. @ 408341 ; -3.486029 ) is dated to the 16th century , aside from restoration work ; it was once thatched roofed . It was run for many years in Tudor times by the Raglan family . In the mid 17th century there is evidence that its owner Edward Craddock was again using it as a mint to " mint his own tokens as there was a shortage of coin at this time . " There are five other pubs and four restaurants in the town .

===== Plymouth House =====

According to the blue plaque on the wall outside Plymouth House ( 51 @. @ 408791 ° N 3 @. @ 488876 ° W ? / 51 @. @ 408791 ; -3.488876 ) , the house is believed to have been formerly part of the monastery , perhaps functioning as a halled house for some time in the fifteenth century . After its closure in 1539 , it became the manor house of West Llantwit owned by Edward Stradling . Later owners include Lewis of the Van , the Earl of Plymouth and then Dr. J. W. Nicholl Carne , who renamed it after its previous owner some time in the 19th century .

===== Court House =====

From the blue plaque on the Court House ( 51 @. @ 409519 ° N 3 @. @ 485348 ° W ? / 51 @. @ 409519 ; -3.485348 ) , it was formerly known as Ivy house when it was a town house from the 16th century . In the 18th century it was extended by Christopher Bassett . For some time it was owned by the Throckmorton family of Coughton Court , Warwickshire , descendants of one of the perpetrators of the Gunpowder Plot . Later owners included Daniel Durrell , headmaster of Cowbridge Grammar School , and the benefactor of Tabernacle Chapel , Elias Bassett . It then fell to his niece and her husband William Thomas and became part of the Thomas family and at one time was owned by Illtyd Thomas , father of Mare Treveleyan , an antiquarian . The Thomases built the Town Hall clock to commemorate Queen Victoria .

===== Knolles Place =====

According to the blue plaque on the building ( also known as " The Old School " ) ( 51 @.@ 408413 ° N 3 @.@ 487469 ° W ? / 51 @.@ 408413 ; -3.487469 ) , it was built around 1450 by John Raglan ( Herbert ) and was then owned by Robert Raglan , from a family who had significant power in the area at the time and held many local administrative posts as stewards and priests . In the 17th century it became a vicarage for Stephen Slugg and functioned as a boarding school for primary school children between 1874 and 1975 .

===== Old police station =====

The old police station ( 51 @.@ 4069 ° N 3 @.@ 4872 ° W ? / 51 @.@ 4069 ; -3.4872 ) was built in the mid @.@ 1840s after the place is Glamorgan Constabulary was established in 1841 , and was originally comprised a single @.@ storey building , but was expanded in 1876 to include four bedrooms on the top floor . It continued to function as a police station until 1928 when a new building opened nearer the town centre on Wesley Street .

===== War memorial =====

This is located in the centre of Llantwit War Memorial ( 51 @.@ 40842 ° N 3 @.@ 486894 ° W ? / 51 @.@ 40842 ; -3.486894 ) , between the Old Swan and the White Hart and has a Celtic cross . The memorial commemorates residents who lost their lives or went missing in World War I and World War II . There are 32 names listed for World War I and 26 names for World War II .

===== Bethel Baptist Church =====

Bethel Baptist Church ( 51 @.@ 408714 ° N 3 @.@ 485035 ° W ? / 51 @.@ 408714 ; -3.485035 ) was erected in 1830 to provide for local Baptists and its first minister was a local shopkeeper named Jabez Lawrence . Christmas Evans , a one @.@ eyed Welsh preacher of considerable renown was reported to have held services here .

===== Boverton Place =====

Located in Boverton , Boverton Place ( 51 @.@ 404751 ° N 3 @.@ 464059 ° W ? / 51 @.@ 404751 ; -3.464059 ) is a former fortified manor house , now in ruins . It was built at the end of the 16th century and served as the seat of Roger Seys , Queen ? s Attorney to the Council of Wales and the Marches in the 1590s . It remained in Seys family until the last heiress Jane Seys married Robert Jones of Fonmon who sold it to owners who let it fall into ruin . Its last occupants were mentioned in the census of 1861 .

===== Dimlands =====

Dimlands ( or Dimland Castle or Dimland Lodge ) ( 51 @.@ 406172 ° N 3 @.@ 501055 ° W ? / 51 @.@ 406172 ; -3.501055 ) is situated about a kilometre back from the clifftops of the Bristol Channel along the road to St. Donats . It was owned at one time by John Whitlock Nicholl Carne of the University of Oxford who moved there after his father 's death . Dimlands was built by John Carne 's father , Rev. Robert Carne , at the end of the 18th century , upon land left him by his father , Whitlock Nicholl of The Ham , sheriff for the county of Glamorgan in 1746 . The property was held by the Nicholl family since the time of King Henry VII . The dwelling is of castellated Tudor architecture with blue lias limestone exterior , and Coombedown stone windows and cornices . The south @.@ facing front is more than 130 feet ( 40 m ) in length . The western coast of Cornwall and Lundy Island are visible from the turrets . The carved chimney in the dining room is made of Caen stone , and the chimney @.@ piece in the drawing room is also . Other features are the Minton tile

flooring , the large Tudor @-@ style staircase , two sitting rooms , and the library , a newer addition . The Dimlands stables feature sharp @-@ pointed gables , as well as a carved stone with the date of the original grant ( 1336 ) .

= = Education and sport = =

Llanilltud Fawr Comprehensive School is the secondary school in the town . A fire gutted the building in October 1991 and a new building was constructed . The school has roughly 1300 pupils and around 85 full @-@ time staff . Immediately adjacent is Llanilltud Fawr primary school , one of four primary schools in Llantwit , the others being Eagleswell primary school , Ysgol Dewi Sant and St. Illtyd 's primary school .

Facilities at the Llantwit Major leisure centre include a small swimming pool , large and small sports halls , the LifeStyle Fitness Studio , sunbed facilities , conference room and bar . The Llantwit Major Rugby Football Club , which played its first match against Cowbridge Rugby Football Club in 1889 , fields two senior , one youth ( U / 19 ) and eight mini / junior teams , and plays in Division Four of the Welsh Rugby Union leagues . Other sports clubs represent association football and cricket .

= = Cultural references = =

The town is fictionally portrayed in the late Glyn Daniel 's novel Welcome Death ( 1954 ) . Some areas of the town have been used in the recording of the recent series of Doctor Who and The Sarah Jane Adventures ( created by BBC Wales ) . The local tearooms were used in the 2007 making of Y Pris filmed by and shown on S4C .

= = Notable people = =

Joe Blackman ( 1984- ) , Entrepreneur and Magistrate , grew up in Llantwit Major .

Glyn Daniel ( 1914 ? 1986 ) , scientist and archaeologist

Dafydd Hewitt ( 1985 ? ) , Cardiff Blues Rugby Player

Daniel Hopkin MC ( 1886 ? 1951 ) , Labour MP born in Llantwit Major

Pat Mountain ( 1976 ? ) , goalkeeping coach for Wolverhampton Wanderers F.C. , grew up in Llantwit Major

Ray ' The Belgian ' Cullinane ( 1937 ? ) , East End gangster linked with the Kray twins but ran a pie and mash stall in Borough Market and had six witnesses when it all went down in the Blind Beggar

Theophilus Redwood ( 1806 ? 1892 ) , pharmacist , one of the founding members of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain