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St Cedwyn's Church

During the Middle Ages, St Cedwyn's Church was a daughter church of St Dogfan's Church at Llanrhaeadr and was looked after by a succession of priests called "Athro" or "Meistr" who held office in the "Clas". The early church was probably built in wood and it was replaced by a stone structure around 1527 (according to an inscription on a timber wall plate). From this church only the pulpit, some monuments, and woodwork were retained when the church was rebuilt in 1869, on the orders of Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn.

St Cedwyn

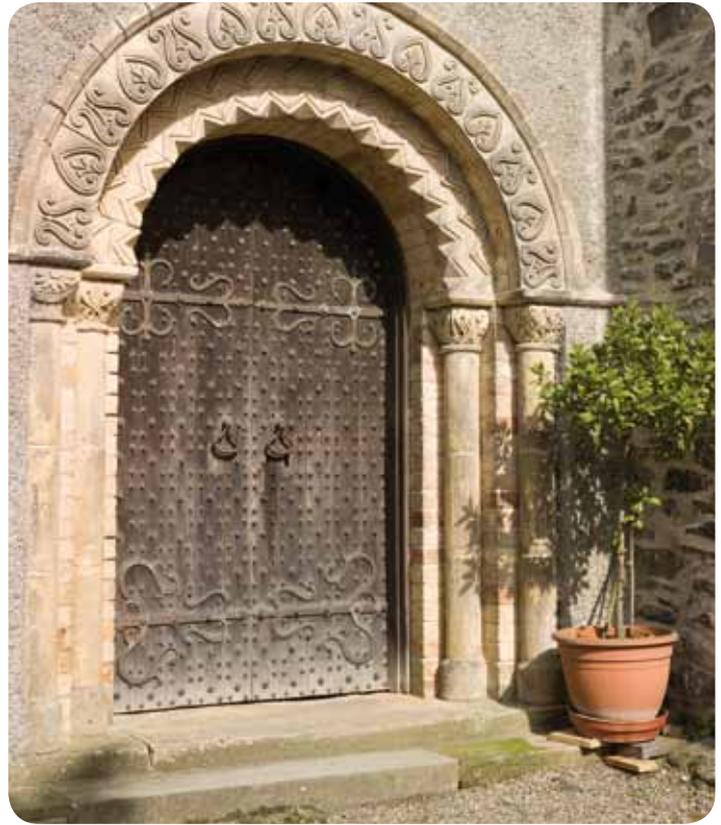
St Cedwyn may have been one of King Arthur's knights, surviving his last battle and becoming a hermit.

The present church

External - The present church is built in grey shale with yellow sandstone around the quoins. An earlier mid-sixteenth century church still exists in its core. It was a simple building with a small nave and timber steeple at the west end. By the 1840's a west porch, built in stone and terracotta, had been added, perhaps by Thomas Penson, as this Romanesque style is characteristic of his work. This porch is the sole survivor of the earlier church and is a distinctive feature of the new one.

Two delightful dormer windows were added to the north and south sides as part of a series of improvements made by H. L. North around 1907. The aim was to allow more light into the interior. Dormer lights are not a common feature on churches, but several churches in this area have adopted them as a means of lighting the interior. Other examples include St Garmon's Church at Llanfechain and St Ffraid's Church at Llansantffraid.

The weathervane has the crest of the Williams-Wynn family attached to the pointer. A similar iron crest also appears above the gates to Llangedwyn Hall, opposite the church.



The terracotta details of the porch are one of the most interesting features of the exterior and date from the 1840's.



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Internal - There is no structural division (such as an archway) between the chancel (where the altar is), and the nave (the main body of the church). This is slightly unusual for the 1860s and may be a reference to the previous church building, which lies at the core of the current church.

Items from the earlier church

Several items in the church survived the restoration of 1869. The oldest of these is the effigy of a fourteenth century priest, thought to be called Yr Athro Griffith. The stone carving lies on the south side of the chancel and seems rather odd in such a relatively modern building. It is a significant link with the earliest church on the site.

The bowl of an ancient plain octagonal font was placed in the porch after Sir Watkin's two young daughters donated a new monumental font to the church.



Two pieces of fine timberwork survive from the seventeenth century - the carved oak pulpit, which has an unusual incised diamond pattern, and a carved oak chest with panelled front.



A wooden pillar alms box, dated 1741, greets visitors as they enter the porch.

The porch is an interesting exhibition area of items from the previous church that did not find their way into the new one. This includes the timber panel on which the 'Ten Commandments' and 'Lord's Prayer' are painted, which is fixed to the west wall.



Churchyard

The churchyard occupies flat ground on the edge of the northern terrace of the River Tanat, well back from the river, at a place where a small stream runs off the hill to the north.

The churchyard has been enlarged three times (1870, 1905 and one later date), and so it is now an irregular 'butterfly' shape, extended south and east. Originally, it may have had an elliptical form, and the best traces of its curved nature are fossilised on the southeastern side.

The tall, graceful cross dating from 1886 commemorates Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn, sixth baronet, under whose patronage the earlier church was demolished and the present one built.

East of the church are two gravestone, carved in the Arts and Crafts style by John Haughton Maurice Bonnor. They are the stones to mark the graves of his father, G.H. Bonnor and his half brother, R.M. Bonnor. John Haughton Maurice also designed the war memorial in the porch. He had an excellent reputation as a fine craftsman, and designed and created jewellery, glass sculpture and woodwork.

