



The Celtic Circle

- In The Footsteps Of Saints And Princes -

3. St. Cadwaladr - Llangadwaladr



Introduction

One of the true gems of the Isle of Anglesey, the church of St. Cadwaladr that you see today has a very long and complex history. Both inside and out there treasures to be discovered, including a superbly carved (modern) Celtic cross (left).

It has a royal history dating back over 1300 years and some of the finest stained glass and stone carving to be seen in Wales, and easily the grandest set of gates of any church on the island.

A Brief History

Though the earliest part of the present church (the Nave) dates back to the 12th century, it used to be referred to as the Eglwys Ail - the 'wattle' church, which speaks of a much earlier history. The church was extended in the 14th century with the addition of the present chancel (left).

As well as close associations with the royal Welsh court at Aberffraw, the church has historically been linked to two prominent Anglesey families; the Owens of Bodorgan and the Meyricks of Bodorgan. In fact it was Richard Meryrick who was responsible for the addition of the north chapel in 1640 (which was rebuilt in 1807 and restored again in 1907). In 1661, the south chapel was donated by the widow of Colonel Hugh Owen. Both chapels contain memorials to the respective families that had them built.

Into the present day, the church has undergone extensive restoration. In 2005-6, the impressive slate roof was added and extensive conservation and repairs to the stained glass in the east window of the chancel and repairs to the huge iron gates were completed. The work being mainly funded by Cadw, the Heritage Lottery Fund and Menter Mon. Work to improve the churchyard and repairs to its footpaths

A Visit

Park your car in the small car park just outside the impressive gates, taking time to admire the fine carved faces around it (picture top right). Passing through the gates you get your first feeling that this is an historic place. The leafy path flanked by large stone monuments leads you directly to the porch, with the exterior of the south chapel to your right.

Entering the church is to enter an architectural treasure house. Set high in the wall facing you is an inscribed stone commemorating King Cadfan of Gwynedd, who died in about 625 and was the grandfather of St. Cadwaladr (who is believed to have been Cadwaladr Fendigaid 'the Blessed', the last Welsh king of the British who died in 682 and from whom the Tudor dynasty was descended).



Moving through the airy and beautifully lit Nave you emerge into the Chancel. Immediately striking are the impressive altar and the extraordinary gothic chandeliers. The 15th century stained glass above the altar has three lights, below the crucifixion scene in the centre light is the 'parliament robed' figure of St. Cadwaladr himself. Below the figure of St. Mary are the figures of Meuric ap Llewelyn and his wife

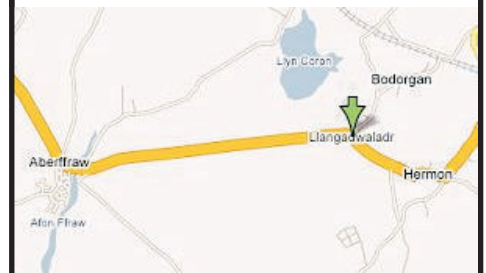
Margaret; below the figure of St. John are Owen ap Meuric and his wife Helen. It is thought to be a thanksgiving for the safe return of their son from the battle of Bosworth in 1485.

Moving back outside the church, turn right as you exit the porch and walk around the back. as you pass the blocked doorway that was an original entrance into the Nave a large Celtic cross can be seen (picture top left) this was built in commemoration of the Meyrick family. This eastern end of the churchyard has some fine monumental graves of Meyrick family members. Take some time to spot and admire the gargoyles perched overhead, some of which are playful, but to legend the Dragon of Wales was on the standard carried by Cadwaladr.



Llangadwaladr

Location



NGR: SH 383 693: Just off the main A4080 about 1/3rd of a mile west of the village of Hermon. A small car park is available just outside the church gates.

Access: The church is kept locked, though the key can be obtained from 01407 840282

Service Times:

Wheelchair access: Easy, though care should be taken with the heavy gates and church door.

Local Amenities: Aberffraw has a 2 very well stocked and friendly village stores one with a Post Office and free-to-use ATM. It also has a popular local pub, Y Goron- 'The Crown'. There is also cycle hire, cafe, shops and accommodation available at

