

A brief history of S. Catwg's Church.....

The present church building is of Norman origin although the evidence for a worshipping community here in Gelligaer goes back to the days of Catwg himself; the earliest evidence being an Irish Ogham stone from the late 4th or early 5th century which once stood below the Parish Church. In 1119, the Church in Gelligaer was named as being among those given to the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Llandaff by the Pope to settle a quarrel over power and influence between the Bishops of Llandaff and Saint David's.

The church has a long and proud history. It was, until the nineteenth century, the Parish Church for much of north east Glamorganshire, a parish stretching from Ystrad Mynach to Brecknockshire. The first rector is believed to have arrived in 1266 although the first rector to be recorded (in the Exeter Episcopal Register of 1336) is Henry de Staunton. In the late 1400's Jasper Tudor presented the Church with a peal of bells in thanks for the support it gave to Henry Tudor in his campaign to become Henry VII. The bells were later sold by the parishioners during the commonwealth period. Although the changes of the reformation were accepted by most there are reports of the Mass being celebrated in Capel Gwladys in 1584 and in 1662 several people were brought to court for refusing to attend the services of the Reformed Church.

From its origins as a Norman built Church, S. Catwg's Church has seen and taken part in the coming to power of the Tudors, the trauma of the reformation and its royalist rector being evicted by the parliamentarians. Following the restoration, the Church suffered the neglect of largely absentee rectors and eventually fell into decline and disrepair before being restored by the Victorians whom we thank for the beautiful Church we enjoy today.

Through it all the Church has stood as an enduring witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. S. Catwg's is a place where God has been worshipped and proclaimed and a place where the faithful have been fed and nourished by Word and Sacrament for over 800 years in unbroken succession. We pray that with God's blessing this tradition of prayer may long continue.

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WELCOME TO S. CATWG'S CHURCH, GELLIGAER

We invite you to join us for our weekly services.

*Sunday
11am Sung Eucharist*

*Thursday
10am Holy Eucharist*



Dear visitor,

Welcome to S. Catwg's Church, Gelligaer.

This church, one of many dedicated to S. Catwg, lies at the heart of his family's homeland. S. Catwg was a leading figure among the monks of South Wales in the sixth century, a contemporary of S. David and founder of the monastery at Llancarfan in the Vale of Glamorgan. He was renowned as a teacher of the faith.

S. Catwg's father was the Welsh ruler Gwynlliw whose lands were centred on Gelligaer and his mother was Gwladys who gives her name to Capel Gwladys located nearby where was discovered the tenth century "Gwladys Stone", which is to be found along with other treasures within this Church.

We hope you enjoy your visit.

Fr. Gary Powell, Parish Priest.

Items of Interest ~ AROUND THE CHURCH

THE PARISH STOCKS

Introduced by Edward III in 1376, the stocks, preserved on the North wall of the Nave once stood by the entrance to the Churchyard.



Offenders were brought into Matins to confess their misdeeds and were then set in the stocks for the remainder of the day.



Window depicting St. Catwg and Gwladys



SANCTUARY MEMORIALS

- Mosaic reredos commemorates Eleanor Harries d. 1971
- Brass effigy of Cannon G. C. F. Harries d. 1879
- Piscina with 17th century copper back plates to the memory of Sir William Lewis of Gilfach Fargoed Fawr.
- Above the Piscina, a tablet commemorates Edward Lewis, founder of the School and local charities.
- Oak panelling to the memory of parishioners who died in the 1939 - 1945 War.
- A note of the 15th century organ is given in the history. A later harmonium was replaced by a 19th century single manual instrument. The present organ was installed in 1935.

CELTIC CROSS

The stone preserved at the rear of the Nave, with its inscribed

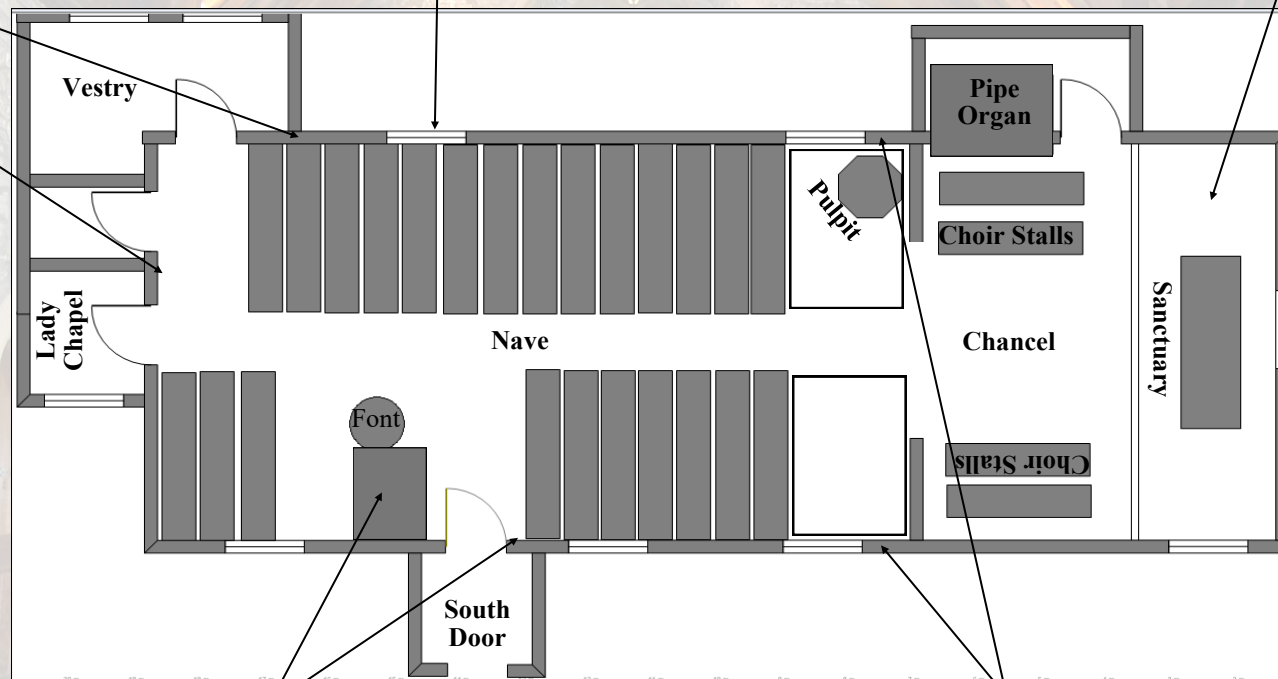


Celtic cross, was found on the site of Capel Gwladys in 1906. The type of cutting found on it dates to the 10th century.

THE BELL

Whilst it is known that a 15th century peal of bells would be followed by a single bell in 1688, as shown by the parish accounts of the time, the fate of the bells is to this date unknown. The present bell was hung in 1760 and is embossed:

E D POWEL & LEWIS
EDWARDS CHURCH
W DNS 1760.



THE BAPTISTRY

Near the South Door is to be seen a Baptistry, restored in 1866. Unique among Welsh Churches, it is a relic of the Commonwealth Church of the 17th century. On the East Side of the South Door is a Holy Water Stoup which is a relic of the Catholic era.



MINOR ALTERS

In the nave on either side of the Norman Arch is to be seen a Piscina, a relic from the Pre-Reformation times. On the Chancel side of the Arch is what must have been an access to the rood screen that has long disappeared.



THE PARISH CHEST

In 1538 Henry VIII decreed that all registers of all baptisms, marriages and burials be maintained and kept in one sure coffer with two locks and keys. Edward VI repeated this order in 1548 and also Elizabeth in 1559. In 1603, James I decided that all records should be kept in one parchment book, locked in a chest with three locks and keys. The keys were shared between the parson and the churchwardens and the number of locks ensured that one party could open the chest in the presence of the other two. Gelligaer's chest, with three locks and keys, was taken over by the District Council in 1895 and subsequently lost.

Should you wish to find further information about the history of S. Catwg's Church, please visit our website www.parishofgelligaer.org.uk and click the history link found in the contents panel.