

# Historic Wales Report

<b>Dataset</b>	<b>Cadw Listed Buildings</b>
Title	Church of St. Garmon
Type	Listed Building
Dataset UID	7625
Community	Llanfechain

## Location

In a circular churchyard at the centre of the village of Llanfechain. Stone churchyard wall, lychgate at south. Sundial shaft near path to church.

Date Listed	1/31/1953
Last Amendment	1/28/2004
Grade	II*

## History

St Garmon's church is named after a Celtic saint said to be of the C9. A small round mound at the north side of the church within the churchyard is traditionally identified as Twmpath Garmon, his preaching mound. There is also a well named after him at the south-east of the village. The round form of the churchyard indicates early origins. The oldest architectural features of the present building date it to the C12, and it was described by Haslam as the most complete Norman church remaining in Montgomeryshire. It was referred to as Capella de Llanvechthyn in 1254 and Ecclesia de Llanetheynt in 1291. Incumbents are traced back to 1407. It has also a fine C15 roof and was sensitively restored in the late C19.

Glynne studied the church in 1855 before much of the C19 restoration had commenced, and pronounced it 'rather mean'; he noted the early Norman windows of the east end and the priest's door with its roll moulding at the south of the chancel. He noted Perpendicular windows at the south of the chancel which have not now survived. Internally his observations included 'rude, old, open benches' and a pew dated 1649. Pictures of the church at this period show a dormer in the south roof over the gallery. There was also a dumpy tower, which was probably to survive as the base of Penson's spire.

R K Penson's restoration in 1859 at the time of the Rev. William Maddock Williams included the addition of a vestry at north, replacing a west vestry hitherto used as a school. He built a new gallery. He also produced the spire, to which the later architect John Douglas of Chester added finishing touches. Penson spent #416 on restoration, including #370 levied by a Church Rate.

The more thorough interior restoration was by Douglas in 1884, at the time of the Rev. David Jones. Douglas uncovered the C15 roof and formed a rood screen to divide off the chancel. The walls were cleared of plaster, the seating renewed, floors repaved and windows reglazed.

## Reason for Listing

Listed at Grade II\* as a church with substantial Norman and later mediaeval remains (authoritatively judged the most complete Norman church in Montgomeryshire), which has been restored to a high standard by two leading C19 provincial architects, Penson and Douglas.

### History

S Glynne, Notes on Historic Churches. Archaeologia Cambrensis 1885 (written 1855).  
R Haslam, Powys (Buildings of Wales Series, 1992) pp. 129-30;  
D R Thomas, History of St Asaph (1906-13) I pp. 26, 123; II p. 221; III p. 350;  
Royal Commission on Historic Monuments Inventory of Montgomeryshire (1911) p. 89;  
Historical & Topographical Sketch of Llanfechain. Montgomeryshire Collections V (1872);  
National Monuments Record file Montgomeryshire Ecclesiastical SJ12SE;  
CPAT Montgomeryshire Churches Survey.

### Interior

The church is entered by the C17 south porch, a two-bay C17 timber-framed addition of unusual robustness on stone plinth walls with arch-braced tie beams. Black and red quarry tile floor. Restored door to nave with wrought iron hinges.

The nave has low pews in two banks with tiled passages. The pews, by Douglas, have decoratively carved ends. Roof of six bays with arch-braced collar beam trusses, cusped V struts and windbracing; ashlar. The walls of the nave and the chancel were entirely stripped of plaster in the C19 restoration, and there is a slight internal batter. Font at the south west corner of the nave: late mediaeval, octagonal, with roses in quatrefoils; fine Gothic style oak font cover donated in 1913 in memory of the Rev. D Jones, under whom the main restoration of the church had been carried out. At the west end is a gallery used as a bellringing and clock chamber, its front beam supported on posts, with boards including decalogue and a benefactions board of 1851. At the centre of the nave is a candelabrum of 1737. Inscribed pulpit of 1636 at left with above it an inscribed sounding board, probably contemporary, hung from an iron bracket.

Two steps up to the chancel. It is also marked by the rood screen, by Douglas, in late Gothic style, with seven openings, tracery in the heads of the openings and a decorative crest; it also carries a small calvary cross at the centre. Quarry and encaustic tiles. Choir stalls and prayer desk in style similar to the pews. Chancel celure, also by Douglas, of barrel form in six facets with traceried panels and carved ribs. Blocked priest's door at south with water stoup. One step up to sanctuary. Stone and timber reredos with Crucifixion beneath a canopy, 1890, designed by Douglas and carved by Griffiths of Chester.

The Royal Arms of George IV are displayed in a frame on the south wall. Good collection of mural monuments, including a Baroque memorial to Humphrey Kynaston of Bryngwyn [1695]; a draped marble to Thomas Evans of Llanbrogan [1826] by Carline, Shrewsbury; several military monuments and windows, to members of the Bonnor Morris family. Stained glass throughout, including the three Norman windows at the east: the top window shows Christ, at left King David, and at right St Germanus, bishop.

### Exterior

A long church consisting of a nave with south porch, north vestry and west spire, without any exterior distinction to mark the chancel. The walling is in local shaley stone, generally irregular, but in some places, probably where restored by Douglas, brought to courses. The early masonry around the priest's door shows traces of limewash. The stone of the vestry, by Penson, is thought to be dolerite from Criggion. There are two corner buttresses at the east end and two buttresses away from the corners at the west end. The two doorways and all the restored windows are in sandstone. The roof is in bright red tiles, in a striking contrast to the materials in local vernacular use. The spire is shingled, in two stages, with a weathervane and a narrow continuous belfry opening through which the timber framing is glimpsed.

The east wall retains three early Norman windows, the one above square headed and the two below round headed. The south door to the nave is round headed, with a simple quarter-round moulding and many marks from knife or arrow

sharpening. The priest's door is also round-headed, with a bold label mould. The remaining windows are of the C19 restorations: a small rose window with six round-headed lights at high level in the west wall, evidently by Penson, and a pair of round-headed windows and a round-headed door to the vestry, also by Penson. Five round-headed windows in the north side and two pairs and one triplet also roundheaded in the south side, probably by Douglas.