

Historic Wales Report

Dataset	Cadw Listed Buildings
Title	Church of St Michael and All Angels
Type	Listed Building
Dataset UID	7587
Community	Manafon

Location

The church stands centrally in the formerly oval churchyard, at the centre of the village. The churchyard, which was extended c.1926, has a lych-gate (q.v.) and a granite war memorial in the S corner.

Date Listed	3/10/1953
Last Amendment	2/4/1997
Grade	II*

History

Built in the C15, the vestry added and the church restored in 1859, and again extensively restored and refitted in 1898 by John Douglas of Chester with money provided by the Perrins-Williams family. The Revd Walter Davies 'Gwallter Mechain', the author and supporter of eisteddfodau, was rector here 1807-1837. Revd William 'Penfro' Morgan, the distinguished poet, held the incumbency in 1904-1918, and is buried E of the chancel, his headstone in the form of a Celtic cross, and the Revd R.S.Thomas, one of the greatest of living Welsh poets, was rector here from 1942 to 1954, a period influential in his work. A C18 sundial plate by R.B.Ryder of Welshpool, complete with its original gnomon, is set on a wooden base 10m S of the S wall.

Reason for Listing

Listed particularly for the surviving early fabric, including its fine medieval roof, for the quality restoration and fittings by an eminent late C19 architect in his own distinctive style, and for its association with three distinguished literary figures who held the living of Manafon.

History

Eisel J C, 'Church Bells of Montgomeryshire', *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, CXXXV, 1986, p 164;
Haslam R, Powys, *Buildings of Wales* series, 1979, pp 157-158;
Merchant W M, 'R.S.Thomas', *Writers of Wales* series, 1979;
Montgomeryshire Collections, XXXIII, 1904 p 16, for reredos.

Interior

Nave and chancel in one cell, the chancel raised by 2 steps. Fine C15 roof of eight and a half bays, consisting of arch-braced collar beam trusses, the centres dropped, and raking struts to the principles which carry two tiers of purlins each with cusped windbraces. The principal rafters are set on bracketed stub ties. The ceiling above is boarded over the rafters. Walls are unplastered, with late C19 oak carved cornice and splayed timber lintels over the wide splayed window reveals. Medieval stoup by S door. The W wall has been altered or rebuilt. A 3-bay arcade with pierced spandrels, probably of mid C19, crosses the W end and supports the belfry floor.

The tower has one bell, of the early C14, believed to be the earliest of the seven remaining medieval bells in the county, set in an early timber frame.

Fittings: C17 and C18 fielded panelling, perhaps from former box pews, reused as dado panelling in the chancel and across the west end. Richly carved reredos incorporating a carved board from the earlier reredos inscribed RP, VP 1608 commemorating the Pryce family of Glyncofen. Font, a simple C19 Bath stone tub with chevron frieze. Pulpit C19, with traceried sides and figures. C17 carved panels built into the reading desk fronts. Good quality oak pews by Douglas, with carved bands.

Glass: E window, a crucifixion by O'Connor, 1859, and in the S chancel, Our Lord and the Marys, 1898. In the vestry, C15 yellow-stain angels reset in the heads of the N and S lancets.

Monuments: A slate tablet on the E wall, to Rev Canon Edward Davies, rector, d.1793 set in a painted frame. On S wall, tablets to Robert Llewelyn Evans, d.1916 and brothers Joseph and William. Marble tablet in alabaster frame on the W wall commemorates the 1898 restoration.

Exterior

Uncoursed small rubble and tabular shale, the W end built on large boulder foundations, and the chancel rebuilt above 1.5m probably in the medieval period. Slate roof. The plan is a single cell, with a S porch, and vestry with store added on the N side, and a conspicuous weatherboarded belltower at the W end with a sprocketed pyramidal roof and wind vane. Plain chamfered S door within the porch. Two and 3-light C19 trefoil-headed windows of Grinshill stone, but a mid C15 3-light E window, and reset single light medieval windows in the vestry. Buttresses of Breidden dolerite and red sandstone ashlar dressings added in the C19 to the E gable end. A pencil drawing of the mid-C19 in the church shows a large 5-light dormer on the S side.