

LLANGARRON
PARISH CHURCH

GUIDE
to the
INTERIOR

2025



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Welcome to the only parish church in England dedicated to St. Deinst, a saint who is also remembered as Deiniol.

The family of St. Deinst, who were forced to flee their homeland on the Scottish borders by constant raids initiated by the Scots and Picts in the early 6th century, settled in Pembrokeshire. At an early age Deinst was sent to be educated at Llangarron where Dubricius, a well-known teacher of faith in the early Celtic Christian church, had established a monastic community, the first church being consecrated in 520CE. Dubricius was a grandson of an Archenfield king who had ruled from a base in the area. At this time religion was locally based; monastic, mystical, celebrating the sacredness of nature. Deinst was initiated into this philosophy and flourished. It is now thought that the church was founded by a British cleric but to honour Deinst it was then named after him. Having received his education Deinst was called to leave the area to live, preach and teach at Bangor. He died there in 572 and requested to be buried on Bardsey Island where Dubricius had also been laid to rest.

The feast day of St. Deinst is celebrated on 11th September.

MEMORIALS & FURNISHINGS

The oldest memorial by far is the understated stone effigy located to the right of the main door. It was once thought to be a 15th century tomb cover for a young child but current opinion, based upon the style of sculpture, is that it dates from the 5th or 6th century.

The window sill to the left of the altar was once a coffin lid. A tiny piece of yellow medieval stained glass survives in the 14th cen. window to the right of the altar. To the left of the main stained-glass window is an elaborate 17th century marble memorial dedicated to the Gwilym family of Langstone Court.

The red ring-bound folder to be found at the back of the church details all the memorials both within the church and those in the churchyard.

Before the oak box pews were removed in 1900 and replaced with pine there were 475 sittings for the congregation. A drawing showing how the nave once looked can be seen on the table between the 14th century font and the south wall. The pulpit dates from c.1630 and, like the communion rails, is made from oak. A pipe organ was installed during the early 20th century but later replaced by an electric version.

Over the west end of the nave hangs a painted board measuring 5ft. x 6ft. depicting the arms of King George 1 (reigned 1714-27). The residents of Llangarron were traditionally royalist and conservative in their outlook. Apparently, there was more difficulty eradicating Catholicism in this parish during the 16th & 17th centuries than anywhere else in the South Marches.

BELLS

A ring of six bells was cast in 1733, the sixth being replaced in 1751 after the original cracked. The bells were rehung in 1888 and overhauled in 1986. They carry the following inscriptions: -

Treble (5 cwt / 254Kg.) *Prosperity to this parish*

2. *Peace and good neighbourhood*

3. *We were all cast at Gloucester by A. Rudhal*

4. *Prosperity to the Church of England*

5. *James Ballard, Gent. John Tovey, Gent.*

Tenor (9 cwt / 472Kg.) *I to the church the living call & to the grave do summon all*

Quarter Peals of 1260 changes, taking c.45 minutes to complete, and Peals involving 5040 changes, taking c.2 hours 45 minutes, are rung for special occasions.

The long tradition of bell practice continues and is currently held on the first Monday evening of each month at 7pm.

CHURCH PLATE

Up until the late 20th century the silverware was kept at the church. However, all valuable items are now held at the treasury in Hereford Cathedral. These include a silver gilt flagon, the gift of Thomas Gwilym, 1683, and a silver gilt chalice, the gift of Ann Ballard, 1686.

The parish registers are held at Herefordshire Archives.

RESTORATIONS & RENEWALS

The building has undergone many transformations over the centuries. It began with the construction of an oak timbered church in c.520CE, which then required repair or rebuilding every time the Anglo-Saxon raids occurred during the 7th and 8th centuries. Records show that a reconsecration was held during the reign of Edward the Confessor (1042-66) and again at the time of William the Conqueror (1066-87). It was during the Norman period that the first stone church was built to provide security for documents and goods as well as an inspirational place for worship.

In 1291, the church building was valued at £13.6s.8d. (equivalent to 1,333 days of skilled trade work today). It was then rebuilt in the mid-14th century; the south porch being added in the 15th century and the Chancel arch rebuilt in the early 16th century. In the 17th century, Thomas Rawlins of Kilreague generously funded the building of the north aisle. In 1842, the aisle was enlarged at a cost of £390 (1,950 days of skilled trade work). At the end of the 19th century, funds were raised to renovate the whole interior. The church reopened in 1900 but there was no rest for the fundraising efforts of the villagers as a new vicarage was also needed. One of the few additions to the church was the installation of electric lighting in 1938.

In 1975 the north aisle was again in need of renovation, this time costing £2,500 (approx. £19K. today). Sectioned off in 2014 the space has become a community hub, providing space for groups to enjoy talks, art exhibitions, and craft markets. Coffee mornings are held on the first Saturday morning of each month.