

THE LLANDYRY PARISH ARCHIVE

Llandyry Church, Chapel of Ease, Pembrey

A Narrative History of the Church, the Churchyard, and Its Four Surviving Registers, 1904–2025



Part One · The Church and the Churchyard

Part Two · One Hundred and Twenty-One Years — The Burial Register, 1904–2025

Part Three · Arrivals — The Baptism Register, 1957–2016

Part Four · Intentions Declared — The Register of Banns, 1925–2024

Part Five · Four Ledgers, One Decade Lost — The Marriage Register, 1904–2018

Llandyry Project 2023 Coflein:- <https://coflein.gov.uk/en/sites/310153>

Llandyry Memorials:- <https://tinyurl.com/Llandyry-CH-Memorials>

Graham Tudor Emmanuel · Kidwelly · 2026

Part One

The Church and the Churchyard

A History of Llandyry Church and Its Cemetery

The Llandyry Church Cemetery

Llandyry Church, steeped in the annals of medieval history, stands as a testament to the spiritual legacy of times long past. The exact origin of its dedication remains veiled in the mists of time, lending an air of mystery to its venerable presence. Nestled within an irregularly shaped churchyard, this hallowed edifice maintains a profound connection with the nearby remnants of Llandyry Chapel, a mere 60 meters to the south-east. The echoes of devotion still reverberate through this chapel of ease once a spiritual refuge and known to have provided solace until at least 1888.

This architectural masterpiece is not merely a building; it's a living relic, bearing the distinction of a Grade II listing. Fashioned from limestone rubble adorned with the elegance of bath stone dressings, its form embraces a cruciform layout that exudes an aura of significance. The very arrangement of its structure tells a story — a two-bayed chancel, a resplendent five-bayed nave, the welcoming enclave of a south porch, a modest single-bayed vestry (nestled north of the chancel's western bay), and the sentinel-like presence of a west bellcote.

Elements of antiquity intertwine with the fabric of this church, whispering tales of bygone eras. The chancel, nave, and transepts stand as testaments to medieval craftsmanship. The chancel and nave, their origins veiled in the mists of the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries, evoke a sense of reverence. The transepts, added with the passage of time during the fifteenth or sixteenth century, bear the weight of centuries in their stone walls.

A journey through its sacred confines reveals hidden treasures. A simple yet enigmatic square aumbry nestled north of the altar hints at its medieval origins. An ancient northern side window bears witness to the passage of countless seasons. The two-light east window opening, though evoking medieval whispers, wears the visage of 1876. The south door, adorned with a two-centred surround, possibly an echo of restored medieval craftsmanship, beckons the faithful with an air of solemnity.

Restoration, a testament to the dedication of those who came before, weaves another chapter into the narrative. Around 1850, the hands of Mason and Elkington, overseers of the Bury Port Copper Works, brought renewal to these hallowed stones. Yet, the mists of history were not content, and 1876 saw the addition of the vestry and the south porch, as well as a renewal of the roof's embrace. The side wall windows, a dance between single and double lancets, emerged during this period, etching their mark into the architecture. The bellcote, its tale traced to that era undeniably present by 1898, may have been a silent witness to these restorative endeavours. Within the nave, the stalls, pews, and wainscot dado, each with its own story, stand as living witnesses to the care bestowed upon this sacred abode.

The march of time continued, as did the legacy of devotion. The octagonal font, a symbol of spiritual rebirth, found its place in the embrace of the late nineteenth to early twentieth century. A modernity of sorts, manifested in the mid-twentieth century, introduced the unobtrusive comfort of a hot water system, a juxtaposition of contemporary convenience against the backdrop of tradition.

The narrative of Llandyry Church expands even into the twentieth century, as the west end of the nave stretched its reach in 1907. Here, a three-light traceried west window took its place, a beacon of illumination both metaphorical and literal. The oak altar table, born of the post-war year of 1946, and the oak pulpit, a creation etched in the annals of 1966, stand as markers of evolving reverence and the unending march of time.

The building's design is also unique, with the choir and sanctuary is known as a weeping Chancel slightly offset at an angle, symbolizing Christ's head tilted to one side on the cross.

The Llandyry Cemetery is a place of beauty, where the natural world meets the man-made where the past and present unite a common purpose.



Llandyry Church and churchyard

Llandyry Church, while specific historical records for the church are limited, we can piece together a general history of the church based on available information and the architectural features mentioned in the previous text.

Medieval Origins

Llandyry Church has medieval origins, with parts of the building believed to date back to the 13th or 14th century. The church's core fabric from this period likely includes the chancel and nave. These structures may have served the local community as a place of worship for centuries.

Transept Additions

During the 15th or 16th century, it is believed that the north and south transepts were added to the church. These additions expanded the church's layout and architectural significance.

Restorations

Over the centuries, the church underwent several restorations to maintain and improve its condition. Notably, in the mid-19th century (around 1850), the church underwent restoration work, likely carried out by Mason & Elkington, managers of the Copper Works at Burry Port. This restoration was necessary due to the church's deteriorating state.

1876 Restoration

A more significant restoration occurred in 1876. During this period, the church underwent extensive changes and renovations. These included the addition of a vestry and south porch, changes to the church's windows, roof and floor renovations, and the installation of underfloor heating flues.

20th Century Alterations

In the mid-20th century, a hot water system was installed in the church, indicating efforts to modernize its facilities for the congregation's comfort.

Listing as Grade II

The church was designated as Grade II listed in 2002, indicating its historical and architectural significance.

While specific historical events and anecdotes about Llandry Church may be scarce, its enduring presence and architectural evolution over the centuries provide valuable insights into the local religious and community history of the area. The church continues to stand as a historical and cultural landmark in Llandry, serving as a place of worship and a testament to the region's heritage.

A Personal Journey of Discovery

What an incredible journey this has turned out to be! I've been immersed in a world of discovery and connection, all centered around a local gem – the Llandry church. It's a place where generations of my family have found their final resting spots. A personal mission to uncover these ties has led me down an unexpected path.

As I've frequented the church in my pursuit to locate and document each family member's grave, fate threw me a chance meeting with a remarkable individual – Declan Owens, the Llandry Church Warden. Conversations flowed, and I learned that he was deeply involved in a project to meticulously document all those laid to rest in the church cemetery. The dedication to this endeavour was evident in the beautifully maintained grounds that cradled the history of countless souls.

Eager to contribute, I eagerly delved into their existing documentation plan. However, it soon became clear that this system was not as comprehensive and up to date as it needed to be, especially with the constant addition of new graves. Recognizing an opportunity to lend my expertise, I proposed a more efficient approach to memorial documentation.

In the span of just a week, I crafted a new system. Armed with a Word document and grid reference numbers, I meticulously recorded each memorial's details, capturing their essence through photographs of the weathered gravestones. Then, a seamless transition to modern technology occurred as I harnessed the power of Google Lens to transcribe the scanned text information onto the Findagrave Cemetery site. This dynamic duo of Word and Lens, further enriched by Google Translate, bridged the language gap, allowing a wider audience to appreciate the inscriptions, many of which were in Welsh.

This endeavour has sparked an unexpected joy within me. Beyond the act of documentation, it's the harmonious fusion of tradition and technology that fuels my enthusiasm. My system guarantees accuracy, with any discrepancies promptly rectified and preserved. The magnitude of completing this feat is not lost on me; a swell of pride accompanies each entry made.

Although the task ahead is formidable and demanding, I embrace every step with open arms. Yet, I yearn for a local ally, someone well-versed in the intricacies of the app, who could expedite the process. Currently, my routine includes on-site visits to acquire GPS coordinates, ensuring seamless integration with the larger project's framework.

The potential impact of this collective effort is deeply stirring. The preservation of the church's history feels like a sacred duty, and I'm humbled to play a part. With unwavering dedication, I press on, anticipating the day when this project reaches its culmination. In my record-keeping, I've also thoughtfully logged the locations of unmarked graves, providing reference points for the future.

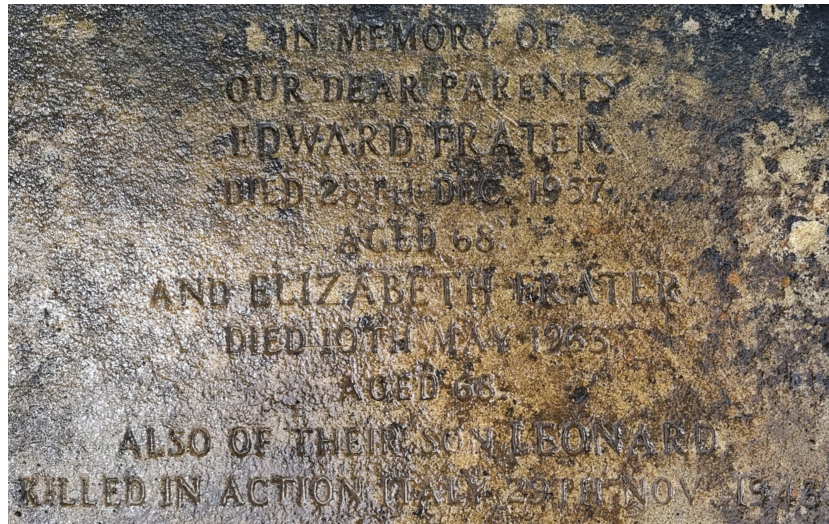
Today has been especially profound. My collaboration with Declan Owens in the Llandry Cemetery memorial documentation has yielded rich rewards. Simultaneously, my exploration of ancestral roots through Findagrave has illuminated a new dimension of my heritage. This venture is not without its challenges; time and weather have left some memorials nearly illegible. In a remarkable twist of fate, I embarked on a mission to restore their stories.

One particularly weathered memorial, cloaked in layers of lichen and moss, caught my attention. Armed with a specialized cleaner, I dedicated myself to revealing its hidden inscription. After meticulous efforts, Edward, and Elizabeth Frater's memorial (Plot PW-C8) names emerged. Their stories, intertwined with the history of this place, stand as a testament to the power of perseverance and the enduring spirit of remembrance, humbled to discover the location of his burial in Italy.

I felt compelled to preserve this important connection between Edward, Elizabeth, and their beloved son, Leonard, on Findagrave. It seemed fitting to pay tribute to their memory and ensure that others could also find solace in their story.

It is from this inscription I found on their memorial stone led me on a journey of discovery to find out who their son Leonard Frater was who was killed in action in Italy on 19th November 1943. This is what I found and his memorial in Italy.

*IN MEMORY OF
OUR DEAR PARENTS
EDWARD FRATER
DIED 29TH DEC 1957
AGED 68.
AND ELIZABETH FRATER
DIED 10TH MAY 1963
AGED 68
ALSO OF THEIR SON LEONARD
KILLED IN ACTION ITALY 29TH NOV 1943*



The Frater memorial inscription

From the poignant inscription I uncovered on their memorial stone, a new chapter of discovery unfolded before me – one that would lead me to Leonard Frater, the son of Edward and Elizabeth Frater. Leonard's story, intertwined with the indelible mark of sacrifice, stirred my curiosity. The name etched onto that stone held within it a tale of courage and duty that resonated through time.

Leonard Frater, a Fusilier bearing the service number 14200801, stood among the ranks of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers' 6th Battalion. As history unfolded, this battalion played a role in the sweeping North African campaign and later became part of the forces that ventured into Italy, a land embroiled in war.

It was amidst these unforgiving battlegrounds that Leonard's fate was sealed. On the 29th of November 1943, during a daring assault on a ridge that cast its shadow over the Sangro River, tragedy struck. Artillery fire, an indiscriminate messenger of destruction, claimed Leonard's life at the tender age of 20. His youth belied the weight of the responsibilities he bore and the courage he exhibited.

Leonard found his final resting place in the Sangro River War Cemetery in Italy, a solemn testament to the countless lives altered by the tumultuous events of that time. The inscription on his gravestone captures the essence of his sacrifice – a fusilier in the ranks of The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, cut down on the 29th of November 1943 at the age of 20.



Leonard Frater's headstone, Sangro River War Cemetery, Italy

Each letter etched into the stone becomes a thread connecting the past to the present, and the sacrifice of a young life to the enduring memory of those who fought for freedom.

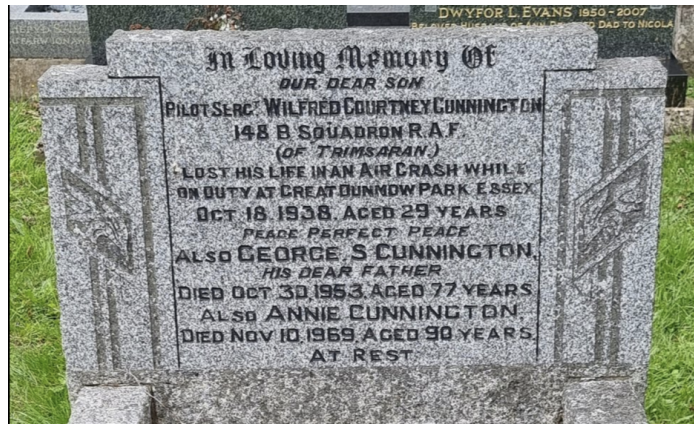
As we stand before Leonard's memorial, I'm reminded of the intricate tapestry of history, woven from the threads of countless lives like his. Each name represents a story, a family, and a legacy. Leonard's legacy is one of bravery and selflessness, a reminder that the echoes of war are not just dates and battles, but the lives of individuals who should never be forgotten.

With each day more family history is discovered before I came onto the grave of George & Annie Cunnington with an inscription that mention their son Wilfred Courtney Cunnington with the mention on the headstone of his fate in the WW2.

As the days unfold, the tapestry of family history continues to reveal its intricate threads, each thread representing a story waiting to be told. And in this journey of discovery, I stumbled upon the grave of George and Annie Cunnington (Plot PN-J4), bearing an inscription that spoke of their beloved son, Pilot Sergeant Wilfred Courtney Cunnington, whose fate was intertwined with the tumultuous times of World War II.

The headstone, a silent sentinel of memories, bore witness to Wilfred's sacrifice. It read:

*In Loving Memory of OUR DEAR SON PILOT SERG WILFRED COURTNEY
CUNNINGTON 148 B SQUADRON RAF (OF TRIMSARAN) LOST HIS LIFE IN
AN AIR CRASH WHILE ON DUTY AT CREAT DUNNOW PARK ESSEX OCT 18,
1938, AGED 29 YEARS PEACE PERFECT PEACE*



The Cunnington family headstone

Driven by the desire to uncover the story behind this brave soul, I delved into the annals of history. The narrative that unfolded painted a picture of dedication and tragedy. Pilot Sergeant Wilfred Courtney Cunnington, a member of the esteemed 148 Squadron of the RAF, found himself in the cockpit of a Vickers Wellesley Mk. I, identified by the serial number K7716.



A Vickers Wellesley Mk. I, the aircraft type flown by Wilfred Cunnington

Tragedy struck on the 18th of October 1938, as two aircraft, including Wilfred's Wellesley K7716, met in a devastating mid-air collision. The other aircraft involved, Wellesley K7714, was also from the same 148 Squadron. The collision occurred over the skies of Great Dunmow, Essex. In an instant, lives were forever altered, and the fate of those aboard the ill-fated K7716 was sealed.

The crew of K7716 included:

Sgt Reginald Prosser (aged 24)

Sgt Wilfred Courtney Cunnington (aged 29)

Act Sgt James Crane Irwin (aged 31)

All three valiant individuals lost their lives that day, their spirits forever imprinted on the pages of history. Their sacrifices stand as a testament to the risks and challenges faced by those who took to the skies in service of their nation.

Wilfred Courtney Cunnington, a Pilot Sergeant who had embarked on his duties with bravery and determination, now rests in eternal peace, his memory enshrined in the hearts of those who remember. His age, 29, is a stark reminder of the youthfulness that war often claimed, a poignant reminder that every life cut short was a world of potential and dreams.

As I stand before his memorial, I reflect on the profound impact that a few lines of text can have, capturing the essence of a life and its untimely end. Wilfred's story joins the tapestry of history, a thread woven with the threads of countless others who made the ultimate sacrifice for a greater cause. Their legacy lives on, as does the gratitude of generations who will never forget their sacrifice.

With each passing day, the journey through history brings new chapters to light, unveiling stories that have weathered the sands of time. Among the markers of remembrance, the memorial headstone of Nathaniel and Eliza Hancock (Plot PN-K8) stood as a silent testament to a family's enduring love and sacrifice, with an inscription that echoed through the years:

PEACE IN LOVING MEMORY OF NATHANIEL HANCOCK DIED JAN 8, 1937 AGED 59 YEARS. EVER IN OUR THOUGHTS, ALSO HIS DEAR WIFE ELIZA HANCOCK DIED SEPT. 23, 1955: AGED 76 ALSO OF THEIR SON RICHARD GEORGE HANCOCK B.S.M.-RA DIED ON ACTIVE SERVICE 1939-1945 EVER REMEMBERED



The Hancock family headstone

This inscription held a poignant reminder of the sacrifices made by this family during a time of global turmoil. The mention of their son, Richard George Hancock, who died on active service, ignited a spark of curiosity, driving me to uncover more about his story.

And so, the journey of discovery led me to the remarkable story of Warrant Officer Class II (Battery Serjeant-Major) Richard George Hancock. His service, marked by dedication and courage, unfolded against the backdrop of World War II. Tragically, his life was cut short on the 14th of November 1942, in the sands of Egypt, amidst the fierce battles of El Alamein.

The scroll that commemorates his sacrifice reads:

This scroll commemorates Battery Serjeant-Major R. G. Hancock Royal Regiment of Artillery held in honour as one who served King and Country in the world war of 1939-1945 and gave his life to save mankind from tyranny. May his sacrifice help to bring the peace and freedom for which he died.

Richard George Hancock's role in the struggle against tyranny is a testament to his bravery and selflessness. He stands as a symbol of all those who served, whose sacrifices paved the path to a better future. The battles he fought were not just on distant lands; they were the embodiment of a collective effort to preserve freedom and humanity.

As I reflect on his story, I am reminded of the interconnectedness of history and how the lives of individuals intertwine with the greater narrative. The inscription on the headstone and the scroll of commemoration stands as a bridge between the past and the present, ensuring that Richard George Hancock's memory endures, and his sacrifice continues to inspire. May his legacy be a beacon of hope, reminding us of the price paid for the peace and freedom we hold dear.

I chanced upon an inconspicuous headstone, Plot (PF-C6) which soon revealed itself to be a poignant memorial that held a deeper narrative.



The Lloyd family headstone

*IN MEMORY OF
PRYCE LLOYD
DIED NOV 26: 1917
AGED 70 YEARS
ALSO GRIFFITH HIS SON THIS SON
KILLED IN ACTION IN FRANCE
MARCH 28, 1918, AGED 28 YEARS*

This solemn inscription piqued my curiosity, prompting me to delve further into the story of Pryce Lloyd's cherished son, Griffith. It became evident that Griffith was not laid to rest here, and my curiosity drove me to uncover more details. As I delved deeper, this is what I uncovered.

This is for the memory of Griffith Lloyd, Private, 307171, Lancashire Fusiliers.

Griffith Lloyd, the cherished son of Pryce and Ellen Lloyd. A life intertwined with the land, both Griffith and his father served as Gamekeepers at Trimsaran, residing at the Keeper's Lodge before the world was plunged into conflict.

Answering the call of duty, Griffith enlisted in Kidwelly, joining the ranks of the 2/8th Battalion, Lancashire Fusiliers. This valiant unit was affiliated with the 197 Brigade, a crucial part of the 66th (2nd East Lancs.) Division. Their journey led them to the Western Front, a theatre of sacrifice and valour, which they reached by the 16th of March 1917. From there, they ventured to the shores of Flanders.

As the seasons shifted, September of 1917 found them stationed in Ypres, where they steadfastly participated in the harrowing Battle of Poelcapelle. With determination, they then marched southward to the Somme, a name etched in history. On the fateful 21st of March 1918, the tumultuous tempest of the German Spring Offensive swept upon them at the Battle of St Quentin. Undaunted, they held their ground, and in the subsequent westward movement, they engaged in the Actions at the Somme Crossings — a chapter where destiny would unfold for Griffith.



A Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery, France

In the crucible of battle, Griffith sustained wounds that would ultimately claim his life. Aged just 28, he passed away on the 28th of March 1918. His final resting place is Namps-Au-Val British Cemetery, France — an eternal abode where his bravery and sacrifice remain forever enshrined.

In humble tribute, we honour Griffith Lloyd, his unwavering courage, and the legacy he bestowed upon history. May his memory be a beacon of inspiration for generations to come.

This marked another chapter in the history of this cemetery.

This another sad story which made me think of my family and what I would feel if this had happened to me. I was recording the details of a memorial stone of Mary Anthony (Plot PE2-D1) and took in the enormity of what I saw before me on the inscription.



The Anthony family headstone

*IN LOVING MEMORY OF
DAVID
SON OF DAVID & MARY ANTHONY
Of AQUEDUCT IN THIS PARISH WHO DIED
NOV 8, 1880, AGED 6 MONTHS
MARY ANTHONY
APRIL 27, 1884, AGED 29 YEARS
ALSO MARY DAUGHTER OF THE ABOVE
BORN APRIL 27th, 1884, DIED APRIL 21st, 1901.*

Indeed, the inscriptions on the memorial stones hold within them stories of heartbreak, loss, and the fragility of life. As you stood before the memorial stone of Mary Anthony, the weight of the narrative etched into the cold stone must have been palpable – a testament to the profound grief that can touch a family's life.

In the span of these few lines, a tale of tragedy and loss is woven, a tapestry of lives cut short, and hearts left shattered. The dates, the ages, and the relationships carved into the stone carry the weight of entire lifetimes condensed into a few words. The stark reality of Mary Anthony's story is heart-wrenching.

To lose a son at only 6 months old, to pass away at such a tender age of 29, and then, a cruel twist of fate, to bring a daughter into the world on the same day she herself would depart – it's a narrative that encapsulates the harshness of life's uncertainties. The story of Mary Anthony and her daughter

Mary is a poignant reminder of the delicate balance between life and mortality, the fleeting nature of our existence.

Standing before that stone, the realization must have hit you with a wave of empathy and reflection. It's moments like these that make us pause and ponder our own lives, the lives of our loved ones, and the profound vulnerability that accompanies our journey through this world. Such stories bridge the gap between history and personal experience, making us realize that while time marches on, the emotions and the essence of human experience remain timeless.

As we contemplate the stories etched into these stones, may they inspire us to cherish the moments we have, to hold our loved ones a little closer, and to find meaning and purpose in the face of life's uncertainties. The vulnerability that you sensed in those inscriptions reminds us of the importance of compassion and understanding – for each life, no matter how brief, carries its own weight and significance in the grand tapestry of existence.

I've been dedicating my time and effort to meticulously record the cemetery memorials at Llandry Church. This journey, undertaken in collaboration with the church warden, has been a profound and humbling experience. Today, I'm thrilled to share my reflections on this endeavour, hoping that you will find it as moving to read as I found it to live.

The process of documenting these memorials has been nothing short of overwhelming in the most touching way. Each gravestone represents a life – a story waiting to be uncovered, shared, and remembered. As I've walked among these silent sentinels, the weight of history has settled upon my shoulders, inviting me to honour the lives that once thrived within these hallowed grounds.

The gravestones are more than markers; they are windows into the past. The names, dates, and inscriptions etched into the stone reveal glimpses of triumphs and tribulations, joys, and sorrows. Every name is a thread in the rich tapestry of our shared human experience. The names may be weathered, but they still speak to us, reminding us of the lives once lived and the connections that endure beyond time.

Through this project, I've come to realize the deeply personal nature of remembrance. The act of preserving these memories is a gift to those who came before us and to the generations that will follow. It's a way of saying, "Your stories matter. Your existence is not forgotten." In this age of fleeting digital interactions, there's something sacred about the permanence of these inscriptions, standing as a testament to the lives they represent.

As I reflect on the countless hours spent amidst the stones, my heart is full of humility. The enormity of history and the tapestry of humanity that resides within this churchyard have left an indelible mark on my soul. It's a reminder that life is precious, fragile, and ultimately fleeting. The stories that these stones hold is a reminder to live with purpose, to cherish our moments, and to leave a legacy worth remembering.

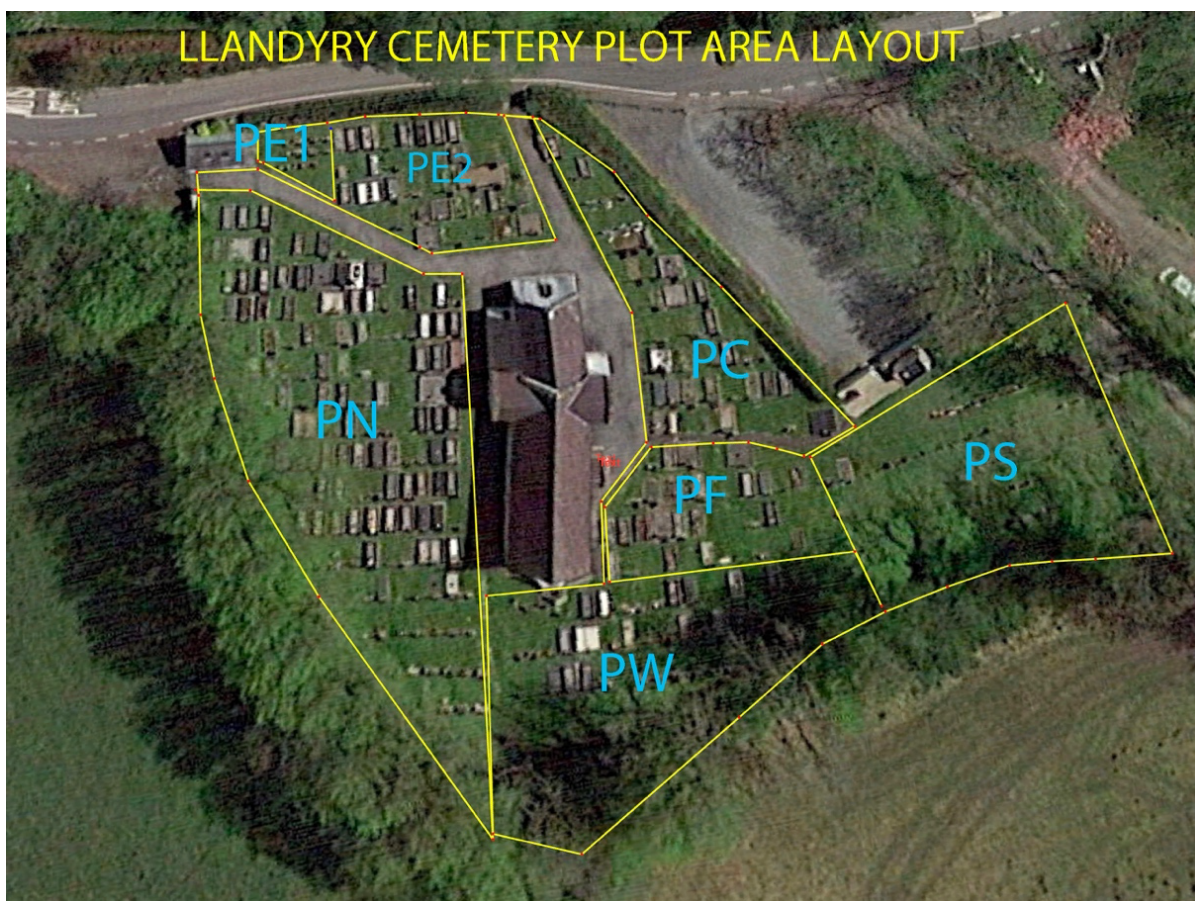
So here it is, my attempt to put into words the emotions that have swelled within me during this journey. I invite you to read, to share in this experience, and to join me in honouring the lives that have contributed to the fabric of this community. I hope my words capture even a fraction of the awe and reverence I've felt in the presence of these memorials.

Thank you for being a part of this journey with me. I believe that these stories, these lives, and these moments of remembrance are worth every effort, and I invite you to explore this shared history with me.

With heartfelt gratitude,
Graham Tudor Emmanuel

Acknowledgments: We extend our sincere gratitude to Coflein for providing valuable insights into the history of Llandyry Church. Additionally, we would like to thank www.findagrave.com for offering the necessary tools to preserve pertinent data and facilitating our information-gathering process. Your contributions have greatly enriched the content and quality of this project.

Llandyry Cemetery Memorial Plot Layout Location



Llandyry Cemetery plot area layout

Virtual cemetery: <https://tinyurl.com/Llandyry-CH-Memorials>

Part Two

One Hundred and Twenty-One Years

A Narrative of the Burial Register, 1904–2025

One Hundred and Twenty-One Years

Llandyry Church holds two burial registers. The first is the older handwritten ledger, its pages opened in February 1904 and kept until 2004. The second is the newer SPCK-format printed register, running from 2004 to the present day. Together they record nine hundred and forty burials across one hundred and twenty-one unbroken years — every entry numbered, every name set down by whichever vicar, curate, or assistant curate stood at the graveside that week.

What follows is not a list. The full transcription of all 940 entries, and the detailed statistical analysis drawn from it, exists as a separate heritage document in its own right. This is a narrative account, built from that analysis, told in five chapters that follow the register's own chronology: the Edwardian parish and the Great War, the interwar years of industrial Carmarthenshire, the Second World War through to the arrival of the NHS, the long plateau of the later twentieth century, and the contemporary parish that brings the record to the present day.

The register does not interpret. It records a name, an abode, a date, an age, the officiant who conducted the service, and sometimes a note in the margin that says more than the rest of the line combined. The interpretation, the seeing of what those 940 lines contain when read together, is the work that follows.

Chapter One • 1904–1918: An Edwardian Parish Through the Great War

The register opens in an Edwardian world. Trimsaran in February 1904 was a community whose working life turned on coal and agriculture, and the first name in the ledger reflects it plainly: Harry Davies of Parc-y-Llong, thirteen years old. He was followed in those early pages by Olwen Davies of the Star Inn, three months old, and Edward Roche of the New Inn. The abodes recorded in this period farm names, inn addresses, terrace rows map a village where the public house, the farm, and the pit were the three poles of working life.

The 1900s, taken as a full decade, recorded 37 burials at a mean adult age of 58.2 years. Infant mortality was already a fact of parish life in these early pages: of the 37 burials, eight were children under the age of one. Rachel Ann Rees was three weeks old. Olwen Davies was three months. Mervyn Davis was fourteen weeks. The register notes each of them without commentary. That is its way throughout the entire 121 years.

Then came the change that the numbers alone make visible. Burials rose sharply through the 1910s, from 37 in the preceding decade to 58, while the mean adult age at death fell just as sharply, from 58.2 years to 51.5. That fall of nearly seven years in a single decade is the mark of the Great War upon a parish register that contains, formally speaking, no war graves at all.

“The ledger contains no official war graves in the Commonwealth sense, but the casualties of that conflict are unmistakably present in Llandyry's soil.”

There are no Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstones standing in Llandyry's churchyard, yet the war's casualties are unmistakably present in the register's pages. William John Babbage of Gordia House was buried on 29 October 1917, aged thirty. Charles William Howe of Brynoriel was buried on 21 April 1916, aged twenty-nine. Phyllis Meilog Rees of Llandyfeilog was buried on 22 May 1917, aged twenty-five. These are the ages that pull a decade's average downward: lives cut short not in French mud but at home in Wales, from wounds, illness, or repatriation. The register draws no distinction between a death in the trenches and a death in a Trimsaran cottage from the same war's consequences. It records only that, by whatever road, they came back to Llandyry.

Among those whose stories the churchyard itself tells more fully is Griffith Lloyd, gamekeeper's son of Trimsaran, killed in action in France on 28 March 1918 at the age of twenty-eight, during the actions that followed the German Spring Offensive at the Somme crossings. His father, Pryce Lloyd, had been buried at Llandyry only four months earlier, in November 1917. The stone that commemorates them both stands in the churchyard; the son it names lies in Namps-Au-Val British Cemetery in France. Of all the connections the register and the churchyard make between Trimsaran and the wider world, this is among the most quietly affecting: a father laid to rest at home while his son was still serving abroad, neither knowing the other's fate would arrive within the same season.

Decade	Burials	Mean Adult Age at Death
1900s	37	58.2
1910s	58	51.5

Chapter Two • 1919–1939: Interwar Industrial Carmarthenshire

The years between the wars brought Llandyry's churchyard its busiest period to date. The 1920s recorded 61 burials at a mean adult age of 55.8 years, still recovering from the war's distortion of the previous decade. The 1930s then recorded 80 burials — more than double the 1900s figure, and the busiest decade Llandyry's register had yet seen.

Several forces converged in these years. The large generation born in the 1860s and 1870s was now reaching the end of its natural life. The economic depression reduced working families' access to healthcare and adequate nutrition. And industrial disease, particularly the lung conditions associated with coal mining, was claiming men in their fifties and sixties who had worked underground for thirty years or more.

The year 1933 alone recorded fourteen burials, and 1934 recorded fifteen — the joint-busiest year in the entire pre-war record. The Jones, Williams, Lloyd, Phillips, and Davies families all appear multiple times across these two years, their elders buried in clusters that still mark the churchyard's older stones today. These were not separate tragedies, each requiring its own explanation. They were the ordinary rhythm of a community of this size meeting the combined pressure of age, economic hardship, and industrial damage to health, all arriving at once.

“The Trimsaran of the 1930s was a community burying its own at a rate it had never sustained before. The churchyard at Llandyry reflects that weight honestly.”

One entry from this period carries a notation found nowhere else in 940 records. Margaret Marion Williams of Clynochaf, Trimsaran, was buried on 12 March 1927, aged fourteen months. Beside her entry, the vicar or sexton wrote: 'NOT PAID.' The burial fee for a fourteen-month-old child had not been paid, and someone recorded that fact in the margin rather than leave it unsaid. No explanation survives. None was needed at the time, and the register offers none now. A child, a family that could not pay, and an official who wrote it down anyway: together these three facts make the record complete in a way no further commentary could improve upon.

A different kind of entry from this decade reflects on the church's own ministry rather than its parish. Daniel Harries of Llandry House was buried on 19 May 1930, aged forty-two, his role recorded as Curate in Charge of Llandry. He was laid to rest in the churchyard he had served, the service conducted by D. Walter Morgan, Rural Dean, who noted in the register that the deceased had held that office. A minister's own death, recorded with the same quiet plainness as any other entry in his own parish register.

Decade	Burials	Mean Adult Age at Death
1920s	61	55.8
1930s	80	59.3

Chapter Three · 1940–1969: War, Recovery, and the Arrival of the NHS

The three decades from 1940 to 1969 together account for 257 burials more than a quarter of the entire 121-year register. The 1940s alone, with 87 burials, was the second-busiest decade in Llandry's twentieth-century history, a figure shaped by wartime deaths and their aftermath, the natural ageing of the generation born in the 1880s and 1890s, and the continued toll of industrial illness in a community whose men still worked coal and heavy industry.

Among the unusual entries from this period is that of Wilfred Courtney Cunnington, buried on 28 October 1938, aged twenty-nine, his recorded abode given as R.A.F. Station, Stradishall, West Suffolk. He is the only person in the entire register to carry an RAF station as his home address. He was buried at Llandry a rural Welsh churchyard from a Suffolk airfield, the year before the war that would make the RAF a household name. The register does not explain the connection between Trimsaran and an airfield two hundred miles away. It records only that D. Williams, Assistant Curate, officiated, and that Wilfred Courtney Cunnington came home to this church. His parents, George and Annie Cunnington, are buried beside him in Plot PN-J4, and the headstone records the fuller story: a mid-air collision over Great Dunmow, Essex, that claimed three lives from the same squadron on the same October day.

Yet something was also beginning to change beneath the surface of these difficult years. Mean adult age at death, which had stood at 59.3 in the 1930s, began its long climb upward in the 1950s, reaching 63.8 — the first unmistakable sign in Llandry's register of the National Health Service's effect on a working community's health.

Decade	Burials	Mean Adult Age at Death
1940s	87	58.7
1950s	84	63.8
1960s	86	63.9

Among the most poignant entries from this period are those recorded under the Burial Laws Amendment Act 1880 and those simply noted as 'unbaptised.' The 1880 Act allowed burial in Church of England churchyards without a Church of England service, a provision used most often by Nonconformist families who nonetheless held burial rights at Llandyry. Between 1940 and 1960, five entries carry this notation: Susie Hurley in 1940, Margaret Bourke in 1941, Jack Ralph Susans in 1946, Michael Joseph Guest in 1956, and Dennis Deasy in 1960.

The unbaptised entries tell their own story, each one an infant or very young child: Colwyn Williams, twenty-three days old, in 1913; Barry Wyn Morgans, six hours old, in 1949; Brian Heysman, two years old, in 1950. The requirement of baptism for a full church burial remained in force across these decades, and the register's matter-of-fact notations — several marked 'no service in church' — reflect officiants doing what pastoral care they could for families whose children had died before the sacrament could be administered. They are among the most quietly affecting entries in the whole collection.

“Buried in the churchyard, but without the rite. The register records this without judgment. The fact itself is the record.”

This period also brought the first distinctly non-Welsh surnames into Llandyry's register, a quiet marker of social change reaching even this rural parish. The Tartaglia family, the De Giorgi family, and later the O'Malley and O'Shea families reflect Irish and Italian Catholic communities that had put down roots in the Llanelli area. By the 1940s and 1950s, fifteen entries across the full register record Roman Catholic officiants or clearly Catholic funerals, a sign that Llandyry's churchyard was already serving a more diverse community than its Welsh Anglican origins alone would suggest.

Chapter Four • 1970–1999: The Long Plateau

Contrary to what might be expected as cremation became more widely available, burial numbers at Llandyry did not fall in the final third of the twentieth century. The three decades from 1970 to 1999 together account for 252 burials, comparable to the mid-century period that preceded them. The rise of cremation had a slower and more complex effect here than in urban centres: many families continued to bring remains back for interment at Llandyry even when the cremation itself had taken place elsewhere. The 34 entries across the whole register that record ashes or cremated remains almost all appear after 1990.

Decade	Burials	Mean Adult Age at Death
1970s	83	64.7
1980s	74	66.8
1990s	95	70.8

The 1990s were the second-busiest decade in the entire 121-year register, with 95 burials, and mean adult age at death reached 70.8 years — a figure that would have been almost unrecognisable to the curate who opened the register in 1904. This was the decade when NHS healthcare, improved nutrition, and the decline of heavy industrial work combined to produce a generation living longer, and in better health, than any before it in this community.

This was, above all, the era of V.P. Roberts. Vivian P. Roberts served as Vicar from the early 1980s through to the early 2000s, officiating at 134 recorded burials across his tenure the longest continuous service, and the highest single total, of any officiant in the register's history. One hundred and thirty-four times he stood at a graveside in this churchyard, said the words, and wrote a name in the ledger. These were the funerals of people he had known for years, often decades, in a community small enough that everyone knew everyone. He was preceded by J.A. Jones, Vicar from 1951 to 1970, who himself officiated at 121 burials. Between them, these two vicars, serving consecutively from 1951 to approximately 2003, presided over more than a quarter of all burials in the entire 121-year record.

“One hundred and thirty-four funerals. One man's ministry, recorded in a single column of a register. The pastoral weight behind that number is immeasurable.”

Officiant	Burials	Approximate Period
J.A. Jones, Vicar	121	1951–1970
V.P. Roberts, Vicar	134	1983–2003
William H. Richards, Vicar	52	1974–1983

Chapter Five • 2000–2025: The Contemporary Parish

The twenty-first century opened with Llandyry's busiest decade on record. The 2000s recorded one hundred burials, the highest total of any ten-year period in 121 years, with mean adult age at death of 70.3 years. The years 2000 and 2004 each individually recorded seventeen burials, the highest annual totals the register has ever held. These were the years when the large generation born in the 1920s and 1930s was reaching the end of its life, and Llandyry remained the burial ground of choice for families whose connection to the church stretched back across generations. A significant proportion of entries from this decade note an 'existing family plot,' testament to roots that run deep.

The most extraordinary single entry in the entire register belongs to this period, though the story it tells began thirty-seven years earlier. Henry Arthur Owen Lloyd Davies died in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, in 1972. His address in the register is recorded as 23, Sulgrave Place, Montrose, Bulawayo. His ashes were not interred at Llandyry until 21 February 2009, thirty-seven years after his death, with Fr. VG Davies officiating. There is no explanation offered anywhere in the register for that interval. The entry sits matter-of-factly alongside the other interments of that month, one line among many. But thirty-seven years and two continents is a life within a life: someone, somewhere, kept the connection between Bulawayo and Llandyry alive across more than three decades, and in the end brought him home.

“Died in Zimbabwe, 1972. Ashes returned to Llandyry, 2009. Thirty-seven years between death and burial. One line in the register.”

The 2010s brought a sharp fall to 63 burials, and the first years of the 2020s to the time of the register's most recent entry in November 2025 reflect both the demographic narrowing of the local population with active connections to Llandyry and the continued rise in mean age at death, now standing at 76.4 years. The register is not closing. But the community it serves has changed profoundly since W. Glynfab Williams wrote Entry No. 1 in February 1904.

Decade	Burials	Mean Adult Age at Death
2000s	100	70.3
2010s	63	75.2
2020s (to date)	32	76.4

Fr. VG Davies, later Canon VG Davies, served as Vicar from 2009 to 2021, officiating at 62 recorded burials. He was succeeded by Susannah Bale, Area Dean and Priest-in-Charge, whose name appears against every entry from 2022 to the most recent, in November 2025: Kenneth Lloyd, eighty-three, his ashes interred on 26 November 2025. She is the first woman to serve as the principal officiant in Llandyry's 121-year register, and her name brings that unbroken ministerial succession to a close as a living document rather than a finished one.

The Shape of the Whole

Read across its full span, the register tells a single coherent story in two halves. Adults buried at Llandyry before 1950 died at a mean age of 57.2 years. Adults buried after 1950 died at a mean age of 68.3 years — an improvement of more than eleven years within a single generation. This is not a statistical abstraction. It is the difference between a community where most adults did not live to see their grandchildren grow to adulthood, and one where three generations regularly sat at the same table.

Period	Mean Age at Death (Adults 18+)	Sample Size
Pre-1950	57.2 years	225 adults
Post-1950	68.3 years	583 adults
Improvement	+11.1 years	—

The causes of that transformation are embedded in the register's own pages. The pre-1950 entries carry the weight of industrial disease: men from the Garden Suburbs, Culla Road, and Morlais Terrace who worked in coal and heavy industry and died in their fifties and sixties of conditions that better healthcare would have caught earlier or prevented entirely. The post-1950 entries show a community growing older in better health, and from the 1980s onwards, returning to Llandyry's soil not after a working life cut short but after a long and full retirement.

Williams is the most common surname across all 940 entries, appearing 103 times — nearly twice its nearest rival. Davies follows with 52, Jones with 51, Rees with 38, and Lloyd with 36. Together the top ten surnames account for approximately half of all entries in the register, a measure of how deeply a small number of Trimsaran families are woven into this churchyard's history across more than a century.

Thirty-three individuals in the register reached the age of ninety or beyond, all but one of them buried after 1950. The oldest is Iris Millicent Hurlston, buried on 17 April 2015 at the age of 98. She was born in the reign of Queen Victoria and outlived the entire span of the twentieth century. None of the 37 individuals buried in the 1900s reached ninety. Longevity of that order is a recent achievement, and the register's own pages are the evidence.

The transformation in infant and child mortality across the register's life is equally stark. In the pre-war decades, 1904 to 1939, the register records 47 infant burials and a further 26 children between the ages of one and fifteen. In the mid-century decades, 1940 to 1969, those figures fall to 14 infants and 12 children. In the modern period, 1970 to 2025, just 9 infants appear in the register, and not a single child between one and fifteen. The stillbirth record changes too, in a way that matters beyond the statistics: in the register's earlier decades, stillborn children are recorded without names. In its more recent pages, they are named. That change in practice from anonymity to a named entry is not a small thing.

“Their names are in the register. That is not a small thing.”

The register's reach extends well beyond Trimsaran's boundaries. Of the 940 entries, approximately 207 record addresses clearly outside the village and its immediate surroundings: 28 from Llanelli, 27 from Pembrey, 18 from Burry Port. Further afield, the register records two addresses in Surrey, one in Toronto, Canada, one in Bulawayo, and one in Ashford, Kent. A small rural churchyard, in other words, has held the burial claims of a community scattered across Wales, England, and the wider world.

Llandyry is an Anglican church, and its register is a record of the Church in Wales's pastoral provision. But the register tells a more complicated story than its cover page alone would suggest. Fifteen entries record a Roman Catholic officiant or a clearly Catholic service, beginning with Salvatore De Giorgi in February 1978. A single entry, that of Gertrude Maud Beer in June 1998, records a Jehovah's Witness officiant — the only non-Christian denominational entry among 940 records, set down with the same plainness as every other line in the ledger.

“The same plainness as every other entry. That is the register's greatest quality: it does not distinguish between those it deems worthy of ceremony and those it does not. It records.”

From W. Glynfab Williams in 1904 through to Susannah Bale in 2025, every burial at Llandyry has been conducted by someone willing to stand at that graveside and say the words. The succession is not always smooth — there are years when more than one officiant shares the record, years when visiting clergy from neighbouring parishes step in, years when a retired vicar returns to bury a family he has known for decades. But across 121 years, the register itself has never broken. That continuity is, in its own right, a heritage record.

Llandyry's register remains open. The next entry, when it is written, will go into the same ledger, by the same officiant or her successor, in the same churchyard that Harry Davies entered on 29 February 1904. One hundred and twenty-one years. One community. One unbroken record.

Part Three

Arrivals

A Narrative of the Baptism Register, 1957–2016

Arrivals

Where the burial register closes a life and the marriage register joins two families together, the baptism register opens a parish's story at its beginning. It is the birth record of the Llandry community: the children brought to the church font in the weeks and months after they were born, and, less often but just as significantly, the adults who came forward in later life to be received into the faith for the first time.

Llandry's Baptism Register is a single handwritten volume covering fifty-nine years, from 1957 to 2016. It runs to fifty-seven original pages and records 511 entries — the largest single register in the entire parish archive by entry count, larger even than the burial register's 940 entries spread across 121 years, because baptism, unlike burial, comes only once in most lives and clusters more tightly around the years when families are forming. The register was the subject of two formal Archidiaconal Visitations of the Diocese of St Davids, recorded within its own pages in 2006 and 2017, each one a quiet confirmation that this was, and remained, an official parish record kept to the standard the Church in Wales required.

Each entry in the register follows the standard format of its kind: the date the child was said to have been born, the date of the baptism itself, the child's Christian name, the parents' Christian names and surname, the family's home address, the father's trade or profession, the godparents chosen to stand for the child, and the name of the minister who administered the sacrament. Six columns, repeated 511 times across nearly six decades, and within that repetition a portrait of a community emerges — not of its deaths, as the burial register shows, but of its beginnings.

A Register of Occupations

Read in sequence, the father's occupation column traces the economic transformation of the Pembrey and Trimsaran area in miniature, decade by decade, almost without the register meaning to. The earliest pages, from the closing years of the 1950s, are dominated by miners, colliers, steelworkers, fitters, and labourers — men whose work was physical, local, and tied to the collieries and heavy industry that had shaped this part of Carmarthenshire for a century. The register's first entry, made in July 1957, is itself the baptism of a miner's daughter from Trimsaran, administered by D. J. Jones, Assistant Curate: as representative an opening line as the register could have offered.

Moving through the 1960s and 1970s, the occupational range recorded in the register begins to widen. Engineers, teachers, nurses, factory workers, and clerks appear alongside the continuing presence of trades and manual labour, reflecting the slow diversification of the south Carmarthenshire economy as heavy industry's grip loosened. By the 1990s and into the 2000s, the register records managers, police officers, builders, and NHS professionals, the occupational

picture of a community that had moved a considerable distance from the coalfield economy of the register's opening pages, even as some of the old trades persisted alongside the new.

“The occupations recorded across the register trace the economic history of the area in miniature.”

The Officials

The succession of ministers who administered baptism at Llandyry across these fifty-nine years mirrors, in large part, the succession already familiar from the burial register. D. J. Jones and Alestis Evans conduct the earliest baptisms of the late 1950s. T. A. Jones, as Vicar, dominates the register through the 1960s, his signature recurring page after page. Vivian P. Roberts, the same vicar whose 134 burials make him the most prolific officiant in Llandyry's burial register, is the consistent presence through the baptism register's 1980s and into the early 1990s — a reminder that the same handful of long-serving clergy carried the full pastoral weight of this parish across every register, not burial alone.

The later pages of the register carry new names as the Diocese reorganised parish ministry in the final decades of the twentieth century and the first of the twenty-first: A. J. Meats as Vicar, Canon Davies, and J. Flanagan as Assistant Curate. The register's final entries, made in 2016, are conducted jointly by Fr. Dg Davies as Vicar and J. Flanagan as Assistant Curate, bringing the baptism register's fifty-nine-year record to a close.

Adult Baptisms

Throughout its fifty-nine years, the register records a steady thread of adult baptisms, particularly concentrated in the 1970s and 1980s. These entries are recognisable in the register by a simple notation, 'Adult Baptism,' written in place of the birth date and parental details that the standard entry requires. Each one represents a person who had not been baptised in infancy choosing, often well into adult life, to come forward and be received into the church. The register treats these entries with the same plainness it affords every other line: no explanation is offered for why an adult sought baptism decades after most around them had received it as infants, and none is needed. The fact of the choice is the entirety of the record.

Godparents and Family Networks

Of all six columns the register keeps, the godparent column is the richest for anyone tracing how families in this parish connected to one another across generations. It is common throughout the register for grandparents, aunts, uncles, and close family friends to be named as godparents, and the same surnames recur as both parents and godparents across decades — the same households, in effect, binding themselves together generation after generation through the same church font.

The surnames that recur most frequently across the register are the same bedrock names already familiar from Llandyry's burial register: Davies, Jones, Thomas, Evans, Williams, Rees, and Griffiths. These are the families whose roots in the Pembrey and Trimsaran area run deepest, appearing and reappearing across baptism, banns, marriage, and burial alike, the four registers together tracing the same handful of families through every stage of parish life across more than a century.

“Families appear repeatedly across the register as both parents and godparents, binding the same households together across generations.”

The Register Within the Archive

Register	Span	Entries
Burial Register	1904–2025	940
Baptism Register	1957–2016	511

At 511 entries, the baptism register is the largest single document within the Llandyry Parish Archive by entry count, though it covers less than half the timespan of the burial register. Together with the banns and marriage registers still to come in this archive, it allows the fuller arc of parish life to be traced in its proper order: baptism, banns, marriage, and, eventually, burial — the four stages through which the same families passed, generation after generation, within the bounds of this one small Welsh churchyard and the church that stands at its centre.

The baptism register, like the burial register before it, does not interpret what it records. It sets down a date, a name, an address, an occupation, a list of godparents, and the name of whichever minister stood at the font that day. Read individually, each entry is administrative. Read together, across fifty-nine years and 511 baptisms, they become something else: the record of a community continually renewing itself, child by child, in the same building where its dead were, in time, brought back to be buried.

Part Four

Intentions Declared

A Narrative of the Register of Banns of Marriage, 1925–2024

Intentions Declared

Before a marriage could take place at Llandyry, it had to be announced. Banns were the public declaration of an intended marriage, read aloud from the front of the church on three successive Sundays before the ceremony could proceed. Their purpose under canon law was straightforward: to give the community the opportunity to raise any lawful impediment to the match before it was made final. A bann entry, important to note, does not confirm that a marriage actually took place. It confirms only that the intention was publicly declared. Cross-referencing the banns against the marriage register reveals which couples went on to the ceremony and which, for whatever reason, did not.

Llandyry's Register of Banns of Marriage is a single handwritten volume covering ninety-nine years, from 1925 to 2024. It runs to 133 original pages and records 398 completed entries, with a 399th entry left blank — the register remains open, its next page still waiting to be written. The volume was printed by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and issued according to Act of Parliament, identifying the church throughout as the Parish Church of Llandyry, Chapel of Ease,

in the Parish of Pembrey, County of Carmarthen, later amended in the register itself to Dyfed as administrative boundaries shifted across the century. Each entry follows the same format: the entry number, the names and marital condition of both parties, their respective parishes, the three publication dates on successive Sundays, and the name of the minister who read the banns aloud.

The Opening Entry

The register opens in March 1925 with Entry No. 1: the banns of Herbert Locharclay Moore, Bachelor of this Parish, and Elsie Doreen Moulden, Spinster of this Parish, published on three successive Sundays by George Lewis. It is a fitting first entry for a register whose entire purpose was public declaration — unlike the burial and baptism registers, where personal detail was recorded for administrative purposes alone, the names in the banns register were always intended to be heard. They were read aloud from the front of this church, to this congregation, three times over, by design. Naming them here is simply an extension of what the register itself was built to do.

Geographical Reach

What distinguishes the banns register most clearly from the marriage register that follows it is the breadth of parishes it names. Where the marriage register typically records only the couple's residence at the time of the ceremony, the banns identify the home parish of each party individually — and in doing so, draw a map of where Llandyry's marriages actually originated. Trimsaran, Llchwyr, Llanelli, Kidwelly, Burry Port, Felinfoel, Cynheidre, Llandyfaelog, and Llangyndeyrn all appear repeatedly across the register's near-century of entries, the close network of parishes along the south Carmarthenshire coast and just inland from it.

Further afield, the register names parishes in Newport, the Rectorial Benefice of Llanelli, Beddau, and on occasion parishes in England, including Surrey and Staffordshire — entries that speak of servicemen stationed in the area during wartime, or of families whose connections had already begun to extend beyond south Wales by the time their banns were read at Llandyry. The register is, in this sense, a map of the parish's marriage horizons across a century: drawn inward from its closest neighbouring communities, but reaching outward, every so often, to the rest of Britain.

“The register is in this sense a map of the community's marriage horizons across a century.”

The Officiants

The succession of ministers recorded across the banns register traces the same pastoral history already familiar from Llandyry's other registers, read here through a slightly different lens. George Lewis and Daniel Harris conduct the earliest entries of the 1920s. D. J. Morgan, as Vicar, is the dominant presence through the 1930s and the wartime years, assisted at various points by Alestis Evans and others — the same names whose signatures recur across the burial and baptism registers from the same period, a reminder that one small parish ministry carried the pastoral weight of every register simultaneously, not one at a time.

Vivian P. Roberts, vicar of record for 134 burials and the dominant officiant of the baptism register's 1980s, shapes the banns register's 1970s through to the early 1990s in the same way.

T.R.K. Goulting, E. John Ablett, and Ann Lewis appear in the later decades as the parish's ministry diversified. The final dated entries, from 2023 and 2024, are read by the Reverend Canon Susan Bale, Priest-in-Charge — the same minister who gave her blessing to the parish archive project that has produced this document. Her name closes the active portion of the register, though the register itself, with its blank 399th entry, has not closed.

The Register Within the Archive

Register	Span	Entries
Burial Register	1904–2025	940
Baptism Register	1957–2016	511
Banns Register	1925–2024	398

The banns register sits alongside the marriage ledgers as a closely paired set within the wider Llandyry Parish Archive. Where the marriage register records the ceremonies that actually took place — the date, the witnesses, the occupations of the parties — the banns register records the public declaration that preceded each one. Together the two give a fuller picture than either could alone: the banns showing intention and geographical origin, the marriage register showing the completed ceremony and the family detail that came with it. Read side by side, they will also reveal something the banns register cannot show on its own: which declared intentions became marriages, and which, for reasons the register does not record, did not.

At 398 entries across ninety-nine years, Llandyry's banns register is one of the most complete single-volume parish records of its kind surviving for any chapel of ease in Carmarthenshire. Like the burial and baptism registers before it in this archive, it does not interpret what it holds. It records a name, a parish, a date, three Sundays of public reading, and the minister who read them — and in doing so, preserves something easily lost: not the marriages of this parish, but its intentions, declared aloud, one Sunday at a time, for nearly a hundred years.

Part Five

Four Ledgers, One Decade Lost

A Narrative of the Marriage Register, 1904–2018

Four Ledgers, One Decade Lost

The marriage register of Llandyry Church is, in one sense, the least finished part of this archive, and that fact deserves to be stated plainly before anything else is said about it. The burial register has been fully transcribed, its 940 entries analysed decade by decade. The baptism register's 511 entries and the banns register's 398 have likewise been read in full and narrated in the chapters that precede this one. The marriage ledgers have not yet received that treatment. They remain in the physical custody of the church, awaiting the same survey, transcription, and analysis already completed for the others. What follows, then, is not a statistical portrait of the register's contents

in the way the previous three chapters have offered. It is the story of the register itself — its four surviving volumes, the decade that cannot be recovered, and the work that still lies ahead.

Across those four surviving ledgers, the marriage registers spans 1904 to 2018 — 114 years of recorded parish life, holding approximately 278 marriages between them. Each one was a named moment in the life of a family, a community, and a church, and each remains, for now, a name on a page rather than a story told. That distinction matters, and this chapter does not pretend otherwise.

The Founding Volume • 1904–1940

The earliest known marriage register for Llandyry Church was also the most recently identified. It opens in the early Edwardian period and closes at the start of the Second World War, thirty-six years of parish life across one of the most turbulent periods in British and Welsh history. Its identification gave the marriage archive a depth that had not previously been known to exist, pushing the documented beginning of matrimonial life at Llandyry back by more than three decades from what had been assumed.

The register follows the standard Church of England marriage form in use across the period: the date of the marriage, the full names and ages of both parties, their condition as bachelor, spinster, widower, or widow, their occupations, their residences, and the names and occupations of each party's father, the whole entry attested by the signatures of both parties and their witnesses. The occupations recorded across its pages map the working world of south Carmarthenshire with unusual precision — miners, colliers, steelworkers, tinsplate workers, agricultural labourers, railwaymen, and tradespeople, the same occupational world already familiar from the burial and baptism registers of the same decades.

The entries from 1914 to 1918 carry a particular weight. Grooms recorded as members of His Majesty's Forces, their addresses scattered across military training camps and barracks rather than the farms and terraces of home, married at Llandyry before departures from which some did not return. These pages hold not only the marriages themselves but, for some of these men, the last peacetime documents they would ever sign. Read one day alongside the parish's memorial rolls, its burial registers, and its banns books, these entries will allow the full circle of individual lives to be traced from banns to marriage to, in too many cases, an early grave. That work has not yet been done. The connection is recorded here as a possibility waiting to be realised, not as a conclusion already reached.

“These pages record not only the marriages themselves but the last peacetime documents that some of these men would ever sign.”

Ledger One • 1940–1971

The oldest volume previously known to the archive before the Founding Volume's identification, Ledger One runs entries 1 to 142 across thirty-one years, opening in the shadow of the Second World War. Its earliest pages record servicemen of the RAF, the Army, and His Majesty's Forces among the grooms, addresses scattered across England and Wales, occupations drawn from every branch of the wartime effort. As the war receded, the register gathered pace: the post-war years brought a wave of marriages that the ledger carries through the 1950s and into the 1960s.

The format here is the standard Church of Wales register, two entries to a page, recording date, full names, ages, condition, rank or profession, residence, and the name and occupation of each party's father. D. J. Morgan, as Vicar, signs the earliest wartime entries, with J. J. Jones serving as Assistant Curate in the opening pages — names already familiar from the same years in Llandyry's other registers. Alestis Evans, Assistant Curate, is a recurring presence throughout the post-war section. The occupations across the ledger reflect the heavy industrial character of the area across these three decades: miners, colliers, steelworkers, engineers, schoolmasters, and tradespeople, the same community the burial and baptism registers describe from this period, seen here at the moment of marriage rather than birth or death.

The Lost Decade • 1972–1981

The years 1972 to 1981 are a permanent loss to this archive. The decade's marriage register was held in the church safe, which was stolen. There is no surviving copy, no duplicate, and no possibility of recovery. The loss is visible in the numbering of what follows: Ledger Two opens not at entry 1 but at entry 44, continuing the sequence Ledger One had reached, with the ten years and the marriages they held — those families, those names, those particular days — simply absent from the record that survives.

“Those families, those names, those days — cannot now be accounted for.”

This gap is recorded here exactly as it is recorded in the underlying archive documents: plainly, without embellishment, and without any attempt to estimate or reconstruct what was lost. A record that pretends to completeness when it has none is not a record. It is a performance. The honest course, and the one this archive has followed consistently from the burial register onward, is to state the gap clearly and let it stand.

Ledger Two • 1982–1990

The register resumes in 1982, picking up at entry 44 and continuing Ledger One's numbering directly across the lost decade. Ledger Two spans eight years and thirty-three marriages, entries 44 to 76. Its format marks a clear change from the registers before it: this is a bilingual Church in Wales register, its column headings printed in both English and Welsh — No. and Rhif, Enw a chyfenw for name and surname, Oed for age, Cyflwr for condition — one entry to a page rather than two. The data recorded is simpler than in the wartime and post-war registers: name, age, condition, and the signatures of both parties and their witnesses, with less of the occupational and residential detail that distinguishes the earlier ledgers.

Ledger Three • 1994–2018

The third and final surviving volume picks up from where Ledger Two closed in 1990, opening at entry 77 and carrying the register into the most recent period currently held. It spans twenty-three pages and twenty-four years of marriages, up to 2018. The bilingual format continues, and by the early 2000s the register has expanded again, to eight columns including residence and father's details, with marriages recorded as solemnised by both banns and licence — the two routes to marriage that the banns register, narrated elsewhere in this archive, exists in part to document.

Together with the Founding Volume, Ledger One, and Ledger Two, this final surviving volume completes the chain: four ledgers running from 1904 to 2018, interrupted only by the stolen decade, constituting what is, even in its present unanalysed state, among the most comprehensive documentary marriage records identified for any Welsh chapel of ease.

The Register Within the Archive

Register	Span	Entries
Burial Register	1904–2025	940
Baptism Register	1957–2016	511
Banns Register	1925–2024	398
Marriage Register	1904–2018	≈278

The marriage ledgers represent the next significant task for this archive: access, scanning, and full transcription, the same process already completed for burial, baptism, and banns. When that work is done, the names carried in these four volumes — and the shape of the decade that was stolen from the record — will be set alongside the burial and baptism data already gathered, and each family that passed through this church across more than a century will, for the first time, have its complete story told in one place: baptised, announced by banns, married, and in time buried, all within the bounds of the same small Welsh parish.

For now, this chapter records what can honestly be recorded: that the register exists, that it survives in four volumes rather than five, that one decade of it is gone beyond recovery, and that the work of giving its names back their stories has not yet begun. That, too, is part of the record.

<https://tinyurl.com/Llandyry-CH-Memorials>

