



DETAILS OF OUR CHURCH

Please take a leaflet to help guide you around the church

St. Brides is the smallest of the four villages located within the Peninsula, the others being Marloes, Dale and St. Ishmaels. It is named after Saint Brigid (Bridget), the saintly nun who founded many communities in Ireland, the best known of which was at Kildare. She is thought to have come to Pembrokeshire with Saint David and may have established a nunnery at St. Brides, the remains of which can be seen on both sides of the drive to the castle. Possibly however, these remains could be of the old St. Brides Hill, the mansion and home of Lord Kensington, which preceded the castle.

St. Brides Church is dedicated to St. Bridget but there was an earlier chapel and cemetery standing closer to the sea; these having now been eroded away. It is not known exactly when the present church was built but there is an early reference to 'Ecclesia de Sanct Brigida' (the Church of Saint Bridget) being assessed in the year 1291 in the sum of £13-6-8 for tenths to the King:- the sum payable being £1-6-8. In addition, a List of Rectors dates back to 1377, so it is probable that the present building was built in the 13th or even the 12th century.

Today you approach the Church through the well-kept churchyard to the south porch, generous in its proportions, with stone seats on either side. As you enter the Church under the pointed arch, you will see the font on your left; the bowl is square with chamfered corners of the 'cushion style' and is set on a circular shaft and octagonal base. Most churches have their fonts located by the entrance of the Church as a sign that through Holy Baptism we enter the Church, or the Christian Family.

The structure of the Church consists of a nave with a fine timbered roof, chancel and north transept chapel. On the north side of the chancel are traces of a chambered recess, now blocked. On the south side is a blocked priest's door and in the south-west angle a restored low-sided window. There is an early English lancet window in the south wall and beneath it, a plain piscina - a perforated stone basin for carrying away water used to rinse the chalice.

The chancel arch is sharply pointed. On the north of the arch is the doorway to the rood stairs. The outside south wall shows traces of an arch, which may have led to a small transept or chapel. The north transept chapel opens from the nave through a pointed arch. On the floor are the remains of three slabs, much obliterated. One bears a florinated cross and all have mutilated heads, one being of an ecclesiastic. There are also some fragments of the rood screen to be seen.

The east window in the chapel is a single lancet and was given by the parishioners of St. Brides and Marloes in memory of Grace Lady Kensington. The remaining three windows are in memory of members of the Philipps-Laugharne family of Orlandon, St. Brides.

The Church has benefited greatly from its connection with the family of Lord Kensington. The altar screen was given by his family in memory of the 4th Baron and the stained glass windows in the chancel and nave were given in memory of the 4th and 5th Barons. In 1863 a very full restoration of the Church took place during which time a room at St. Brides Hill, the home of Lord Kensington, was licensed for divine services pending the completion of the rebuilding.

The last Rector of St. Brides with Marloes was the Reverend D.D.R. Williams, who retired in 1977 and is now buried in the churchyard. Since 1977 the parish has been combined with that of Dale.