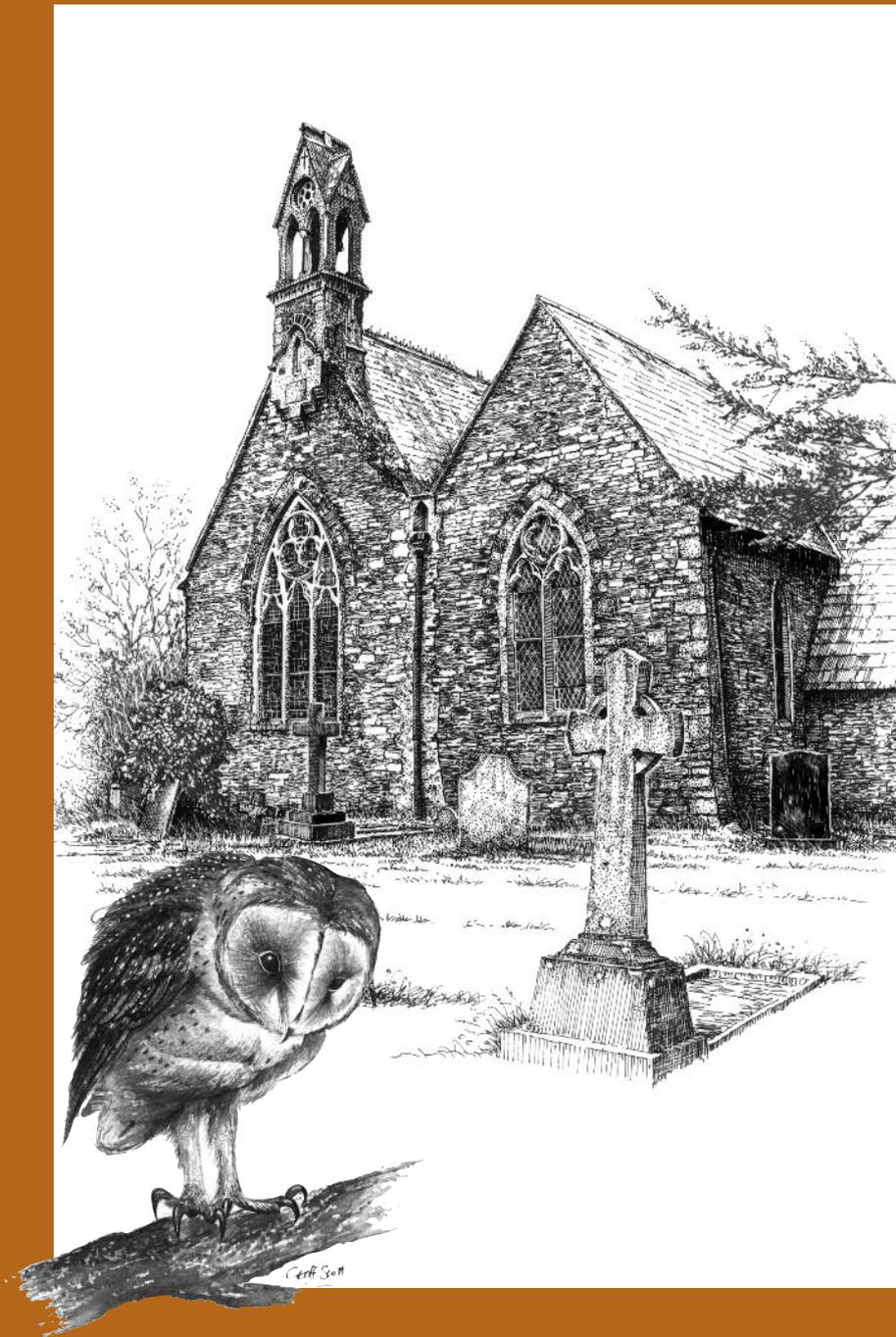


LAMPETER VELFREY



*Naws am Le
Sense of Place*

Origins

Before the Norman invasion, Wales was divided into administrative areas called commotes. One of these was Efelffre (anglicised as Velfrey). It covered what are now the parishes of Lampeter Velfrey, Llanddewi Velfrey and Crinow. No-one knows for certain what the name means.

Early Christians would establish a *llan* or enclosure; in it would be a church and graveyard, with a dwelling for a priest and land to support him. This is the origin of Lampeter: in Welsh Llanbedr, the *llan* dedicated to St. Peter.

Early History

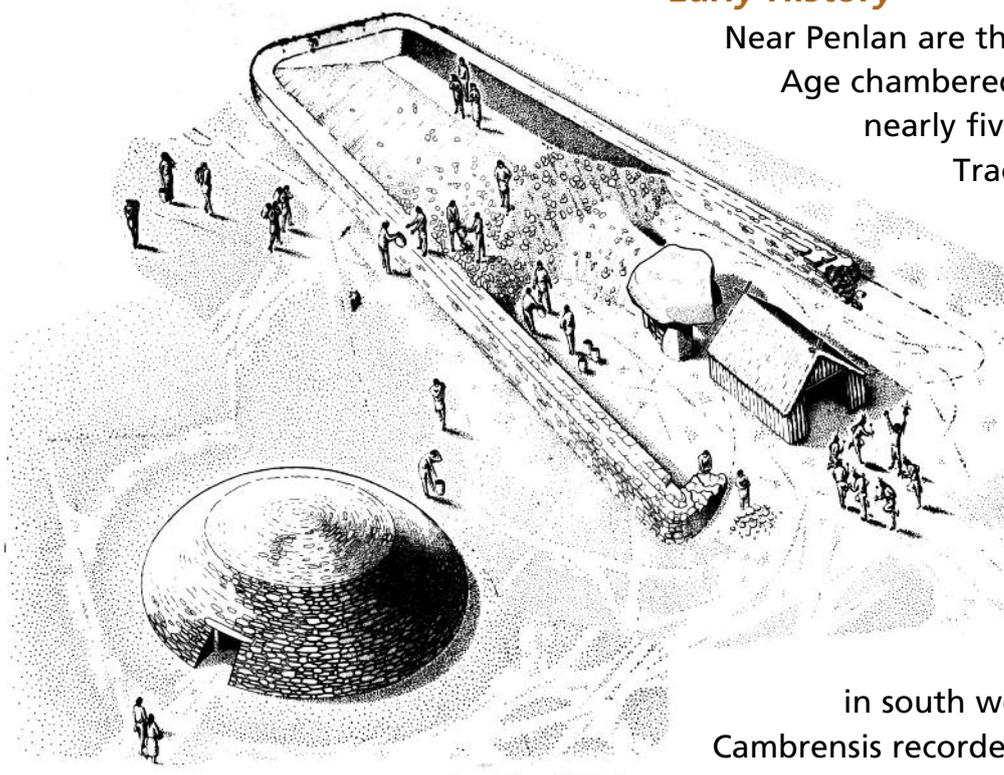
Near Penlan are the remains of three Stone Age chambered tombs, erected perhaps nearly five thousand years ago.

Traces of prehistoric cooking hearths have been found by the stream above Marlais View, near Coedy-Ffynnon and towards Princes Gate. The whole parish is dotted with Bronze Age barrows and standing stones.

Henry II granted Efelffre to Rhys ap Gruffydd, the leading Welsh magnate

in south west Wales, in 1171. Giraldus

Cambrensis recorded that by 1186 his uncles, Hywel and Walter, whose beautiful mother, Nest, was the sister of Rhys ap Gruffydd, had



Neolithic chambered tomb

received Lampeter and Efelffre. Perhaps one of them had the ringwork thrown up to the north of the church, and a timber fort built on top.

Efelffre became a reeveship under the Lord of Narberth. His tenants here attended his Welsh-speaking court. The Lord had 60 acres of demesne land (and another motte) at Llangwathen, which fell to the Crown in 1330 when the then Lord, Roger Mortimer, Earl of March, was hanged at Tyburn. The Crown took over the appointment of the priest at Lampeter; Edward III presented the first whose name we know, Rees ap Henry, in 1350. Later evidence tells of Crown lands at Gilfach, where a field is still known as King's Park. Manorial courts met at Gilfach in the 1630's.

By the 17th century, if not long before, the pattern of farm holdings had largely been established. The main landowner then was Lewis John of Penlan. In 1670 his was the largest house in the parish, with nine fireplaces - only one fewer than Picton Castle. He served as High Sheriff of Pembrokeshire in 1676. When he died in 1696, his estate was divided among his children. They took Lewis as their surname. The eldest son, Sir William, a soap manufacturer in Bristol, erected the memorial to his parents in Lampeter Velfrey church.

The Houses

Lampeter House (Upper End Town) was once the home of the Philipps family. A daughter of Edward Philipps (Rector 1779-93) married into the Slebech estate and was the mother of Baroness de Rutzen, Lady of the Manor of Narberth. His son Thomas, a failed banker, emigrated to South Africa and in 1820 helped to found a settlement he called Lampeter, now New Bristol.

Lower End Town, the farm at the other end of the village, replaced two vanished houses, Plas yr Hen Fagwr close to Coed-y-Ffynnon and Plas Nant y Dref towards the Marlais. Nant y Dref, town stream, flows past Hill Home to the Norton. It is well known to geologists for its fossils.

The Rectory was the second largest house in the parish in 1670. Rector Edward Philipps seems to have largely rebuilt it in the 1770's, and Richard Lewis transformed it again in 1852.

Manchester House used to be the village shop until 1989. James Davies was a draper and grocer here at the end of the nineteenth century. His son-in-law, Joseph Walter Lewis, made suits to measure and sold a wide range of goods.

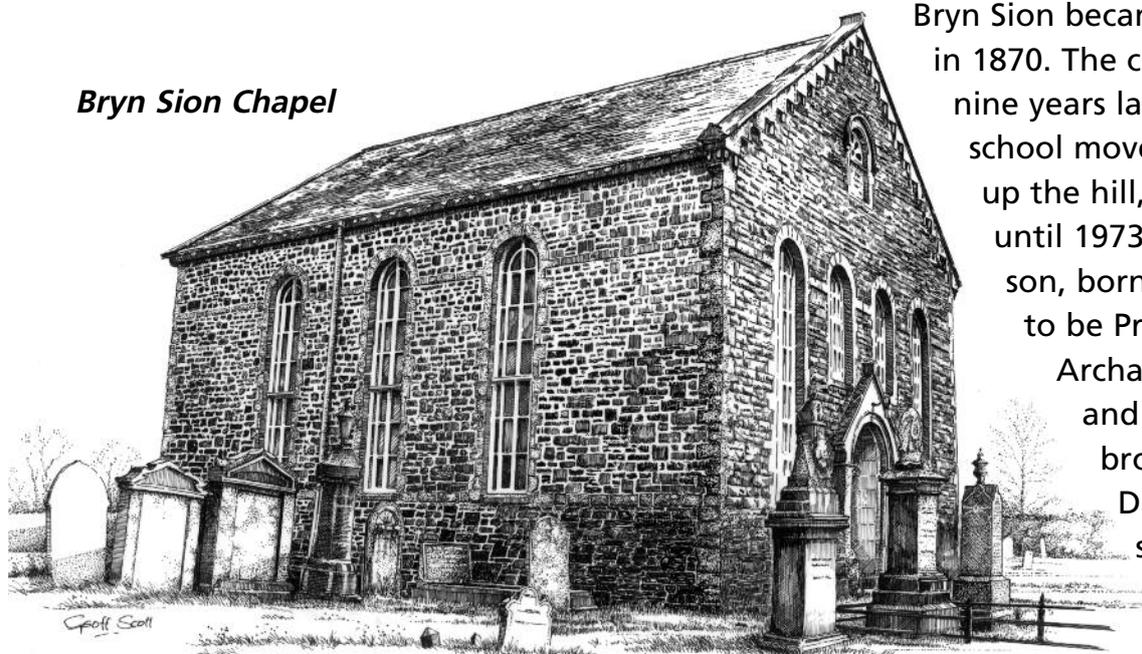
Opposite the church gates is a playground, established in 1976. It replaces Church Cottage, which housed the Rector's coachman or gardener. Phil Davidson, whose family lived here and who lost a leg in the Great War, unveiled the parish war memorial opposite in 1921. Immediately east of the cottage was an archway with a stone trough and tap, fed by a spring on the glebe. The field behind is still called the cricket field; the village once sported its own team. The village has supported many other organisations. The Mothers Union, founded before 1897, is the oldest branch in the diocese.

Schools and the Chapel

The former Church school in the village street is on the site of a cottage that Lewis John had bequeathed in 1696 as an almshouse. It served until Narberth Workhouse was erected at Allensbank in 1838. Churchgoers stabled their horses here, and the school met upstairs. Rector Richard Lewis had it rebuilt in its present form (apart from the kitchen) in 1854. The local Congregationalists promptly built their own school (now the vestry) and a chapel at Bryn Sion. Lewis, later Bishop of Llandaff, is said to have refused to pass the chapel when going to his brother's house at Henllan, Llanddewi, preferring to use the short cut behind what is now the Old Manse. This is still called Bishop's Lane.

Bryn Sion became the Board School in 1870. The chapel was rebuilt nine years later, and in 1895 the school moved to new premises up the hill, where it continued until 1973. One head teacher's son, born here in 1914, rose to be Professor of Archaeology at Cambridge and a popular broadcaster - Dr. Glyn Daniel. The Church school closed in 1905.

Bryn Sion Chapel



Village Inns

A pub known as the Bush was opened at Canoldre (Middle Town) in 1851. In 1876 it moved to the shop next door, and continued until just before the Second World War; the name survives as Bushlands.

The village had pubs before: the Three Tuns (a 'tun' was a large cask), in a cottage at the top of the street, and the Horse and Jockey later called the Lime Kiln Inn, in Baldwin House.

The Parish Church

Rector Richard Lewis was responsible for a major restoration of the parish church in 1860-62, which provided new roofs, windows and furnishings. Most of the walls and the arches inside, as well as the font, are medieval. The bell was cast in 1639.

The church was thoroughly restored and beautified in 1998.

Corn Mills

Towards Whitland, the Afon Cwm was diverted into a leat west of Derry Cottage to fill a millpond at White House Mill, where corn was ground. Upstream at Melinau it was impounded to power mills - hence Melinau - for Treffgarne and Rhyddgoed farms. The main corn mill, however, was driven by a leat from the Gwyddno near its meeting with the Marlais. White Mill dates back at least to 1532. It belonged to the Lord's demesne at Llangwathen. The water turned an overshot wheel ten feet across, driving two pairs of stones. The Gwyddno used to run along the road from near Lawn Cottage to meet the Marlais at a dangerous ford, crossed only by a rickety footbridge.

The raised roadway and bridge were opened in 1956.

Lime Quarries and Kilns

George Owen recorded in 1603 that limestone had been 'anciently digged' in Lampeter Velfrey. Two massive limekilns stand on either side of Sarel. There used to be another,

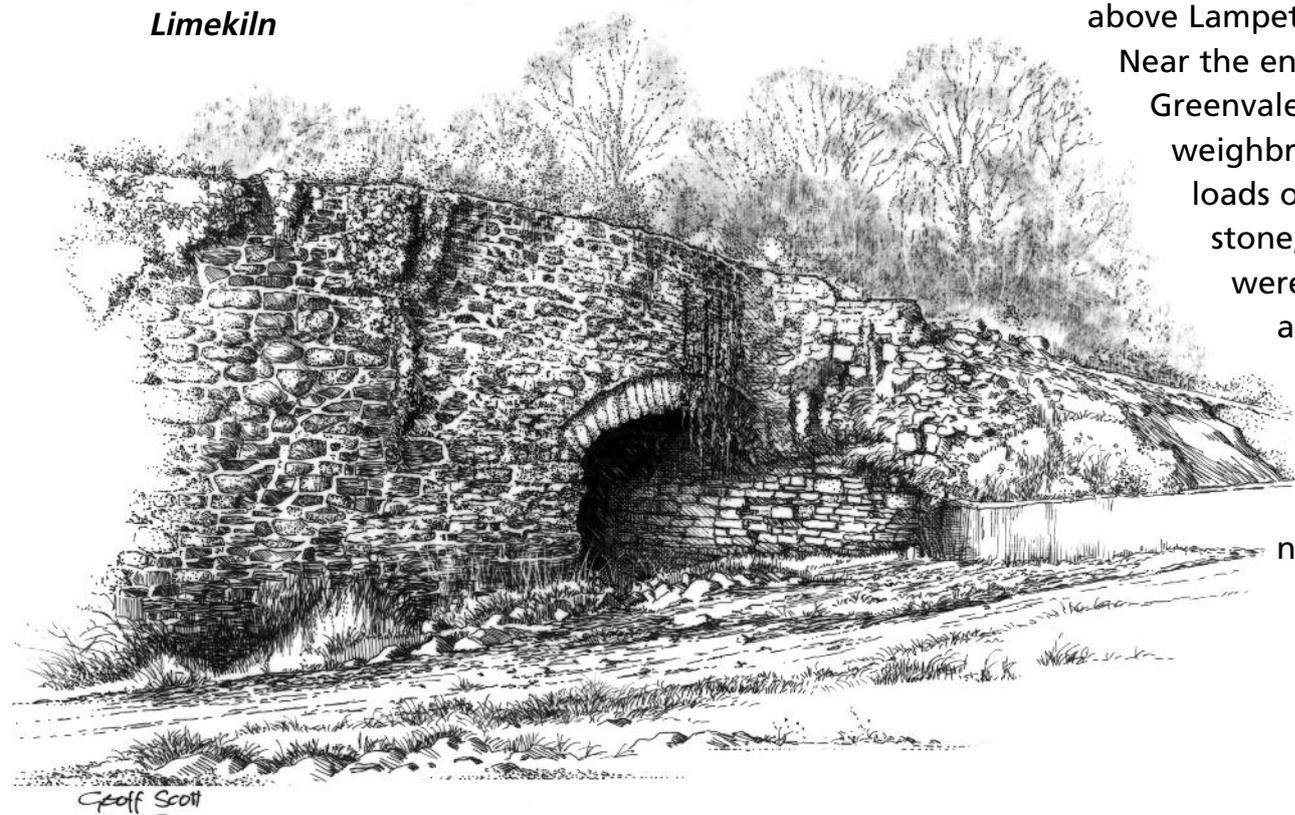
opposite the small quarry above Lampeter House.

Near the entrance by

Greenvale was a weighbridge for the loads of lime and stone, which were hauled along rails.

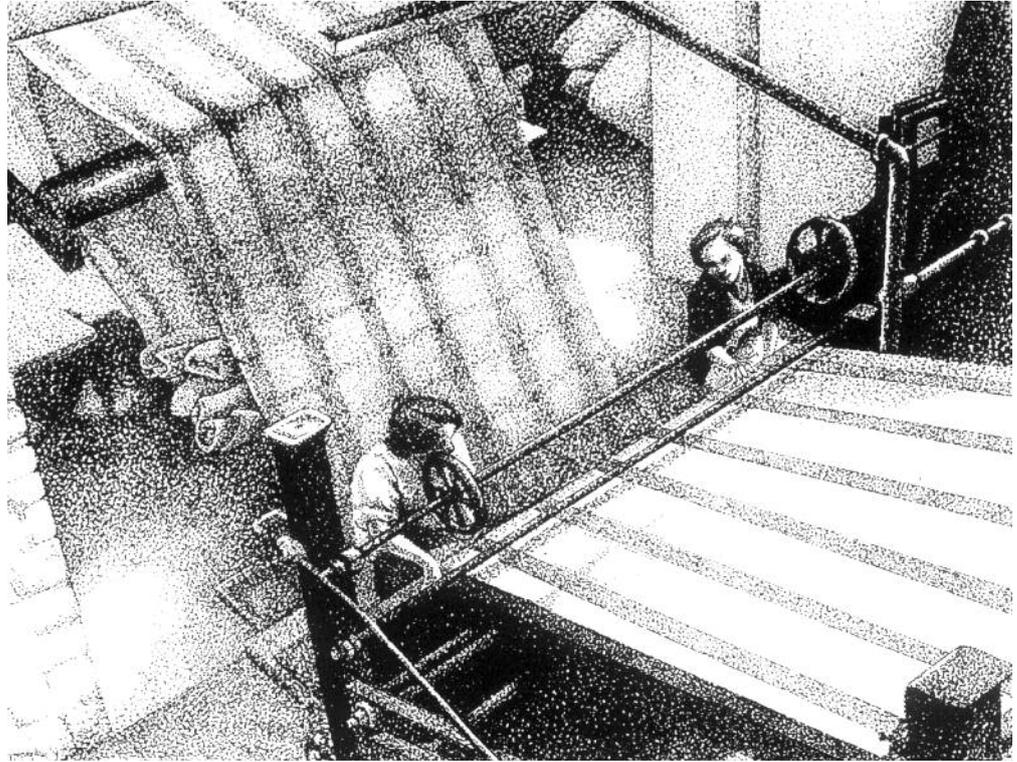
There were more limekilns near Llanmill.

Limekiln



Woollen Mills

Llanmill (properly Lanmill) used to be a leading centre of the woollen business. In 1770, a fulling mill owned by Penlan farm stood just to the southwest of Llanmill House. Another fulling mill, also powered by a leat from the Gwyddno, belonged to Dyffryn Farm. A third mill, the Factory, was built near Venterin.



William Humphreys

acquired the Llanmill business around 1860. In 1876 he leased Dyffryn Mill and rebuilt it on three floors. Power came first from a waterwheel, but by 1898 a steam engine had taken over. William built the Street - Brynvalle - to house some of his staff. His son, David, introduced the new synthetic dyes and other up-to-date technology. Cloth woven here won international prizes, but the business could not weather the depression between the wars and it closed down.

Country Walks

In the countryside surrounding Lampeter Velfrey there is a comprehensive network of footpaths providing links with neighbouring communities: Narberth via Crinow (3 miles), Llanddewi Velfrey (3 miles) and using the Landsker Borderlands Trail, Whitland (4 miles) and Tavernspite (2 miles).

Circular Walks

Marlais Valley Circular Walk (5m, 8km)

From the middle of the village (GR SN 155144), take the Whitland road and turn left past Tŷ Gwyn Farm and White House Mill. The path crosses the river round Panteg and on to Llanddewi Velfrey (GR SN 150165). Turn immediately left towards St. David's Church and follow the track past the ruins of Plas Crwn. Above is Llanddewi Gaer, the remains of an Iron Age hillfort (see Llanddewi Velfrey leaflet). Follow the path past the church down to White Mill, and turn left to Ffynnon Claf Bridge and on to Bryn Sion Cross, where you turn left to walk back into Lampeter Velfrey.

Victorian letterbox



Shipping - Gilfach Circular Walk (2½m, 4km)

From the middle of the village (GR SN 154144), walk up beside the council houses, on the left, in Marlais View; the footpath starts at a stile beside the garage on the right. Follow the way-marked path to Shipping Farm. Joining the country lane turn left and pass Castell Hywel and Gilfach Cross (GRSN 161151) towards Melinau. Turn sharp left onto a field path to Pen-back Farm and on to the junction with the lane near Gilfach.

Here you can follow the lane down into the village (about 2 miles in all) or a few yards downhill turn right following the Landsker Borderlands Trail way-marked down a narrow green lane between fields. After a sharp bend to the left, look out on your right for two Standing Stones in the middle of a field. These may have been boundary marks in the Middle Ages. Pass a spring in the bank to reach the Whitland Road. Turn left back into the village.

Ffynnon Claf Circular Walk (2½ miles, 4km)

Start at Ffynnon Claf Bridge (GR SN 141150). Ffynnon Claf means "Well of the Sick" and the water is reputed to have healing powers.

Follow Dyffryn farm lane for a few yards and turn right to cross a stream beside the railway embankment. Follow the path across fields to Crinow. Turn left on the main road, and left again at the next junction (GR SN 127140). Pass the Crematorium (the grounds are well worth a diversion in summer) and go downhill into Llanmill. Turn left past the Victorian letterbox and follow the track past the former millworkers' cottages and past a large house on your left, towards Dyffryn Farm and Ffynnon Claf Bridge.

Country Code

Respect • Protect • Enjoy

- Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs.
- Leave gates and property as you find them.
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home.
- Keep dogs under close control.
- Consider other people.