



The screen

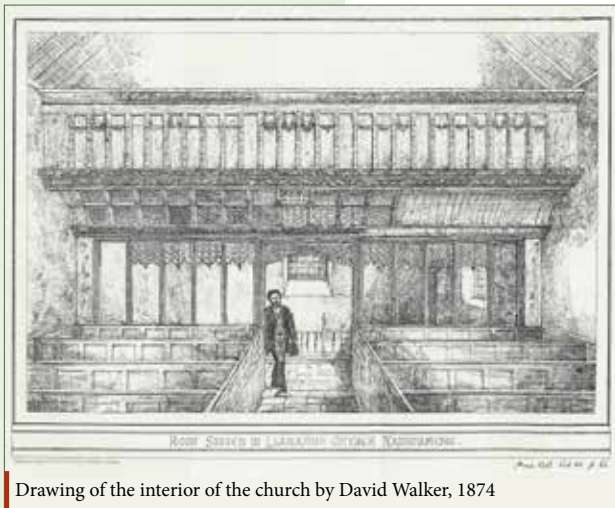
The church is home to a remarkable late medieval screen. At a time when medieval rood screens were being taken down and removed from churches, it was decided that the screen should be preserved in the new church, and it was carefully dismantled and stored while the church was rebuilt. It was restored and installed in 1880, at a cost of £300.

The screen has similarities with others from Newtown and Llanwnnog, with similar carved patterns, and it has been suggested that they are the product of a local workshop, probably centred in Montgomeryshire and perhaps in Newtown.



The little church of St Anno is set in a quiet spot by the River Ithon, screened by trees from the busy but winding road between Llandrindod Wells and Newtown that follows the river valley. The place-name, suggestive of the 'Church of Anno', is attested in the thirteenth century, but uncertainty over its dedication is evident as it was recorded as dedicated to Wonno in the eighteenth century. There is no other early evidence of a St Anno, and references to the saint and the feast day are no earlier than the eighteenth century.

The medieval church was rebuilt in 1877 to the designs of the architect David Walker with some of the old masonry built into the new walls. Memorial wall tablets were restored to the new church and Walker retained one of the seventeenth-century box pews as a seat for the churchwardens, which is now located towards the back of the church.



Drawing of the interior of the church by David Walker, 1874

The rood screen, dividing the chancel from the nave, would once have been found in all medieval churches. These screens would have been painted and were often adorned with images of saints. Above the screen would have been the rood – the image of Christ on the cross, usually with his mother Mary and St John at each side. Images were removed and almost completely destroyed after the Reformation, although at Llananno it was decided to fill the niches with figures once again. These were carved by R.L. Boulton of Cheltenham and depict Christ at the centre, with figures

from the Old Testament to the left and the twelve apostles to the right. Some of the missing square coving panels were also added and an additional wyvern was carved to extend the rood beam, as the church was rebuilt slightly wider than its medieval predecessor. A drawing of the screen by David Walker made in 1874 shows the gaps in the coving panels on the right of the screen, and also reveals that many of the canopies over the niches had not survived.



The inventiveness and variety of the carving of the square coving panels and bosses on the screen at Llananno is unparalleled in Wales. There are also some carved faces on both sides of the screen, including a strange one that joins two faces together.



Other Friends' churches in Wales with medieval rood screens

St Ellyw's, Llanelieu, Powys

A verandah-style screen carved in the 14th century. The oxblood painted timbers are stencilled with white roses. In the centre, a cross is picked out in bare wood. (Open daily).



St Jerome's, Llangwm Uchaf, Monmouthshire

A majestic, intricately carved screen where most of the woodwork survives from the 1400s. Elements were sensitively restored in the 19th century. (Open daily).



St Mary's, Derwen, Denbighshire

Unusually, the richly carved rood-loft is the main survivor here. On top of this loft, the rood would have been erected: a crucifix, flanked by figures of the Virgin Mary and St John. (Open daily).

St Michael & All Angels', Gwernesney, Monmouthshire

A thick 15th-century rood-beam, with a pierced, foliate trail of carved decoration, dating from this period. The panels have 19th-century gold-leaf decoration. (Open daily).



St Brothen's, Llanfrothen, Gwynedd

A nine-bay screen with simple chamfered edges. Like so many others it lost its rood loft and the rood itself, after the general destruction of roods by government order in 1548. (Open daily).



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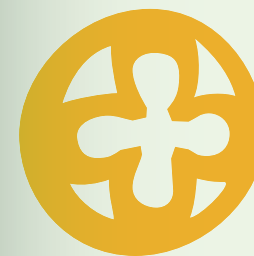
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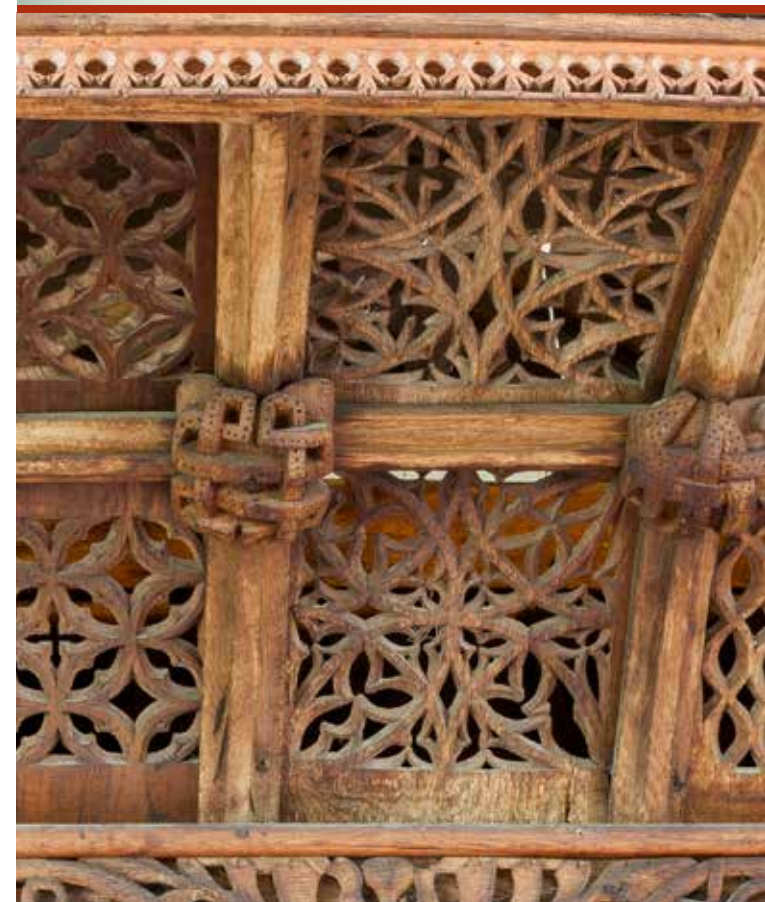
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Church of St Anno Llananno

a guide to its history