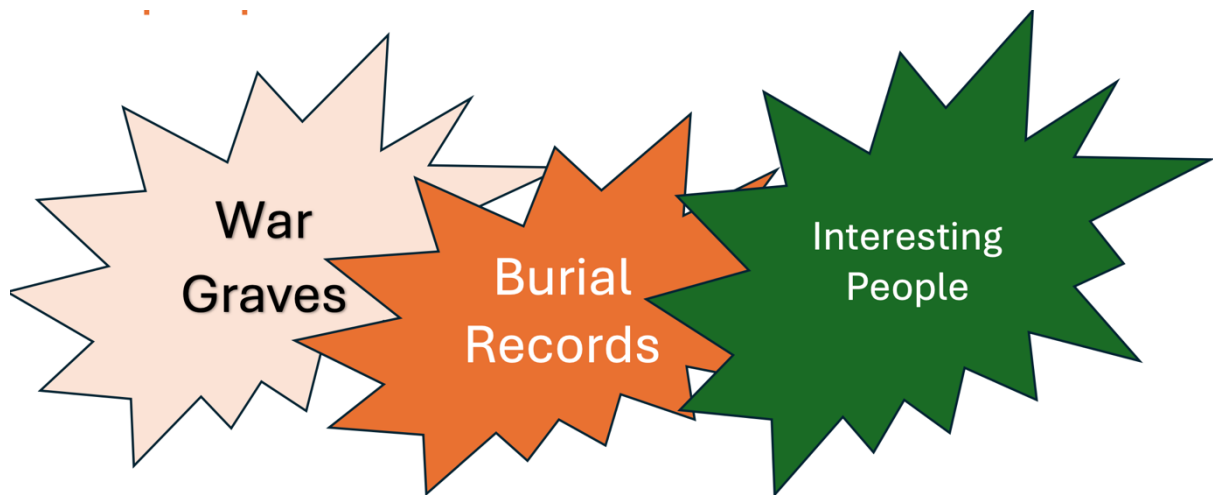


Priory Church
of St Mary

**St David Lewis
and
Mysteries of the Churchyard**

August 2025



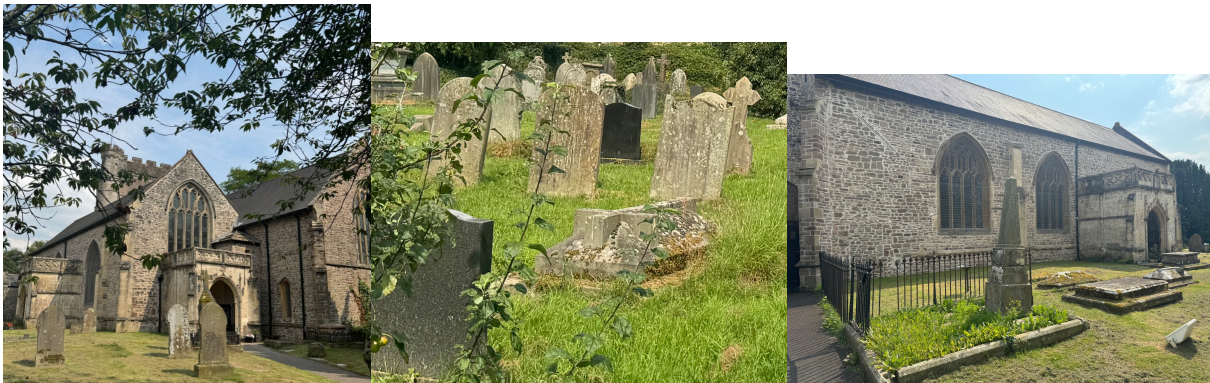
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General Churchyard Facts

- There are 598 headstones or memorials
- The war memorial has 62 names - 50 from 1914-1918.
12 from 1939-1945; 10 mentioned on headstones
- Many 19th century graves are of children who died in infancy
- 9 drowned
- 1 murdered
- 1 accident on the hunting field
- 1 accidentally killed receiving musketry instruction
- 9 clergymen
- Local people with a range of occupations - JP, dressmaker, wheelwright, bonnet maker, surgeon, ostler, many agricultural labourers
- The oldest grave is of a male 15th century civilian
- The oldest person was Tom Pearce aged 103
- The heaviest person was Phillip Mason who died 11th May 1775 aged 52 weighing 554lbs (39stone 8lbs)



Did you know?

The church is a Grade 1 listed building as an important historic church with Norman origins and surviving masonry, also especially notable medieval porches and roodscreen.

Some of the tombs and walls are also listed buildings!

- **Morgan Tomb in St Mary's Churchyard**
To N of path in churchyard, and NW of church.
- **Medieval Tomb Effigy in St Mary's Churchyard**
To N side of main path through churchyard, about 25 metres from gates.
- **Matthews Tomb in St Mary's Churchyard**
On S side of churchyard between Church Street gates and church.
- **Section of churchyard wall linking gatehouse and priory church**
At SW corner of churchyard.
- **Medieval Cross Base in St Mary's Churchyard**
Near W entrance to churchyard at fork of 2 paths.
- **Berry Tomb in St Mary's Churchyard**
On N side of path in churchyard.
- **Churchyard Wall & Gateways at Priory Church of St Mary**
The churchyard wall surrounds the W, N, E and part of churchyard.
Gates are at E and W.

Saint David Lewis (aka Charles Baker) – 1616-1679



Saint David Lewis is inextricably linked to our local communities. For more than 30 years he served the Catholic communities of Usk and the surrounding areas.

One of Forty Martyrs of England and Wales who died because they were Roman Catholic Priests or had harboured a priest, at a time when it was against the law not to express allegiance to the monarch as head of the Church.

Saint David Lewis was born in Abergavenny in 1616. David and his father (who was headmaster of Abergavenny King Henry the VIII Grammar School) were Protestants. However, his mother and 8 siblings were Catholic. David converted to Catholicism and was ordained a Catholic Priest in Rome in 1642 and joined the Jesuit Order. He was sent to the Roman Catholic Jesuit Mission in The Cwm, Llanrothal. From there, he travelled on foot by night, to give the sacraments to local Catholic families who supported him. He was known locally as 'Father of the poor'.



Red lettering, seen here on the gravestone of St David Lewis, was used to honour his martyrdom.

'The blood of the martyrs is the seedbed of the Church.'

Many local families who were Catholics, allowed St David Lewis and other priests to celebrate Mass in their homes, despite the risks to them. Many had hidden chapels, such as was found in Gunter Mansion in Abergavenny. Plas Gunter Mansion is now being restored and is open as a small museum to tell the historical story.

Following the Titus Oates Popist Plot, in which Jesuits were accused of plotting to kill King Charles 11 he abandoned The Cwm. He was betrayed by two servants for a bounty of £240 and was arrested at Llantarnam en route to say Mass.

He was moved from Monmouth jail to the house of correction in Usk, to Newgate prison in London and then back to Usk for execution. On the day of execution, no-one could be found willing to erect the gallows. A convict, promised his release, made a bad job of it. Then no willing hangman could be found so a blacksmith was bribed to do the job. St David Lewis had to stand on a stool for the hanging.

He was spared the full rigours of the law for Treason (hanged, drawn and quartered) due to the support he received. He died by hanging. His final words were 'A Catholic Priest am I'. He said that he prayed for the King, for his executioners and commended his soul to God. A cloth was dipped in St David Lewis' blood by John Giles (the sympathetic Chief Constable of Usk) to be kept as a relic. Part of this relic is preserved in the Shrine to St David Lewis at the Catholic Church here in Usk.

There is an annual pilgrimage on the last Sunday of August in Usk from Saint Francis Xavier and Saint David Lewis Catholic Church in Porthycarne Street.

Plas Gunter Mansion - Abergavenny



Priory Church of St Mary, Usk
History Day 9th August 2025

**THE LAST SPEECH OF MR. DAVID LEWIS, PRIEST OF THE SOCIETY
OF JESUS, WHO WAS EXECUTED AS A PRIEST ONLY,
AT USKE IN MONMOUTH-SHIRE, ON THE 27TH DAY OF AUGUST, ANNO
DOMINI 1679.**

Here is a numerous Assembly, I see, the Great Saviour of the World save every Soul of you all; I believe you are here met not only to see a Fellow-native die, but also with expectation to hear a dying Fellow-Native speak. If you expected it not, at least I intended it, I hope the favour will not be denied me, it being a favour so freely granted to several late dying persons in *London* it self; I shall endeavour to speak inoffensively; I hope the same favour will not be denied me.

Let none of you suffer as a Murderer or a Thief, but if as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; St. Peters words in his 1. Ep. Chap. 4. Ver. 15, 16. I hope by Gods Holy Spirit now whispered to my memory, and that to my abundant consolation; for I suffer not as a Murderer, Thief, or such like Malefactor, but as a Christian, and therefore am not ashamed.

I distinguish two sorts of Life on Earth, Life-moral, and Life-natural; Life-moral is that by which we live with good Repute in the Esteem of other Men of Integrity; Life-natural is that by which we breath; in the first sort or kind, I thank God I have suffered lately, and exceedingly, when maliciously, falsely, and most injuriously, I was branded for a public cheat, in Pamphlet, in Ballad, on Stage, and that in the Head City of the Kingdom, yea and over the whole Nation, to the huge and great detriment of my good Name, which I always was as tender of, as the other I am now quitting.

The Pamphlet Story (believe my dying words) had no truth in it, neither to Substance nor circumstance of the thing, a story so false, that I could have easily defied the Face that had attempted to justify it to my face; so sordid a business, a story so ridiculous, that I wonder how any sober Christian, at least who knew me, could as much as incline to believe so open an improbability; who that Protestant young Man there mentioned was, I know not; who that Popish young woman, who the Father dead a year and a half before, what County, what Parish, where all transacted, I know not, none of

all these there particularized; and when in the face of the Country at last Lent Assizes, I vindicated my innocence herein, to the satisfaction of the then Judge himself, why appeared not there then someone to make good the charge, and disable my defence? but none of this offered, a plain demonstration to all candid minds, the whole was a mere fiction of some malicious person against me: God forgive them or him, I heartily do. How forward my endeavours always have been to my power to relieve the Poor, and not directly to defraud them, impartial neighbours that know me can tell you; besides this, during my nine months imprisonment, several foul and false aspersions were cast out against me, and that by those unto whom, for full thirty years, I had been charitably serviceable: God forgive them, I heartily do; yet notwithstanding all these calumniation, I hope I still retain the character of an honest man amongst gentlemen of worth, with whom I conversed, and with all neighbours of honesty, with and amongst whom I lived.

And now I am parting with the other Life by which I breathe, behold, that within these few moments of time is to unbreath me; but why thus sledged to this country *Tyburne*? Why this so untimely death of mine? have patience and I'll tell you, not for any plotting I assure you, and what I shall now say as to that, God is my Witness, I shall speak without any equivocation, mental reservation, or palliation of truth whatsoever.

By all that is Sacred in Heaven and Earth, I here solemnly protest, that I am as innocent from any Plot whatever against His Majesties Person or Government, as the infant that left the mother's womb but yesterday; neither did I ever hear or know anything directly or indirectly of any such Plot, till public fame had spread it over the Country between *Michaelmas* and *All-Saints* day last: This is true, as God shall judge and save my Soul; neither was there any guilt of any such black crime found in me by Mr. *Oates*, Mr. *Bedloe*, Mr. *Dugdale*, and Mr. *Prance*, when by them I was strictly examined on that Point last *May* in *Newgate, London*; nay, had I had the least knowledge or hint of such plot, I had been as zealously nimble in the discovery of it, as any the most loyal subject His Majesty hath in his three kingdoms; wherefore when I am dead and gone, if some malevolent give out

I lose my life for plotting, by charity strive to disengage him of his mistake, do that Right to my dead Ashes.

I was never taught that doctrine of king-killing, from my Soul I detest and abhor it as execrable, and directly opposite to the principles of the religion I profess, what that is you shall know by and by; it being the positive definition of the Council of *Constance*, That it is damnable for any subject or private person, or any subjects in council joined, to murder his or their lawful King or Prince, or use any public or clandestine conspiracy against him, though the said King or Prince were a Turk, Apostate, Persecutor, yea or a Tyrant in Government:

Never tell me of *Clement* the Murderer of *Henry* the 3^d of *France*; never tell me of *Ravillac*, Murderer of *Henry* the 4th of *France*; they did so, but wickedly they did so, and for it they were punished to severity, as malefactors, and for it to this very day are stigmatized by all *Roman* Catholics for very miscreants and villains: I hope you will not charge the whole *Roman* Catholic body with the Villainies of some few desperadoes? By that rule all Christianity must be answerable for the Treason of *Judas*; for my part, I always loved my King, I always honoured his person, and I daily prayed for his prosperity; and now, with all unfeigned cordiality, I say it, God bless my Gracious King and Lawful Prince, *Charles* the Second, King of *England*, and Prince of *Wales*, God bless him temporally and eternally, God preserve him from all his real enemies, God direct Him in all his councils, that may tend to the greater Glory of the same Great God; and whatever late plot hath been, or is, the Father of Lights bring it to light, the contrivers of it, and the actors in it, that such may be brought to their condign punishment, and Innocence preserved.

But why again this untimely death? my religion is the *Roman* Catholic religion, in it I have lived above these forty years, in it I now die, and so fixedly die, that if all the good things in this world were offered me to renounce it, all should not move me one hairs breadth from my *Roman* Catholic Faith, a *Roman* Catholic I am, a *Roman* Catholic Priest I am, a *Roman* Catholic Priest of that Religious Order called the Society of Jesus I am, and I bless God who first called me, and I bless the hour in which I was first called both unto faith and function.

Please now to observe, I was condemned for reading Mass, hearing confessions, administering the Sacraments, anointing the sick, christening, marrying, preaching: As for reading the Mass, it was the old, and still is, the accustomed and Laudable Liturgy of the Holy Church, and all the other Acts, which are Acts of Religion, tending to the Worship of God; and for this dying, I die for religion: Moreover know, that when last *May* I was in *London* under examination concerning the plot, a prime examinant told me, that to save my Life, and increase my fortunes, I must make some discovery of the plot, or conform; discover plot I could not, for I knew of none; Conform I would not, because it was against my conscience, then by consequence I must die, and so now dying, I die for conscience and religion; and dying upon such good scores, as far as human frailty permits, I die with alacrity interior and exterior; from the abundance of the heart, let not only mouths, but faces also speak.

Here methinks I feel flesh and blood ready to burst into loud cries, tooth for tooth, eye for eye, blood for blood, life for life; No, cryeth Holy Gospel, *Forgive and you shall be forgiven; Pray for those that persecute you; Love your Enemies*; and I profess myself a Child of the Gospel, and the Gospel I obey.

Whomever, present or absent, I have ever offended, I humbly desire them to forgive me; as for my enemies, had I as many hearts as I have fingers, with all those hearts would I forgive my enemies, at least-wise with all that single heart I have, I freely forgive them all, my neighbours that betrayed me, the persons that took me, the Justices that committed me, the witnesses that proved against me, the jury that found me, the judge that condemned me, and others who ever, that out of malice or zeal, covertly or openly, have been contributive to my condemnation; but singularly and especially I forgive my capital persecutor, who hath been so long thirsting after my blood, from my Soul I forgive him, and wish his Soul so well, that were it in my power, I would seat him a Seraphim in Heaven, and I pray for them in the language of Glorious St. *Stephen* the Protomartyr; *Lord, lay not this sin unto them*; or better yet, in the style of our Great Master *Christ* himself, *Father forgive them, they know not what they do*.

And with reason I love them also; for though they have done themselves a vast Soul-prejudice, yet they have done me an incomparable favour, which I shall eternally acknowledge; but chiefly I love them for his sake, who said, *Love your Enemies*; and in testimony of my love, I wish them, and it is the best of wishes, from the centre of my Soul, I wish them a good eternity: O Eternity! Eternity! How momentary are the glories, riches, and pleasures of this world? How desirable art thou Endless Eternity? And for my said enemies attaining thereunto, I humbly beseech God to give them the Grace of true repentance before they and this world part.

Next to my enemies, give me leave to lift up my Eyes, Hands, and Heart to *Heaven*, and drop some few words of advice unto, and for my friends, as well those present as absent. friends, *Fear God, Honour your King*, be firm in your Faith, avoid Mortal Sin, by frequenting the Sacraments of Holy Church, patiently bear your persecutions and afflictions, forgive your enemies, your sufferings are great, I say be firm in your Faith to the end, yea even to Death, then shall you heap unto yourselves celestial treasures in the *Heavenly Jerusalem*, where no thief Robber, no moth eater, and no rust consumer and have that Blessed Saying of the Blessed St. *Peter*, Prince of the Apostles, always in your memory, which I heartily recommend unto you, viz. *Let none of you suffer as a Murderer or Thief, but if as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but glorify God in his Name.*

Now it is high time I make my addresses to Heaven, and supplicate the Divine Goodness in my own behalf, by some few short and cordial Ejaculations of Prayers.

Sovereign Lord God, *Eternal Father of Heaven, Creator of all, Conserver of all, sole Author of Grace and Glory, with prostrate Heart I Adore thee, and thee only I Adore as God, the Giving of Divine Honour to any Creature of highest degree, I abhor and detest as damnable Idolatry.*

Incarnate Son of God, *True God, Thou hast purchased a Church here upon Earth with thy Sacred Blood, and planted it with thy Sacred Labours, a Church, One, Holy, catholic, and Apostolic, a Church to continue to the Consummation of the World: Whatever that Church of thine hath by*

Revelation from thee, whatever that Church of thine hath taught me, and commanded me to believe, I believe it to an Jota.

God Holy Ghost, who maketh thy Sun to shine on Good and Bad, thy Rain to fall on the Just and Unjust, I praise thy Holy Name and thank thee for the Innumerable Benefits thou hast been pleased to bestow and confer upon me, thy unworthy Servant, the threescore and three years I now have lived on Earth.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Charity of God, and the Communication of the Holy Ghost, be with you all, Amen,

The Peace of God that passeth all understanding, keep your Hearts and Minds in the Knowledge and Love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, and the Blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be among you, and remain with you all, and always, Amen.

O Holy Trinity, three Persons, and one God, from the bottom of my Heart, I am sorry that ever I have offended thee my Good God, even to an Idle Word; yet through the Mercy of thee, my God, and Merits of my Redeemer, I strongly hope for an Eternal Salvation.

Sweet Jesus Receive my Soul.

Remembering those lost during Conflict

Usk War Memorial

The memorial was unveiled in November 1922 to commemorate the local men who had died in the First World War. The names of men who died in the Second World War were added later and the memorial was rededicated to those who died “in the Great Wars”.

It is described as a Latin cross with tapering shaft set on two steps with an octagonal base. The whole is set on gravel with a rectangular stone surround.

Commonwealth War Graves

The following War Graves are located in the graveyard and are cared for by the Commonwealth War Graves commission. In addition, the grave of WH Roberts is acknowledged and cared for by the Commission: Wireless Operator in HM forces who fell in action at Cambrai Nov. 30th, 1917. Aged 36 years.

The Rev. DAVID HOWELL GRIFFITH Chaplain 4th Class	Army Chaplains' Department United Kingdom	Died 12 December 1917
F LEWIS Private Service Number: 130525	Royal Army Medical Corps United Kingdom	Died 04 June 1921
E WEARE Private Service Number: 23534	12th Bn. South Wales Borderers United Kingdom	Died 20 September 1915
E B HAYNES Second Lieutenant	No. 1 (S) Aircraft Repair Depot Royal Air Force United Kingdom	Died 14 November 1918 45 years old

Roll of Honour

TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND THE
HONOURED MEMORY OF THE MEN OF
USK WHO DIED IN THE GREAT WARS.

R.I.P.



1914-1918

BOWEN

**Alfred John
Hamilton**

Lieutenant Colonel, 2nd Battalion, Monmouthshire Regiment. Died 2nd March 1917 aged 31. DSO and Bar, 3 times Mentioned in Despatches. Son of Alfred Edward and Emily Marianne Bowen, of Usk, Monmouthshire, Wales, husband of Jean Gertrude Wilton, of Winnipeg, Canada. Buried in Guards Cemetery, Combles, France. Plot I. Row D. Grave 8.

CAREY

William

Lance Corporal 1396, 2nd Battalion, Monmouthshire Regiment (Territorial Force). Killed in action 6 July 1916.

COLWELL

S

probably Samuel Colwell, Lance-Corporal, 3rd Battalion, Royal Welch Fusiliers. Died 15th

November 1918. Buried at Limerick (Kings Island) Military Cemetery.

COOK

**Frederick
Arthur**

Private, 9th Battalion, Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Son of George William and Ellen Cook, of Twyn Square, Usk, Mon. Died 14th June 1918 aged 20. No known grave. Commemorated on the Soissons Memorial, France.

COOK

**William
George**

[George William on SDGW]
Private 265113, 2nd Battalion, Monmouthshire Regiment (Territorial Force). Killed in action 23 August 1917. Born and enlisted Usk.

CRICHTON

Mc

No further information available at present.

DAVIES

D B

No further information available at present.

DAVIES

C

No further information available at present.

DAY

Thomas

Private 27952. 8th Battalion, East Yorkshire Regiment. Killed in action 13 November 1916. Born and resident Usk, enlisted

		Northampton. Formerly 5081, Northamptonshire Regiment.
de la PASTURE	Charles Edward	Captain, 1st Battalion, the Scots Guards. Died 29th October 1914 aged 35. No known grave. Commemorated on the Menin Gate, Ypres, Belgium.
DOWDING	Frank Alfred	Private 27205, 4th Battalion, South Wales Borderers. Died of wounds in Mesopotamia 3rd March 1917. Born Abercynon, Glamorganshire, enlisted Usk, resident Pontnewydd, Monmouthshire. Buried at Amara War Cemetery, Iraq.
EVANS	John	Private 12299, 4th Battalion, South Wales Borderers. Killed in action in Mesopotamia 9 April 1916. Aged 39. Born Usk, enlisted Brecon. Eldest son of George and Mary Ann Evans, of Usk, Mon. No known grave. Commemorated on Basra Memorial, Iraq. Panel 16 and 62.
GARSDIE	L R	No further information available at present.

GEORGE P No further information available at present.

GEORGE W No further information available at present.

GRIFFITHS Alfred [James] Private 24953, 2nd Battalion, South Wales Borderers. Died at sea 13 August 1915. Aged 19. Born Usk, enlisted Newport, Monmouthshire. Son of Alfred and Alice Griffiths, of Yew Tree Farm, Gwehelog, Usk, Mon. Formerly 5202, Dragoon Guards. No known grave. Commemorated on Helles Memorial, Turkey (including Gallipoli). Panel 80 to 84 or 219 and 220.

GRIFFITHS George [Alfred] Sapper 159830, 67th Field Company, Royal Engineers. Killed in action 24 October 1917. Born Usk, enlisted Tredegar, Monmouthshire.

HAGGETT Reginald Russell Private 160635, 2nd Canadian Mounted Rifles Battalion. Killed in action at Courcelette 2 October 1916. Aged 31. Born 3 April 1884 in Usk, Monmouthshire. Son of John Perchase Haggett, of Clarence

House, Bridge St., Usk, Mon.,
 England; husband of Pamela
 Haggett. By trade a Post Office
 Clerk. Unmarried. Attested and
 passed fit 14/15 October 1915,
 at Calgary, aged 31 years 6
 months, height 5 feet 6 inches,
 chest 35 inches, fair
 complexion, blue eyes, brown
 hair, religious denomination
 Church of England. No known
 grave. Commemorated on Vimy
 Memorial, Pas de Calais, France.
 National Archives of Canada
 Accession Reference: [RG 150,](#)
[Accession 1992-93/166, Box](#)
[3918 - 60](#)

HARRHY	E	No further information available at present.
HARRIS	E	No further information available at present.
HAYNES	Ernest Boulton	2nd Lieutenant, No. 1 (S) Aircraft Repair Depot, Royal Air Force. Husband of Florence Haynes, of 26, Upton Rd., Newport. Suffered a cerebral haemorrhage, admitted to Cambridge Military Hospital, Aldershot; died 14th November

		1918 aged 45. Buried at Usk (St Mary Magdalene) Churchyard.
JENKINS	[Thomas] Melville	[Listed as Thomas Melville on CWGC] Private 13506, 6th Dragoons (Inniskilling). Died of wounds 2 April 1918. Aged 23. Born Maindee, Newport, Mon., enlisted Newport, resident Usk. Son of Samuel and Sarah Elizabeth Jenkins, of "The Willows," Usk, Mon. Native of Newport, Mon. Buried in Namps-Au-Val British Cemetery, Somme, France. Plot I. Row K. Grave 5.
JOHNS	J	No further information available at present.
JONES	T	No further information available at present.
JONES	W S	No further information available at present.
JONES	E S	No further information available at present.
KNIGHT	Charles Ernest Vickery	Private 41349, 2nd Battalion, South Wales Borderers. Killed in action 10th March 1918. Aged

19. Born and enlisted Usk. Son of Walter Ernest and Elizabeth Knight, of Mill St., Usk, Mon. Buried in Poelcapelle British Cemetery, Belgium. Plot X. Row E. Grave 18.

LEWIS

W

No further information available at present.

MEREDITH John Lionel

[Listed as Lionel on SDGW]
Private 19410, 3rd Battalion, Coldstream Guards. Died of wounds 11th October 1917. Aged 18. Born Usk, enlisted Mountain Ash, resident of Usk, Monmouthshire. Son of Christie Meredith, of Tenby House, Usk, Mon. Buried at Dozinghem Military Cemetery, Poperinge, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. Plot X. Row J. Grave 11.

MITCHELL

Edward J

Private 267351, 2nd Battalion, Monmouthshire Regiment (Territorial Force). Killed in action 12 April 1918. Born Usk, enlisted Newport.

MITCHELL

F J

No further information available at present.

MITCHELL G

No further information available at present.

MORGAN E

No further information available at present.

PARDOE W

No further information available at present.

PARRY Tom

Private 266199, 2nd Battalion, Monmouthshire Regiment (Territorial Force). Killed in action 1 July 1916. Born Glascoed, enlisted Usk.

PRICE L

No further information available at present.

PRICE S

No further information available at present.

**PRICE William
Henry**

Private 9816, 2nd Battalion, South Wales Borderers. Killed in action at Gallipoli 25th April 1915. Aged 23. Born Trostrey, Usk, enlisted Usk. Son of Mrs. A. K. Trigg (formerly Price), of Cherry Tree, Gwhelog, Usk, Mon. No known grave. Commemorated on the Helles Memorial, Turkey (including

Gallipoli). Panel 80 to 84 or 219 and 220.

REES	[Henry] Charles Stephens	Acting Corporal 265264, 2nd Battalion, Monmouthshire Regiment (Territorial Force). Killed in action 1 July 1916. Aged 20. Born and enlisted Usk. Son of Thomas Rees, of "Fernleigh," Usk, Mon. Buried in Hawthorn Ridge Cemetery No. 1, Auchonvillers, Somme, France. Plot/Row Section A. Grave 68.
ROBERTS	W H	No further information available at present.
SAUNDERS	E [S]	Pioneer 182435, "B" Corps Singla Company, Royal Engineers. Killed in action 19 June 1917. Born Raglan, Monmouthshire, enlisted Usk.
SMITH	Arthur [John]	Private 26409, 5th Battalion, South Wales Borderers, Killed in action 25 March 1918. Born and enlisted Usk.
STICKLER	Herbert Joseph	Private 7006, 22nd Battalion, South Wales Borderers. Killed in action at Gallipoli 15th June 1915. Aged 36. Born Newport,

Mon., enlisted Birmingham.
Husband of Jessie Maud
Stickler, of Maryport St., Usk,
Newport, Mon. Buried at Twelve
Tree Copse Cemetery, Turkey
(including Gallipoli). Plot XI. Row
A. Grave 19.

THOMAS

**Bertie
William
Goddard**

Rifleman B/497, 1st Battalion,
Rifle Brigade (The Prince
Consorts Own). Died of wounds
15 April 1917. Born and resident
Usk, enlisted Sheffield.

TURNER

**James
William
Alfred**

Private 238052, 10th Battalion,
Lincolnshire Regiment. Killed in
action 22nd March 1918. Aged
35. Enlisted Cardiff, resident
Usk. Husband of Martha Maud
Collins (formerly Turner), of
Bridge St., Usk, Mon. Formerly
1887, Welsh Regiment. No
known grave. Commemorated
on the Arras Memorial, France.
Bay 3 and 4.

WATKINS

**Iltyd Edwin
Maitland**

Captain, 2nd Battalion
(Territorial), Monmouthshire
Regiment (Territorial Force). Son
of John Maitland Watkins, of
Usk, Mon., and the late Frances
Watkins. Killed in action 5th
[SDGW] or 7th [CWGC] May

1915. Aged 25. No known grave.
Commemorated on the Menin
Gate, Ypres, West-Vlaanderen,
Belgium. Panel 50.

WATKINS	Reginald Evan	Private 123526, 58th Battalion, Machine Gun Corps (Infantry). Killed in action 24th March 1918. Aged 19. Born and resident Usk, enlisted Pontypool. Son of Mrs. Emma Watkins, of 1, New Market St., Usk, Newport, Mon. Formerly 61525, Welsh Regiment. No known grave. Commemorated on the Pozieres Memorial, near Albert, Somme, France. Panel 90 to 93
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WEARE	Ernest	Private 23534, 12th Battalion, South Wales Borderers. Died in United Kingdom 20th September 1915. Born Tondu, Glamorganshire, resident Griffithstown, Monmouthshire, enlisted Newport, Monmouthshire. Buried in Usk (St Mary Magdalene) Churchyard.
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WILLIAMS	George	Private 8023, 1st Battalion, South Wales Borderers. Killed in action 26 September 1914. Born Usk, enlisted Brecon. Son of
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William and Mary Williams, of Berllanderry, Raglan, Mon.; husband of Elizabeth Rose Wise (formerly Williams), of 4, Baron St., Usk, Mon. No known grave. Commemorated on La Ferte-Sous-Jouarre Memorial, Seine-et-Marne, France.

WILLIAMS Tom

Private 19096, 1st Battalion, Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Killed in action 3 September 1916. Aged 34. Born and enlisted Mountain Ash, Glam. Son of Mrs. Mary Williams, of New Market St., Usk, Mon. Buried in Delville Wood Cemetery, Longueval, Somme, France. Plot VI. Row B. Grave 8.

**WINDOW Leonard
Rees**

Private 59663, 84th Company, Machine Gun Corps (Infantry). Died 14th September 1919. Aged 20. Son of Mr. R. and Mrs. E. A. Window, of Priory St., Usk, Mon. Buried in Haidar Pasha Cemetery, Istanbul, Turkey. Plot I. Row G. Grave 10.

1939-1945

AULT Kenneth

Squadron-Leader, 11th Squadron, Royal Air Force. Son

of Percy Ault, and of Helena Ethel Ault, of Bristol. Died 9th April 1942 aged 26. No known grave. Commemorated on the Singapore Memorial, Kranji War Cemetery, Singapore.

DAVIS

Edgar John

Flight Sergeant (Air Gunner) 984441, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. Son of Edgar Glynn Davis and Marjorie Revis Davis, of Usk; husband of Phyllis Eileen Davis. of Usk. Died 22nd March 1943 aged 27. Buried south of the chancel in Trostrey (St. David) Churchyard, Monmouthshire.

HOBBS

**Arthur
Edward**

Private 5189527, 1st Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment. Son of Alfred and Rosa Annie Hobbs, of Usk, Monmouthshire. Died 3rd June 1942. Aged 22. No known grave. Commemorated on the Rangoon Memorial, Myanmar. Face 12.

KNOWLES

J M

No further information available at present.

MARSHALL

C

No further information available at present.

MORTIMER **Joseph
Edward**

Trooper 402999, 3rd Kings Own
Hussars, Royal Armoured Corps.
Died 17 March 1945. Aged 36. of
Charles Allen Mortimer and
Margaret Ann Mortimer;
husband of Kathleen Mary
Mortimer, of Clifton, York. Buried
in BERLIN 1939-1945 WAR
CEMETERY, Berlin, Germany.
Plot 11. Row B. Grave 16.

PRICE **A E**

probably Albert Edward Price,
Private, 3rd Battalion, the
Monmouthshire Regiment. Son
of Albert Edward and Eliza Price;
husband of Linda Kathleen
Price. Died 7th September 1944
aged 24. Buried at the
Schoonselhof Cemetery,
Antwerp, Belgium.

**RENNIE,
MC** **Charles
Andrew**

Captain 224079, Royal
Armoured Corps attached to
16th Light Cavalry, Indian
Armoured Corps. On the 17th
March 1945 Captain Rennie was
sent with a troop along the
Meiktila to Rangoon road. While
searching the village of
Kandaung a Japanese sniper
fired, from a tree, and wounded
Captain Rennie through the
back of his head. He was

immediately evacuated to A.D.S. and back to C.C.S. where he eventually died. Aged 31. Son of John and Lucy Rennie; husband of Nan M. Rennie, of Woodside, Clevedon, Somerset. Awarded the Military Cross (M.C.). Buried in MAYNAMATI WAR CEMETERY, Bangladesh. Plot 3. Row B. Grave 18.

His citation for the Military Cross reads as follows:

Capt. Charles Rennie

This officer on the 27th and 28th February 1945, led two patrols down the Meiktila-Rangoon road. Little was known of the enemy dispositions at this time, particularly the placing of his anti-tank weapons. Despite this, Capt. Rennie completed both the patrols which went out to a distance of 23 miles into the enemy occupied territory. His skill and boldness produced excellent results. On the first day, apart from producing the information required, by a skilful series of traps, he destroyed three enemy trucks full of personnel and one staff car, killing a total of 24 Japanese. On

the seconds day he killed another 12 Japanese. Recommended for an immediate award of the Military Cross.

His death was announced in *The Times* 27th March 1945, pg. 1; Issue 50102:

RENNIE.- Died of wounds in Burma, March 1945, CAPTAIN CHARLES ANDREW RENNIE, Royal Armoured Corps. attached I.A.C., beloved husband of Nan (nee Taylor), and darling daddy of Sara Ann, Woodside, Clevedon, Somerset and son of Mr. and Mrs. Rennie, Usk, Mon.

SMITH	D A	No further information available at present.
SMITH	E	No further information available at present.
STOCKHAM	Herbert Richard	Corporal, Royal Air Force. Died 19th December 1941. Buried at Stanley Military Cemetery, Hong Kong.
WATKINS	Alfred Henry	Ordinary Seaman, HMS Somali, Royal Navy. Died 24th September 1942. No known

grave. Commemorated on the
Portsmouth Naval Memorial.

Buried in the churchyard but not on the memorial

GRIFFITH	The Rev. David Howell	Chaplain 4th Class, Army Chaplains' Department. Died 12th December 1917. Buried North-East of Church in Usk (St. Mary Magdalene) Churchyard.
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LEWIS	Frank	Private 130525, 'E' (19th) Company, Depot, Royal Army Medical Corps. Died 4 June 1921. Transferred to 1st Western General Hospital, Fazakerley, Liverpool, 26 September 1918. Resident 4, Ash Street, Usk, Monmouthshire. Buried North- East of Church in Usk (St. Mary Magdalene) Churchyard.
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Last updated: 24 November 2021

Remembering the Clergy of this Parish

Rev Evan C Meredith. 1745-1814 - unknown

Sacred to the memory of the Rev Evan Meredith of this town who died Oct 23rd, 1814, aged 69. Clergyman of Usk (burial plot unknown)

Rev John Saunders 1756 - 1831 - Section C

John Saunders was born in 1756

In 1815 he married Elizabeth Davies, both of Usk, at St Mary's church.

He was widowed and married for the second time in 1824 at the church of St Augustine the Less, Bristol, a widow, Ann Prothero. Ann was baptised daughter of Thomas and Ann Prothero. She is believed to be the widow of Thomas Prothero (see Chartist connection). A witness at their marriage was Rev Illtyd Nicholl. In the will of Rev John Saunders, he leaves to his friend Illtyd Nicholl all his personal stock and effects.

Rev John Saunders was buried in St Mary's churchyard on 20th August 1831, the funeral was conducted by Rev Thomas Addams Williams. At the time he had been living in Trostrey, so was possibly the vicar at St David's church.

Rev Stephen Cattley Baker BA 1812 – 1892 - Section C

- Born in Southampton
- Married 1) Mary Graham 1847
 - 2) Martha Pitt 1866
- Studied at St John's Cambridge
- 1851 Vicar of Skenfrith
- 1861 Vicar of Usk, living in New Market Street
- 1871 Vicar of Usk and Monkswood, living in the Vicarage
- Performed his last funeral on 7th August 1892
- He died in office, 5th October 1892, having served as Vicar of Usk for 32 years and his funeral was conducted by the Archdeacon and the Rural Dean.
- Buried 10th October 1892 aged 80, with his first wife Mary and their new-born baby. Alongside is the grave of his second wife Martha, who died in 1882.

Rev Illtyd Nicholl 1815 – 1867 - Section C

Born in Usk and was given the family name Illtyd, originally named after the founding saint of Llantwit Major where the family lived.

On 6th October 1842 he married Augusta Jane Nicholl

In 1847 he performed a funeral in Usk of William Henry Morgan aged 8 months

In 1851 he and Augusta were living in Hastings

In May 1850 their daughter Augusta Eleanor died aged 2 and in July the following year his wife Augusta died aged 33

In 1861 he is a clergyman and widower living at Tresilian, St Donat

He died 11th February 1867 aged 52 at Ham, near Llantwit Major and was buried at Usk 16th February 1867 with his wife Augusta and their daughter

The funeral was conducted by Rev Stephen Cattley Baker

Memorial to William Henry Nicholl has the epitaph:

“I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions and as a cloud thy sins”. Apparently, William had run off with the family housemaid and was never forgiven

Rev William Henry Wrenford BA 1822 - Section C

Born in Liverpool

In 1851 William was living in Maryport Street with his wife Martha - he was a master at the grammar school.

By 1871 he was widowed, living at Maryport Street - a curate and master at the grammar school

In 1874 he was living at the vicarage, Llanbadoc as Vicar of Llanbadoc

In 1881 he was Vicar of St Nicholas Sheldon in Devon, where he was buried.

Both his wives, Martha and Fanny are buried together in Usk churchyard

Rev Percy Louis Charles Nash 1865 – Section C

- Born in Newton Abbott, Devon. Rev. Nash was blind from childhood and attended The Commandery in Worcester as a boarder. At the time, this was a college for the blind sons of gentlemen. However one headmaster, Rev Forster later lobbied for scholarships for less wealthy boys and a development of a school for blind girls.
- In 1891 he was a priest at St Pancras, London and in 1931 he married his second wife, Muriel Duckett there.



- The following year, 1892 he became Vicar of Usk, living at The Rectory.
- Because of his blindness a heating pipe was installed below his desk in the church so he could warm his fingers in order to read Braille.
- He performed his last funeral on 24th February 1926.
- In 1939 he was retired and he and Muriel were living at the Lawns, New Market Street.

Rev David Howell Griffiths -1917

Chaplain 4th Class Army Chaplains' Department

He lived at Nannerch Rectory, Old Flintshire

He died 12th December 1917 and was buried 15th December in St Mary's churchyard by Rev Hiram S Rees

Rev Hiram Smyth Rees (1868-1963)

Rev. Rees was born in Fishguard and he became vicar of Abertillery, however in 1908 some members of the congregation complained to him because they felt he had adopted Roman Catholic practices, including displaying a large crucifix behind the altar and providing Holy Communion on Sundays instead of the usual Matins. However, he was supported by other parishioners. In November 1908 the crucifix was removed but no other concessions were made.

The complainants took a petition to the Bishop of Llandaff, who noted the points made and said he hoped that in future peace would reign among the churchgoers.

He married Jennett, daughter of Rev Edward M Griffiths -rector of Clocalnog, Denbighshire for 22years. Three graves, dating between 1874 and 1963 which are enclosed by railings, contain several members of the family including Rev David Howell Griffiths

Five graves, dating between 1874 and 1963 which are enclosed by railings, contain several members of the family including Rev David Howell Griffiths.

Rev David Ivor Jones 1891 – 1963

Born Tredegar 1891 and baptised there on 22nd December 1891. In 1934 he married Letitia Anne Muriel Jones – in 1939 they were living at The Vicarage Blaenavon, where he was a Clerk in Holy Orders

He was a very well-loved Vicar of Usk from 1947 to 1963

He died 22nd January 1963 at 88 Mill Street and is buried in St Mary's churchyard

Rev Rendle Leslie Davies 1929 – 2016

Born in Abertillery. In 1956 he married Pamela Veronica Knight of Monmouth and in 1962 they were living at The Rectory Gwernesney and then in 1963 as Vicar of Usk, living at The Vicarage.

On Sunday 10th March 1963 a peal of bells was rung to welcome the new vicar as noted in 'Ringing World'.

From 1963 - 1981 he was Chaplain of Usk Borstal and from 1981 - 1994 he was Chaplain of Usk Prison.

He retired in 1999, having served as vicar of St Mary's for 36 years. He and Pamela went to live at Wyesham, Monmouth.

Reverend Rendle died 24th December 2016 aged 87 and his ashes buried in the Garden of Remembrance at St Mary's.



Tombs of Interest

James Henry Clark (1818 to 1913) – Row 3

Clark was born in Gloucester on 23 January 1818. By the time he was sixteen, he had completed his training as a printer at his father's printing office in Chepstow. In 1834, he set out with his brother, Alfred, and walked to Usk. On their journey, they were overtaken by a wagon carrying Chepstow's old public oil lamps to Usk as Chepstow had just installed gas lamps for street lighting.

It is interesting to note his first impression of Usk "There was nothing to indicate it to be a place of trade or traffic, except about a dozen mules laden with bags of charcoal belonging to one Neddie Caenila, who was employed to convey charcoal from the charcoal-burners in the woods to Pontypool".

Clark had a busy life printing, ordering and receiving goods, and running a retail stationer's shop. He also became involved in public life. When Queen Victoria ascended the throne in 1837, he was elected to a committee to arrange the town's celebrations. Subsequently, in June 1838, one hundred and fifty of the poor townspeople enjoyed a meal in the market under the Town Hall (now the British Legion) to celebrate the occasion.

In 1838 Clark married Sophia Howell. They had six children, three boys and three girls. They celebrated their Golden wedding anniversary in 1888 at the Three Salmons Hotel. Sophia died in 1901.

Woodbank House in Bridge Street was built in 1848. The Clark family lived there from 1851. Clark also had his printing office there. The Usk Observer was first published from those premises in 1855. It was an 8-page weekly publication which cost one and a half pence. Local news was printed on sheets which arrived from London. The Crimean War (1853-1856) was on-going and the

Observer included artists' impressions of the battles. The paper continued to be published until 1907, though its name was changed to the County Observer in 1867. The original first copy is held in the National Library of Wales.



The Chartist Riots took place in 1839. Thirty-eight of the rioters were arrested and brought to trial by a Special Commission at Monmouth. At Usk, about 180 men were sworn in as Special Constables. Clark was one of the officers. It was rumoured that an attempt was to be made to rescue the prisoners from Monmouth Gaol and Clark was ordered to muster his Usk 'Specials' and man the river bridge to help the military. The order was later countermanded, it is understood, that the Chartists abandoned their intention.

One of Clark's friends was Edward John Trelawny. He occupied the Cefn Ila Estate and he propagated many trees and plants. As a result of his friendship with Trelawny, Clark became interested in Botany. He started to make scientific searches for native plants and travelled around the surrounding countryside collecting the most desirable plants for drying to include in his herbarium. He wrote several botanical books including 'The Songs of the Seasons and Wild Flowers of the Months'; 'The Flora of Monmouthshire'.

Clark was involved in many enterprises, to name a few: He became first chairman of the Usk Board of health, formed in 1857, and for thirteen years the chairman of the Usk Local Government Board. He was a pioneer of the Usk Farmers Club and its secretary for fifty years. He was also a pioneer of the Great Western Rail Line (GWR) from Little Mill to Usk. It was his wife, Sophia, who dug the first turf at the Rhadyr Farm on 11 April 1854. The rail line opened on 2 June 1856 and closed on 30 May 1955.

On 3 December 1872, the Usk Gas company was set-up. Clark was one of the twelve board members.

Clark held the role of Portvree (Mayor) nine times and was the last person to hold the post. The role of Portvree evolved and was eventually subsumed into a broader local government structure. His final act as Portvree, was to place a memorial window in the Parish Church of St. Mary's. Clark unveiled the window in March 1886, and handed it over for dedication. He was appointed Postmaster of Usk on 9th February 1857. For many years he was a warden at the church.



Three Usk men fell in the Boer War (1899-1902). On New Year's Day, 1908, in his 90th year, at the old Town Hall (now the British Legion) Clark unveiled the ornamental lamp frame of polished granite to the memory of the three men.

Clark wrote many books including 'Usk and its Neighbourhood'. His last book 'Reminiscences of Monmouthshire' printed at his own press in Usk, appeared in 1908, his ninetieth year. It marked the epilogue to the writing and publishing career of a man who lived a very full and fascinating life in Usk during the 20th

On Clark's 95th birthday, he had a fall in his bathroom, breaking a pane of glass and cutting his back with glass. Although the wound healed, inflammation of the brain occurred. He died on 16 February 1913.

See inside the church where a commemorative window on the West wall of the nave is dedicated to Clark.

Mary Troutbeck 1787 to 1866 – Row 3

“Here lies the kindest and most affectionate of mothers”

Mary was buried in Usk churchyard 14th October 1866 aged 79

Eleanor Williams (Medieval) – Row 7

To the north side of the main path through the churchyard, about 25 metres from the gates, there is a late medieval tomb. There is a weathered medieval tomb slab with a worn effigy of a figure in civilian dress.



Information from **Cadw** (2004) tells us this tomb was originally thought to be covering the resting place of *Eleanor/Ellen Williams, the last Prioress* (serving from 1529 until 1536).

The tomb is also listed in the 1971 journal: **Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies** as being, ‘*A medieval stone effigy in St. Mary’s churchyard, Usk, Monmouthshire.*’ And describes the tomb as, ‘*15th century recumbent figure with dog (no text). A male civilian figure.*’

Which leaves some doubt over who is actually resting here.

Why is the tomb a listed building? Medieval tomb slab with group value with Priory Church of St Mary.

Sir Matthew Digby Wyatt (1820 to 1977) – Row 8

Sir Matthew Digby Wyatt was born 28 July 1820 and died 21 May 1877

He was known as a Chartist, architect, author and art historian who was based in London where he worked with the Royal Academy.

Responsible for building many notable buildings in Newport including:

- Malpas court for Thomas Prothero
- Usk goal opened 1840
- Usk sessions house 1875-1877

Friendly with Thomas Prothero son of Thomas Prothero who has a memorial plaque in St Mary's church. (See research completed inside the church and plaques on rear wall). It has been recorded that Thomas Prothero was the "bad boy" of the area and an adversary of John Frost.

Sir Matthew worked with leading figures of his time, including I. K. Brunel, George Gilbert Scott, Herbert Minton, and Henry Cole. Owen Jones was his lifelong friend.

He was the younger brother of architect Thomas Henry Wyatt (1807-80).

Other notable achievements:

- Matthew was the secretary of the Great exhibition in 1851
- Surveyor of the East India Company
- 1st Slade professor of fine art at Cambridge



Nicholl Family Tombs – Row 8

There are a number of tombs in the graveyard belonging to the Nicholl family including Sir Matthew Digby Wyatt – son in law.

The Nicholl family graves in St Mary's Churchyard, Usk, Monmouthshire, by Sir Matthew Digby Wyatt. The large grave in the middle has two polished reddish granite slabs side by side on a stone plinth, with "hipped tops and a Byzantine cross to the interstice" (listing text). The inscriptions tell us that these are the last resting places of Eleanor Nicholl and her daughter, who both died in 1850, and other members of the Nicholl family. The ironwork around the family plot is very elaborate — a cast-iron railing "with barley-sugar twist uprights bearing paterae and fluted finials. Openwork scrolls with Romanesque-style foliage finials and cresting to horizontal panels and rails" (listing text). What is most remarkable is that the pattern is similar to that employed by Wyatt much later in the [ironwork of Paddington Station](#).

The smaller grave plot to the left is that of William Henry Nicholl, who died in 1874, and was joined there in 1913 by his wife Elizabeth. This too is thought to have been designed by Wyatt. The slab is of grey granite this time, but also on a stone plinth, and also protected by decoratively patterned ironwork, with "openwork, cusped panels with finials to centre of quatrefoils; polygonal uprights to angles with ball-finials" (listing text).

To the right is Wyatt's own grave, designed by his brother, [T. H. Wyatt](#).



Colonel Richard Roden (Died 1887) Row 10

'The Murder of Colonel Roden' as reported in the 'County Observer. 23rd April 1887'

Colonel Roden, of Ty Brith near Newport, has been tragically killed in Corsica. The news was received by his daughter shortly before she joined him in that island.

The Colonel was a director of the Argentilla Silver Lead Mines at Calvi and had been out there to supervise the running of the Company for a short time. He was living in a house at the works and had arranged for a new closet to be constructed, in the garden of the house, by three carpenters. On leaving the house after lunch he found only two of the men at work, the third had gone off shooting without permission. When the man returned the Colonel abused him about the work, took him by the throat, and shook him. The man, who was called Pair, infuriated at this attack, shot the Colonel in the abdomen, and he died almost immediately. Pair is now in prison awaiting trial.

Colonel Roden's body has been enclosed in a zinc shell and then in two others of wood, and interred in the cemetery of Galeria, from whence it has since been exhumed and sent back to England by the Steamship 'Noruban', for burial near his home.

See inside the church on the west wall at the back to see the plaque dedicated to his memory.

Henry Arthur Addis – Row 15



A solicitor's clerk living and working in Usk, he was also clerk to the local board and the parish council.

Noted: Henry Addis was present at the 'THE FINAL COURT LEFT DINNER'

On Monday, November 9th, 1885, the final Court Last Dinner was held at the Three Salmons Hotel. Mr. J. H. Clark, the Portreeve-elect.

Francis Morgan and Family – Row 16

An interesting tomb in the Grecian style. Rectangular chest with corners sloping outwards; on plinth. Capstone supports urn of similar style to chest.

Inscriptions in memory of "Elizabeth wife of Francis Morgan of the parish of Llanbaddock" who died in 1823, and Francis Morgan. Also to Anne Phillips of this town who died in 1785.

Francis was an Alderman and member of the voluntary rifle corps in Usk.

Noted: At the Quarter Sessions, at Usk, on 3rd of January 1832, at which Lord Granville Somerset presided, 22 prisoners were tried. David Griffiths was convicted of having stolen two pigs from James Blower, Little Castle, Gwehelog, and Richard Williams, of stealing a neck of pork belonging to Mr. Francis Morgan, of Usk.



Tom Pearce (1910 to 2013) – Row 17

Gilbert Thomas Henry Pearce, known as Tom, was buried in Usk churchyard on 9th May 2013, aged 103. St Mary's church was full of mourners for the funeral taken by Rev. Julian Grey. He said that it was nice to do a funeral for someone who has lived to a wonderful age and lived such an interesting life.

Tom was well known across S. Wales for his fine dart playing. He would throw brass darts from a distance of nine feet, regularly hitting the target.

He became friendly with John Lowe, a world darts champion who attended Tom's 100th birthday celebration.

Picture from Free Press 15th May
2013



Sarah Hutchinson Adams (Freeman) (1852 to 1909) – Row 29

Sarah was born on 3rd May 1852 in Pennsylvania USA and died on 2nd July 1909 in England. She was buried in Usk on 6th July 1909.

Sarah lived in Plas Newydd and was married to Henry Francis John Freeman who was born on 30th July 1854 and died 27th April 1916. Henry's father Bushrod W. Adams was president of the Philadelphia Stock Exchange from 1889 to 1891 and was elected as a member of the stock exchange in 1882 and was one of the trustees.

George Edward Price (1900 to 1924) – Row 44

George was born in Abergavenny in October 1900 and was a resident of Llanllowell from 2nd April 2022. He died on 7th June 1924 and was living in Old Market Street, Usk.

His parents were James Price (1878 to 1939) and Margaret (nee Tomkins) (1881 to 1944). He had eleven siblings all noted.

1902 to 1963: Mary Price and 1903 to 1997: Gladys May

1906 to 1977: Ivor James and 1908 to 1980: Arthur

1910 to 1990: Harold and 1911 to 1991: Owen Gordon

1913 to 1994: Albert Rowland and 1915 to 1916: Reginald

1917 to 2003: Reginald Leonard

1918 to 1996: Gwendoline Grace and 1921 to? Myrtle

Lewis Tomb – Section C Members of the Lewis family were buried in this tomb and believe to be the family of Thomas Lewis, Esq. a Magistrate (died 4th September 1784). A trustee of the Roger Edwards Trust:

Other Lewis's living in and around Usk in the 1800's

Lewis, Ann, milk woman - Lewis, Alfred, chemist - Lewis, George, prison warder - Lewis, Hester, by Town Hal - Lewis, Henry, timber merchant - Lewis, John, innkeeper - Lewis, John, carpenter - Lewis, Mary, Old Market street - Lewis, William, labourer - Edwin Lewis, Tregirog Fann. - Alfred Lewis, Tyharry Farm, Penyclawdd.



Robert Rickards 1839-1924

Born in Exeter in 1839

In 1865, at St James Westminster, he married Isabella Richards, daughter of Rev Edward Windsor Richards who was living at the Rectory, St Andrews Glamorgan. The marriage states that Robert was a gentleman, as was his father.

In 1871 Robert was a civil engineer and was living in Gabalfa, Cardiff with Isabella and their sons Robert Windsor aged 5 and Hely Bennet aged 3.

Sadly Hely died at Weston-Super-Mare in 1891. Robert Windsor had studied at Marlborough College and later at Oxford.

At this time they were living in The Priory, Usk.

In 1901 Robert senior was a land agent and magistrate; from 1911 until his death in 1924 he continued to live at The Priory on his own means with several servants.

Robert, Isabella and Hely are buried together in St Mary's churchyard.

James Williams 1810 to 1863 – Section E

Noted: In 1842, Mr. James Williams, having purchased the site of the old House of Correction, in Bridge Street, commenced building extensive premises, in which he carried on a large trade. This induced other tradesmen to build and improve their residences.



Edward Henry Mathews – Section E

Mathews Tomb – Grade 11 listed. Early C19, commemorating death of Edward Henry Mathews in 1840. An agent living in Usk.

“Beneath this tomb are laid the remains of Edward Henry Mathews who was cut down by typhus fever in the bloom of manhood in the 21st year of his age on 23rd September 1840. His Eulogy shall not be here Engraved nor shall Words interwove with Sins find out their way his loss has bitterly scarred his parents heart”

Edward was the son of Henry Mathews, gentleman



Tombs noted in Past and Present – Printed by J.H. Clarke in 189?

This book is available on line and proved to be an excellent source of information when re-searching the Victorians living in the community surrounding the church.

In the Churchyard there are several very handsome Tombs, among the principal of which are those belonging to the Nicholl family.

A massive Aberdeen granite one records the death of Iltyd Nicholl, born July 19th, 1785; died October 22nd, 1871; and Eleanor, his Wife, born 1778; died February 19th, 1850.

An adjoining Tomb records the death of the Rev. Iltyd Kicholl, eldest son of the foregoing, born April 5th, 1814; died February 11th, 1867. Also of his Wife, Augusta Jane, born December 17th, 1817; died July 3rd, 1851. And their daughter and only child, Augusta Jane, born May 19th, 1848; died April 23rd, 1850.

Another Tomb of Wicklow granite is to the memory of William Henry Nicholl, youngest Son of Iltyd Nicholl, Esq., who died October 21st, 1870.

An Aberdeen and Wicklow granite Tomb is also in the group, recording the death of Sir Matthew Digby Wyatt, Son-in-law of Mr. Nicholl, born July 28th, 1820, died May 21st, 1877.

Near the same spot is a Tomb composed of large slabs of Wicklow and Aberdeen granite, with an anchor of granite, to commemorate the decease of Henry William Francis Greatwood, who died July 30th, 1885; Emma Greatwood, his Wife, who died February 8th, 1849; and Francis Ross Greatwood, their Son, who died November 9th, 1863.

Other Tombs record the deaths of: —

Richard Brown Roden, who died in Corsica, March 5th, 1887, aged 55 years.

Thomas Reece, of Porthycarne House, died October 8th, 1853, aged 71 years; Mary Elizabeth, his Wife; and Mary Elizabeth, their daughter, who died in the 13th year of her age.

Near the west entrance to the Church is a handsome granite Tomb to the memory of Edward Parker, who died September 2nd, 1881, aged 85; and Mary, his Wife, who died March 1st, 1871.

Near the west entrance gate is a noble monolith of granite, to the memory of James Williams, Merchant, of this town.

The following record is also to be found in the Church- yard:

Underneath this Tomb lyeth the remains of Rachel wife of Philip Mason, of this town, died November 26th, 1769, Aged 46 years.

Also, the above Philip Mason, died May 11th, 1772,

Aged 52years, Weighing 554lbs!!

Mass Burials

Twyn Square Chapel

Human remains disinterred from Twyn Square Chapel and reinterred in St Mary's Churchyard March 1989.

Twyn Square Congregational Chapel was originally built in 1769 for local farmers. It was rebuilt in 1862 at a cost of £1200. It has a turret for one bell and could accommodate 400 people.

From 'The Christian' 3rd March 1905: "Mr Sidney Evans and Mr Sam Jenkins have conducted a series of revival services at the Twyn Square Congregational church Usk where splendid meetings have been held for the past 8 weeks. There have so far been nearly 50 conversions in the place."

Unfortunately we have been unable to discover the number nor the names of any of those whose remains were reinterred in St Mary's churchyard.

Mass Burial of Remains Found During Archaeological Dig (20th Century)

In 1987 archaeological excavations took place in preparation for an extension to the burial ground. The site was to the east of the Garden of Remembrance and was known as Duke's Yard as it had originally housed workshops for the Duke of Beaufort's estate.

It was a medieval graveyard with 73 individual burials and a charnel pit. It was believed to be associated with the Priory as it was separate from the parish graveyard.

The graves contained the remains of women, and this is believed to be a burial area for nuns of the priory. One of the women was found buried with the remains of a child tucked into her arm.

The remains of one man were found. His legs were broken, and it is believed that this was because he was tall, enabling him to be buried in a casket. It is suggested these might be the remains of Adam of Usk.

The remains were disinterred and reinterred in one grave in the new burial



Priory Church of St Mary
History Day 9th August

"Herein
lie the medieval remains
of those who were originally
buried here between the
late 12th and 16th centuries
Disinterred 1987
Reinterred 1991
Requiescat in Pace"

Buildings and Monuments of Interest

Priory Gatehouse and Porches

A wall can be seen running from the church, on the south-west corner (left of the west porch), between the church and the Priory Gatehouse.

This wall would have formed part of the medieval churchyard.

The churchyard would have been an enclosed area, used by parishioners worshipping at the church and would have been completely separate from the areas used by the nuns- whose buildings and cloisters were on the south of the church.

The Priory Gatehouse was built just before 1535, not long before the **suppression** of the convent. It remains today, giving access to the current priory building (not owned by the church) and is undergoing repair and conservation.

The north and west porches were added to the building in the early 15th century, when further rebuilding work took place. The work is thought to be funded by the foundation of Sir William Herbert (the builder of Raglan Castle). His crest can be seen above the north porch.

The arches on the porch are known as **ogee arches** and are decorated with **crockets**. An **ogee arch** is a design used in the late 14th century and early 15th century and is formed by using a convex

and concave curve. **Crockets** are the stylised carvings of curled leaves, buds and flowers used to decorate.



Crest of Sir
William Herbert

Crockets

Convex and concave
curves forming the arch

Priory Church of St Mary, Usk
History Day 9th August 2025

Base of Medieval Cross

'The Cross sanctified the churchyard and provided a memorial to those buried there in unmarked graves. The Cross was a focal point for festivals, especially Palm Sunday and Corpus Christi when a large wooden cross would have been carried from the Church around the building to the Churchyard Cross, while the clergy and the parishioners sang psalms. Various gatherings took place beneath them as well as public announcements.'

'During the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century most of Monmouthshire's Crosses suffered greatly, with practically all losing their heads; others were not so lucky with only stone sockets or steps surviving.'

'A plain square base, with a mortice for the shaft, is all that is left of the old cross in Usk Churchyard. It stands on the North side of the Church and is 3ft square'. (Elizabeth Harcourt Mitchell 1893).



Priory Church of St Mary

Following the Norman Invasion of England and Wales the Marcher Lord, Richard (Strongbow) de Clare, Earl of Hertford and Lord of Usk, founded the market town of Usk. He founded St. Mary's Priory in 1135. His coat of arms can be seen in the stained-glass window above the west door. It was also found on tiles, excavated from the original chancel floor.

His son Gilbert continued the development of the Priory until his death in 1152.

The charter to establish a Priory of Benedictine nuns in Usk was granted by Richard Strongbow, 2nd Earl of Pembroke in 1176.

The earliest part of the church is earlier than the foundation of the building as it stands now and is mentioned in the **foundation charter**. This means the nuns took over an existing church and it is possible there may have been an informal community here before the formal endowment of the priory.



As with all churches of this time in Britain, St Mary's was a Catholic church and was led, in faith, by Rome

The church was a **conventual church** (intended for men or women of monastic life to use for their worship- in this case the female nuns).

St Mary's Priory was one of only three female convents in medieval Wales. The priory church was also used as a parish church for worship by local people. The nuns would have used the **conventual** or monastic part of the building (the chancel and transepts). The **nave** would have been separated and provided with a nave altar for the parish church.

The de Clare family had the right of patronage over the church until 1322.

King Edward II gave the patronage to Hugh Despenser (a favourite of his). Five years later in 1330, Elizabeth de Clare confirmed the patronage and she supported the Priory- leaving a generous inheritance after her death of £6 and two gold cloths.

The church has undergone many changes over the years. Parts of the original church were built over the remains of the Roman fortress and these parts suffered from subsidence. Repairs in centuries past were unsuccessful and the north and south transepts and the eastern apse no longer exist. Repairs were carried out in the early 15th century following the campaign of Owain Glyndŵr to regain Welsh control over the area. These repairs and changes made at that time, including the porches on the north and west walls, were funded (in part at least) by William Herbert of Raglan- his crest can be seen over the north porch gate.

Further changes were made to the church following the dissolution of the monasteries in 1535/1536. Restoration, excavation and work to modernise the church (for safety and continued use) have been ongoing throughout the church's history and St Mary's, Usk remains a well-used parish church in the Monmouthshire Diocese.



The Original East End

Scars can be seen on the exterior east wall, showing the site where the original choir/quire was positioned.

Excavations and observations in 1987 identified a wall on the line of the Garden of Remembrance and the new burial area. It ran north - south for 9.5m and is believed to have been the east end of the presbytery. This would have made it 22.6m in length.

Pieces of medieval pottery were found, also 73 burials, believed to date from 13th- 16th century.

Similar markings can be seen in the north wall above the vestry extension, where the original north transept would have been positioned. An ancient well (date unknown) was also found in this area.



Former Northern Transept

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