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Dublin Core

Title

Nautical Imagery at St Davids Cathedral | Delweddau Morwrol yng Nghadeirlan Tyddewi

Subject

St Davids Cathedral

Cadeirlan Tyddewi

Pembrokeshire

Sir Benfro

Nautical Imagery

Delweddau Morwrol

Creator

David James

Publisher

Ports, Past and Present Project

Date

2023

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Relation

<https://perma.cc/NY29-ATJR>

Format

Curatescape story

Language

English

Welsh

Coverage

51.8814223886474, -5.267635637472266

Curatescape Story Item Type Metadata

Lede

The interior of St. Davids Cathedral contains many hidden marvels of nautical imagery, from wooden misericords depicting seasickness to graffiti of medieval ships.

Lede (Welsh)

Mae'r tu mewn i Gadeirlan Tyddewi yn cynnwys llawer o ryfeddodau cudd o ran delweddau morwrol, o fisericordiau pren sy'n portreadu salwch môr i graffiti o longau canoloesol.

Story

The interior of St Davids Cathedral contains some fascinating traces of Pembrokeshire's maritime history that visitors can discover. Some of these legacies can be found in the misericords, wooden structures on the underside of the folding seats of choir stalls found across Europe in medieval churches. They depict a wide array of scenes, from medieval domestic life to biblical imagery to depictions of monsters and animals found in bestiaries. They are a riot of life and playful imagery protected and hidden from view.

The St Davids misericords are each carved from a single block of oak and are fine examples of craftsmanship and the art of wood carving. They are located in the choir at the East end of the Cathedral. Many of them contain nautical imagery, showing the deep connections of St Davids and Pembrokeshire with the coastline and the ocean.

One misericord depicts four men in a small boat in turbulent seas. One is being violently sick over the side and the expressions of his shipmates seem to suggest they may be getting pleasure from their shipmates discomfort: one is patting him on his back to help him. The boat shows an oar through a hole in a plank in the side in the Viking fashion. The story associated with this carving is the sixth-century St. Govan who, with two companions, was sent by his Master, St. Aelfyw from St Davids Cathedral to Rome, to obtain a copy of the true Mass. During the journey St. Govan nearly died of seasickness. (Script from the booklet "The Misericords of St. David's Cathedral, Pembrokeshire"). Another twelfth-century misericord depicts a clinker built ship being constructed on shore. the shipwrights are taking a break, an axe lies behind one of them. This ship has fore and after castles and a straight stern, which suggests she may eventually be fitted with a rudder on the stern rather than the traditional viking side rudder.

The Cathedral also contains graffiti depicting the outline of medieval vessels carved into the stone work, which you can see in the images below. All of these traces form part of the dense and interconnected web of maritime heritage in the region, and the link between St Davids Cathedral and a wider world of Irish Sea religious sites.

Story (Welsh)

Mae'r tu mewn i Gadeirlan Tyddewi yn cynnwys olion hynod ddiddorol o hanes morwrol Sir Benfro y gall ymwelwyr eu darganfod. Gellir gweld peth o'r etifeddiaeth honno yn y misericordiau, sef strwythurau pren o dan seddi plygu'r côr sydd i'w gweld mewn eglwysi canoloesol ar hyd a lled Ewrop. Maent yn portreadu amrywiaeth eang o olygfeydd, o fywyd domestig yn yr Oesoedd Canol i ddelweddau beiblaidd a darluniau o angenfilod ac anifeiliaid a geir mewn bwystoriau. Maent yn gyforiog o fywyd a delweddaeth chwareus, wedi eu diogelu yno, o'r golwg.

Cerfiwyd holl fisericordiau Tyddewi o un bloc o dderw ac maent yn enghreifftiau gwych o grefftwaith a chelfyddyd cerfio pren. Fe'u ceir yn y côr ym mhen dwyreiniol y Gadeirlan. Mae llawer ohonynt yn cynnwys delweddau morwrol sy'n adlewyrchu cysylltiadau dwfn Tyddewi a Sir Benfro â'r arfordir a'r môr.

Mae un misericord yn portreadu pedwar dyn mewn cwch bach ar foroedd cythryblus. Mae un wrthi'n taflu i fyny dros ymyl y cwch ac mae ystumiau'r tri arall yn awgrymu eu bod yn cael pleser o'i weld yn dioddef: mae un yn curo'i gefn i'w helpu. Yn y portread o'r cwch ei hun, gwelir rhwyf yn ymddangos drwy dwll yn yr ochr – un o nodweddion amlwg llongau'r Llychlynwyr. Y stori sy'n gysylltiedig â'r cerfiad hwn yw bod Sant Gofan a dau gydymaith wedi'u hanfon i Rufain yn ystod y chweched ganrif i geisio copi o'r wir Offeren, a hynny gan eu Meistr, Sant Aelfyw o Gadeirlan Tyddewi. Yn ystod y daith, roedd Gofan yn dioddef cymaint o salwch môr nes y bu bron iddo farw. (Ceir yr hanes yn y llyfryn *The Misericords of St. David's Cathedral, Pembrokeshire*). Mae misericord arall sy'n dyddio o'r ddeuddegfed ganrif yn dangos llong estyllog yn cael ei hadeiladu ar y lan. Mae'r seiri wrthi'n cymryd hoe, a gwelir bwyell yn gorwedd y tu ôl i un ohonynt. Mae gan y llong hon fforcas ôl a blaen a starn syth, sy'n awgrymu efallai mai ar y cefn y byddai'r llyw yn cael ei osod maes o law yn hytrach nag ar yr ochr yn null traddodiadol y Llychlynwyr.

Mae'r Gadeirlan hefyd yn gartref i ddarn o graffiti sy'n dangos amlinelliad o longau canoloesol wedi'u cerfio i'r gwaith cerrig (gweler y delweddau isod). Mae'r holl olion hyn yn rhan o rwydwaith cyfoethog treftadaeth forwrol yr ardal, a'r cysylltiad sydd rhwng Cadeirlan Tyddewi a'r byd ehangach o safleoedd crefyddol ar lannau Môr Iwerddon.

Factoid

The imagery of some English misericords could be quite risqué! Many were destroyed in the Reformation or removed by nineteenth-century moralists.

Roedd rhai o'r delweddau a geid ar fisericordiau yn Lloegr yn eithaf risqué! Cafodd llawer eu dinistrio yn y Diwygiad Protestannaidd neu eu gwaredu o'r eglwysi gan foesolwyr y bedwaredd ganrif ar bymtheg.

Related Resources

Misericords at St. David's Cathedral, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, <https://rcahmw.gov.uk/misericords-at-st-davids/>

Paul Hardwick, *English Medieval Misericords: The Margins of Meaning* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2011)

Official Website

<https://www.stdavidscathedral.org.uk/>