

Great Archaeological Sites in Rhondda Cynon Taf



6. ST PETER'S CHURCH, PETERSTON-SUPER-MONTEM



In the days before the Industrial Revolution the hills and valleys of Glamorgan were sparsely populated. Villages were thickly clustered in the Vale and were the centres of small parishes, but parishes in the hills where there were few people could be enormous. One such parish was Coychurch which covered a huge swathe of land north-east of Bridgend. Like some other parishes of this size, it had chapels of ease which catered for worshipers who lived nearer to them than to the mother church. These allowed people living in isolated farmsteads in the hills to attend services more easily a Sunday.

St Peter's church (SS 9932 8531) was one of these. The name of this part of the parish, Peterston super Montem, says where it was – 'on the mountain'. There are signs that it may date to early in the Middle Ages, and may even go back to before the parish system was introduced to Wales, as it stood in an enclosure with curved boundaries. The walls of the church itself were widest at the bottom church, and there were no windows on its north wall, both early fashions. Unfortunately there are no carvings left that might enable us to work out the date it was built, neither around

the doors and windows nor around the piscina in the chancel where the priest washed the chalice after saying mass.

By the first half of the 19th century communities had started to grow up in more accessible places and their inhabitants too wanted some more convenient to worship. The church on the mountain went out of use and in 1833 a new one was built in Brynna to replace it. The old building and its burial ground, went out of use and gradually fell into ruin, as it is today.



The ruins of St Peter's church are just off the Ridgeway Walk. From Brynna (on the outskirts of Llanharan) where there is limited parking, follow the footpath leading northwards over Mynydd Coedbychan until it crosses the ridgeway walk, where you should turn left (west). The nearest railway station is Llanharan, on the line between Cardiff Central and Bridgend. Maps: OS Landranger Series sheet 170, Explorer Series sheet 151.

Timeline (the asterisks indicate the time-span)



You can learn more about this site, and other similar archaeological sites in Wales, by going to <https://www.archwilio.org.uk/arch/>. Please read and observe the Conditions of Use. St Peter's church has the PRN (Primary Record Number) 00348m, and you can search for other similar sites here too. You can contact us via social media or through the methods given at the bottom of the page. See more about our Christian sites at http://www.ggat.org.uk/cadw/historic_christian/pages/index.html