

The Ystrad Fflur treasure: 1620 Bible

Many people know of the little church of Ystrad Fflur (Strata Florida) and of its connection with the Cistercian monastic order. But there exists a special treasure in the church which belongs to an era after Henry VIII dissolved the monastery. Philip Wyn Davies explains



The first complete Welsh version of the Bible, known as William Morgan's Bible, was published in 1588. Yet this is not the 'old' Welsh Bible with which we are accustomed.



There was a revised version in 1620, four centuries ago this year, and this is our 'old' Bible. It is accepted that the person who completed the revision work was Dr John Davies of Mallwyd, priest and one of the leading Welsh academics, who was also a master of the original languages of the Bible. He is the hero of Gwynn ap Gwilym's novel *Sgytha*.

The original copy of the 1620 Bible is kept safely in Ystrad Fflur church. It is a large book which was published for use in churches and also includes the Common Prayer Book. This was a Bible to be used for all to listen to readings from it during services.

In 1620 attendance at parish church services was compulsory, but few could read. A version of the Bible that people could buy was published in 1630; the 'Beibl bach' (little Bible) sold for a crown.