

Capel

CYMDEITHAS TREFTADAETH Y CAPEL
THE CHAPELS HERITAGE SOCIETY



CYLCHLYTHYR / NEWSLETTER

13

GWANWYN / SPRING 1990

CYFARFOD Y GWANWYN SPRING MEETING

Cynhelir cyfarfod hanner blyneddol y gwanwyn eleni yn ysgoldy Eglwys Fethodistaidd y Trinity, Stanwell Road, Penarth ar 11 Mai, gan gychwyn am 10.30 a.m. Os ydych am fynychu'r cyfarfod a fydddech garediced â llenwi'r ffurflen a amgaeir gyda'r *Cylchlythyr* hwn a'i dychwelyd cyn 4 Mai i Mrs Valerie Bird, 1 Belle Vue Terrace, Penarth, De Morgannwg, CF6 1DB.

The half-yearly spring meeting this year will be held in Trinity Methodist Church schoolroom, Stanwell Road, Penarth on Saturday 11 May, starting at 10.30 a.m. If you wish to attend the meeting please complete the form enclosed with this issue of the *Newsletter* and return it before 4 May to Mrs Valerie Bird, 1 Belle Vue Terrace, Penarth, South Glamorgan, CF6 1DB.

LLWYNRHYDOWEN

Cynhelir cyfarfod ar y cyd gyda Chymdeithas Hynafiaethwyr Ceredigion yng Nghapel Newydd Llwynrhydowen, Rhydlewis, Dydd Sadwrn 13 Gorffennaf am 10.30 a.m.

Traddodir darlith gan y Parchedig Elwyn Davies, Y Coleg Coffa, Aberystwyth ar *LLWYNRHYDOWEN: CANOLFAN RADICALIAETH*.

Ar ôl y cyfarfod bydd cyfle i gael cinio gerllaw ac i ymweld â Hen Gapel Llwynrhydowen, sydd bellach yn amgueddfa.

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A joint meeting with Ceredigion Antiquarian Society will be held in the Llwynrhydowen New Chapel, Rhydlewis, on Saturday 13 July at 10.30 a.m.

A lecture will be delivered by the Reverend Elwyn Davies, The Memorial College, Aberystwyth, on *LLWYNRHYDOWEN: A CENTRE OF RADICALISM*.

After the meeting there will be opportunity to have lunch nearby and to visit the Llwynrhydowen Old Chapel, which is now a museum.

CHAPELS AND RELIGION IN THE VALLEYS

On 12 February at the Pontypridd Historical and Cultural Centre Mr Alwyn J. Williams, the recently retired Mid Glamorgan Planning Officer, addressed the South-East Wales Group on the topic of 'Chapels and Religion in the Valleys', showing how Nonconformity had shaped the culture of the Valley communities and chapel buildings had contributed to the townscape of the region.

After a brief survey of Nonconformity in the area and the history of the different denominations, showing the important roles played by the Sunday school, the revivals, the temperance movement and the tradition for music and singing, he described the varied architectural styles of the chapels, showing how these often reflected the amount of money available and how the same builders' work can often be traced in the chapels and in neighbouring industrial sites.

He explained how his interest in the topic had developed from a 1978 MSC-funded scheme under which Mid Glamorgan had recruited young people to carry out a survey which covered 636 chapels. Measured drawings were produced of these buildings, and information on the history of about two thirds of this number was assembled. This magnificent archive, recording the state of chapels in Mid Glamorgan in 1978 is now lodged in the care of the Glamorgan Record Office.

Mr Williams then turned to his collection of slides to illustrate a variety of chapel styles and the variety of different uses to which redundant chapel buildings had been put. Of particular note were successful conversions to residential use, community centres, museums, and inter-denominational use.

Mr Williams left his audience with several thought-provoking questions:

1. Will religion be as important a force on the development of the Valley communities in future?
2. Is there a need for so many chapels, or indeed for all those denominations?
3. Should not consideration be given to selling those chapels that are no longer viable, so as to concentrate on the maintenance of a reduced number?
4. When selling chapels surplus to requirements, should there not be a restricting covenant placed on the sale to ensure the conversion to be more appropriate to the original purpose of the building than has often been the case? No more conversions into Bingo Halls or Night Clubs.
5. Finally, should we not make a concerted effort to make religion and chapels, together with Sunday Schools, more attractive to parents and children so that they can again have the influence on the life and conduct of the community which will counteract the poor behaviour and materialistic attitudes of the present day?

SIWRNAI O GWMPAS CAPELI CWM RHONDDA

[A minister of the Presbyterian Church of Wales maps the chapel scene in the Rhondda by taking us on a guided tour of the Valley from Blaen-y-Cwm in the North to Porth in the south, pointing out the thirty-five or so chapels which have been demolished or converted to other use (mainly flats or old peoples homes), largely in the last seven years].

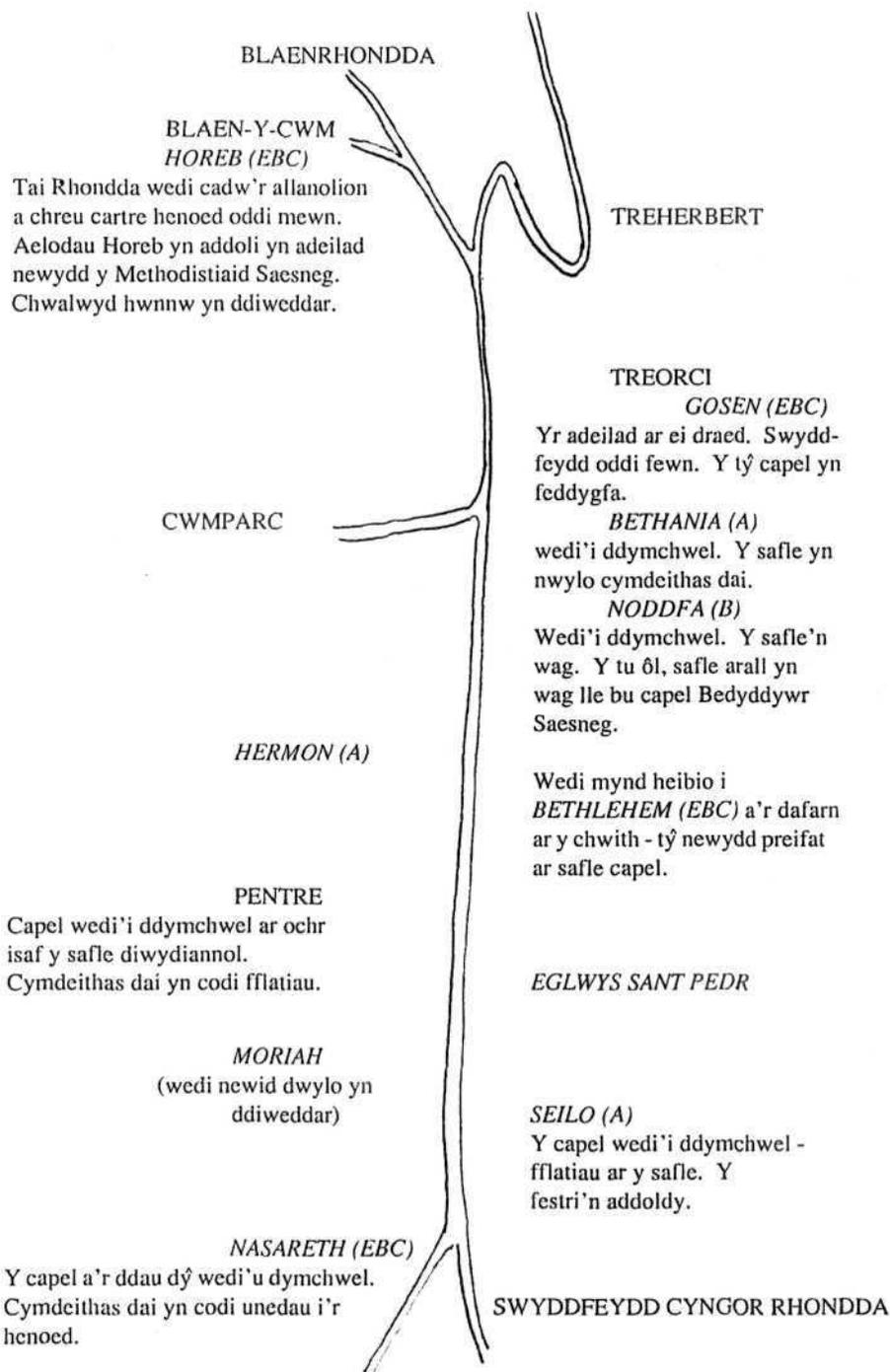
Pan awn ar daith drwy Gwm Rhondda, mae'r bylchau niferus yn yr adeiladau ar hyd y strydoedd yn mynnu ein sylw. Beth a ddiplannodd? Beth achosodd y gwagle? Pam alla'i nawr weld y mynydd? Dacw adeilad newydd yn codi fan'na! Beth, tybed, oedd yno o'r blaen? A'r ateb bron bob tro yw capel!

Yr wyf wedi ceisio llunio map i egluro'r newid. Digwyddodd y rhan fwyaf o'r hyn a nodwyd yn ystod y saith mlynedd ddiwethaf yma. Mae'r chwalfa ar raddfa helaeth anhygoel pan ystyriwch mai rhyw naw milltir yw hyd y Rhondda Fawr o'r Porth i Flaen-y-cwm.

Nid yw'r map yn holl-gynhwysfawr. Map ydyw sy'n cyfleu yr hyn a welaf i ac a glywaf i ar fy siwrnai o ddydd i ddydd ar hyd y cwm, wrth fy ngwaith fel gweinidog gydag Eglwys Bresbyteriaidd Cymru.

Byddai'n gwneud taith diwrnod ddiddorol iawn, gan gychwyn ym Mlaen-y-cwm wrth droed Mynydd y Rhigos o gorffen ym Mharc Treftadaeth y Rhondda yn Nhrehafod, ar safle hen waith glo Lewis Merthyr.

MYNYDD Y RHIGOS



GELLI

Capel wedi'i ddymchwel, y safle'n wag. Un arall yn fflatiau.

CWM CLYDACH

SOAR (A)
Cartre henoed preifat
LIBANUS (EBC)
'Boys' club'

PENYGRAIG

EGLWYS LLANFAIR
wedi'i dymchwel;
tai annedd yno.

SOAR (B)

y capel yn ganolfan gymdeithasol; y gynulleidfa'n addoli yn y festri fawr yng nghefn yr adeilad.

TON PENTRE

Safle hen eglwys Dyfodwg. yr hen adeilad wedi'i ddymchwel; adeilad newydd yno

HERMON (B)

Y capel wedi'i ddymchwel. Fflatiau henoed yno; y festri wedi'i haddasu. Dau gapel enfawr -

BETHESDA (A) a
JERUSALEM (EBC)

- a chapel Saesneg yn agos.
Capel arall yn fflatiau.

LLWYNYPIA

SALEM (A) wedi'i ddymchwel. Adeilad newydd ar y safle.

CALFARIA (B)

wedi cau ond yn sefyll

TONYPANDY

JERUSALEM (B)
fflatiau henoed
ZION (Methodist Saesneg)
wedi'i addasu. Hefyd yn ganolfan Methodistiaid y cylch, wedi chwalu'r Central Hall.
EGLWYS DEWI SANT C
a fu'n addoldy i'r Cymry yn eiddo i'r Eglwys Apostolaidd

MORIAH (B) wedi cau; trafodaethau ar hyn o bryd ynglŷn â'i ddyfodol.

YSTRAD

Capel Saesneg (W) newydd ei ddymchwel
Capel '*Heol Fach*' (EBC) yn 'Boys' Club' ers blynyddoedd
Safle **NODDFA (B)** yn fflatiau henoed. ers blynyddoedd.
BODRINGALLT (A)
newydd ei ddymchwel, y safle'n wag.

TREALAW

Addoldy Byddin yr Iachawdwriaeth wedi ei ddymchwel

Tŷ ar safle hen

gapel y Bedyddwyr
ARMEL (B.Saes.)
ar y farchnad
AINON (B.Cym.) wedi ei wedd-newid yn addoldy Efyngylwyr
SEION (EBC)
Y safle'n wag a'r capel yn Japan.

RHONDDA FACH

YNYSHIR

MORIAH (EBC)
ar ei draed ond yn wag ers blynyddoedd; yr organ ym **METHANIA** Tonypandy.

TREWILIAM
SARON (A)
newydd ei ddymchwel.

Capel y Westleaid yn
garej ers blynyddoedd;
y galeri i'w weld fel
yr oedd.

NASARETH (EBC)
yn ganolfan henoed ers
blynyddoedd; yr hen
bwlpudd yng nghapel
Glanynant Pengam

Y PORTH
BETHLEHEM (EBC)
(tu draw i Leo's)
y festri'n siop, y capel
wedi'i ddymchwel a'r
safle'n wag.

SALEM (B) - capel a
fu ar stryd Hannah, prif
stryd siopa'r Porth ac a
noddwyd gan Thomas & Evans -
chwalwyd yr adeilad ddiwedd
1990. Aeth y tu fewn i'r
Almaen. Y gynulleidfa'n
addoli yn y tŷcapel
(wedi'i addasu).
CAPEL Y PORTH (A)
wedi'i ddymchwel.

TREBANOG

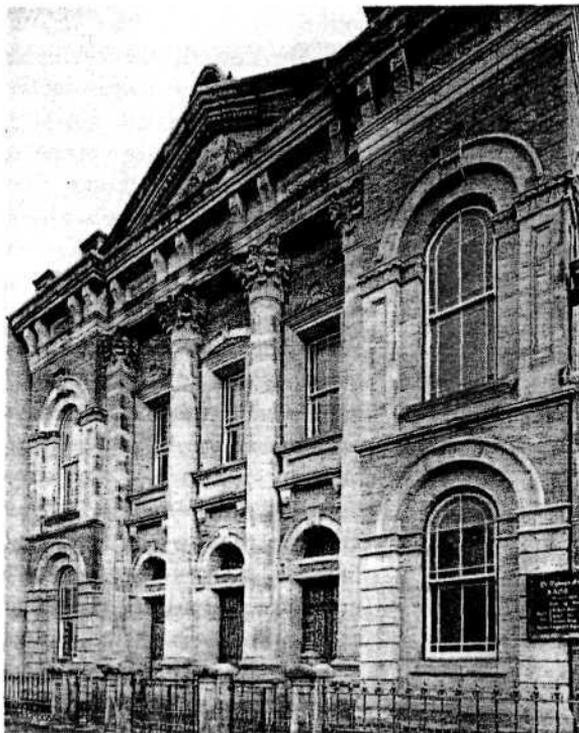
Yn ardal Y CYMER
o'r Porth mae safle capel
hynaf y cwm (A. 18fed ganrif).
Bu'n wag ers dwy flynedd a
bwriedir ei symud i'r Parc
Trefstadaeth yn Nhrehafod.
Gogyfer â'r adeilad bychan
hwn saif capel mwy (A) a
godwyd adeg y chwyldro
diwydiannol. Hwn yn nwylo
adeiladydd.
Yn uwch i fyny CAERSALEM (A)
a werthwyd yn ddiweddar ac sy'n
awr yn cael ei droi'n fflatiau.

TREHAFOD

Lona Roberts

METHODISM IN ABERYSTWYTH

The word "Methodist" has had several connotations in Wales, but currently only one officially survives. There used to be a Calvinistic Methodist Church before it became the Presbyterian Church of Wales, and there were Wesleyan, Primitive, and United Methodist Churches before they all became really united as the plain "Methodist Church". In Wales, both English-speaking and Welsh-speaking Methodist Churches exist as separate strands of the one Methodist Connexion which is based at Central Hall, Westminster.



St Paul's Welsh Methodist

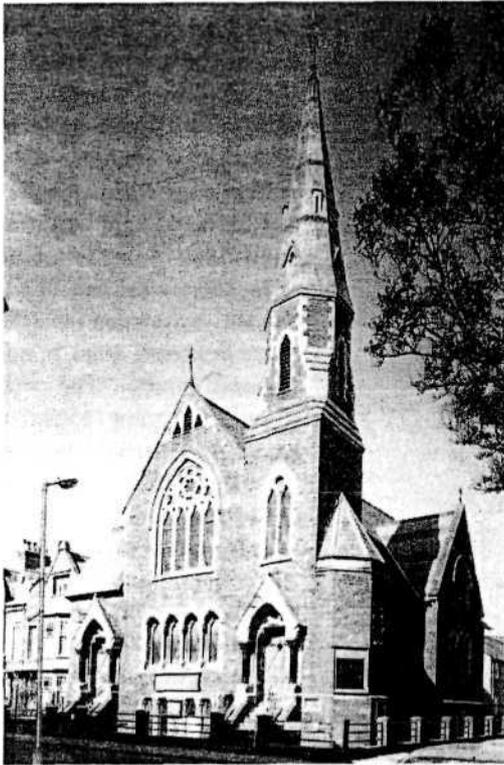
In line with Methodism's traditional interest in education, the building doubled as a school, which was described in a contemporary report as one of the best schools of its type in Wales. This building, which cost £257, is still in use as a place of worship by the Salvation Army.

There is an interesting history attached to these two strands of the Methodist Church in Aberystwyth. The first Welsh "Wesleyan Missionaries" visited and preached in inns in the town in 1804 and again in 1805, and following the formation of a society the first Welsh chapel was opened in 1807 in a court off what is now Queen Street. The work flourished and expanded as it strove to meet the needs of English-speaking members in addition to the indigenous Welsh speakers, and with the full cooperation and help of the Welsh society a separate English chapel was built in 1844 in Alexandra Road. In line with Methodism's traditional

Membership of both churches grew steadily over the next few decades, and by the mid 1860s both buildings were proving inadequately small. The English church was granted its own minister in 1865, and immediately set about planning to build a new, larger, church. This came to fruition in 1870 when a building designed to seat 450 was opened on the corner of the present Queen's Road and Bath Street. So came into being an imposing church, with a "novel and picturesque tower" (intended for a belfry which was never added), which was originally known as Wesley Chapel, but subsequently, with the demise of the word Wesleyan, it became Queen's Road

Methodist Church. The cost of £2,333 set the members back with a debt which took 24 years to clear.

The parallel growth of the Welsh church led to similar overcrowding and the need for larger and better premises. As if to further the prestigious image of Methodism in the town, the Welsh Methodists in 1880 opened an even grander chapel, known as St. Paul's, in Upper Great Darkgate Street, at a cost of £5,900. The debt was very large and proved a millstone to the members until, after a series of special efforts, it was finally cleared by the turn of the century.

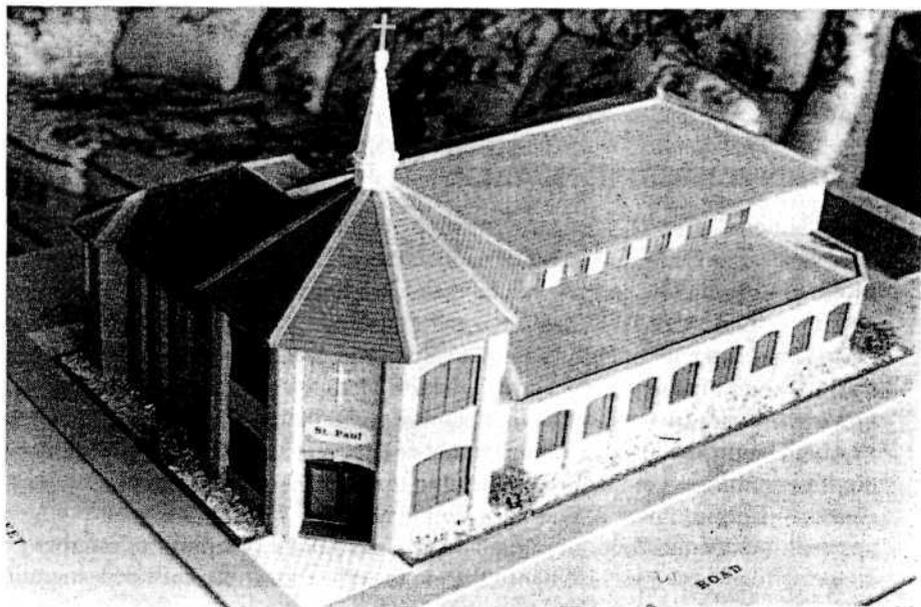


Queen's Road English Methodist

In the latter half of the 19th century Aberystwyth was developing as a holiday resort and an educational centre. The first College of the University of Wales was opened in the town in 1872, and many churches and chapels were built in this heyday of the Victorian era. English Methodism also benefited from the closure of the lead mines in neighbouring villages of Cardiganshire, when many ex-Cornish miners, who were of strong Methodist persuasion, sought employment in the town. Around this time, too, the Cambrian Railway linking Aberystwyth to the English border was opened, with its traditional preponderance of Methodist employees. With so much development in Aberystwyth within a space of a few years, it is perhaps understandable that our forefathers built impressive English and Welsh Methodist churches, believing in an exponential growth!

The 20th century has seen many changes, with both ups and downs in the fortunes of the two churches, but one thing that relentlessly deteriorated was the fabrics of both buildings. As a result, a significant development is unfolding as we approach the end of this century. The membership of the Queen's Road church has now exceeded 150 for the first time in its history, and since 1982 it has been planning a replacement building to meet its growing needs for the 21st century. Structural problems and declining resources at the St. Paul's Church, which have prevented them from using the main church building for many years, have now been resolved by a decision to

share in the new building project. The plans for this 'Methodist Centre' are now rapidly taking shape: the English church has been demolished, the Welsh church is up for sale, and the construction of the new building on the Queen's Road site is under way. In deference to the mother church, the new one, which is due for completion in the spring of 1992, will be called St. Paul's.



Model of St Paul's Methodist Centre

The design of the new building is such that the two congregations will be able to worship separately and simultaneously in their own languages, under one roof. There will be a main hall, with seating for about 250, which is separated from an adjoining concourse area by sliding partitions to allow an extension of seating accommodation to over 300 if required. All seating and ecclesiastical furniture will be movable, so that the hall will provide for multi-purpose usage. It will be equipped with a high quality electronic organ. On the ground floor there will also be a kitchen, lounge, crèche, church office, minister's room, and toilet facilities.

Part of the building will be double storied. The upper floor will house an elegant octagonal hall, with seating for about 60, and a separate organ, to provide the two independent worship areas required. On this floor also will be three smaller rooms for Sunday School and committee use, and separate toilet facilities. A feature of the whole building is that every room will be accessible to the disabled: there will be no steps to the street, and there will be a lift to the first floor. The overall design makes maximum use of the corner site, with a central octagonal block topped by a fleche and cross, with the main entrance splayed across the corner. The total cost of the project will be of the order of £600,000.

So the Methodist wheel has turned full circle. The English work grew out of the stronger Welsh society, which started its life in Queen Street, and led to the building of the first English Nonconformist church in Aberystwyth. Subsequently, both societies moved to larger, impressive, buildings - St. Paul's for the Welsh, Queen's Road for the English. Now, these two churches are abandoned and the roles are reversed as the Welsh work will share with the stronger English society a new St. Paul's Methodist Church Centre in Queen's Road. And another first: this will be the first new purpose-built church in the town of Aberystwyth this century.

Geoffrey M. Brown

METHODIST RECORDS IN WALES

The Methodist Church is, apart from the Roman Catholics, the only significant denomination in Wales to be part of a much larger and centrally-controlled organisation. In Britain the Church is run by the Conference, the sovereign body; and the country is divided into 33 Districts, each governed by a Synod. Each District is divided into a number of circuits, with a Superintendent Minister, and administered by the Circuit Meeting (formerly the Quarterly Meeting, but now often meeting only twice in the year). In each circuit are a number of individual churches or causes, each of which has to appoint a substantial number of officers as well as representatives on circuit committees; the main administering body of the individual church was the Leaders' Meeting, now called the Church Council. Despite this great degree of apparent democratisation, the ordained ministers hold a position of authority and chapel officials have less influence than in the other nonconformist denominations.

In Wales, all Welsh-speaking Methodist churches are in the Cymru district, which is superimposed on a territorial division of Britain where the other 32 districts are concerned. Clwyd and Gwynedd and northern Powys form the North Wales district; Dyfed, Glamorgan and Gwent now form the South Wales district; while some Powys churches belong to the Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury district. Each district synod must appoint a district archivist, who is to contact, discuss with and advise chapels on their records, artefacts and historical aspects of church property. Their work is restricted, however, insofar as Conference has adopted the very enlightened policy of directing that all circuit and church records be deposited in the nearest local record office. District records are sent to an appropriate regional record office, while national records and others not easily housed are sent to the central collection at John Rylands Library in Manchester.

It is the writer's experience that, as a whole, the Methodists have tended to preserve their records somewhat better than other denominations, especially in the case of baptism records. This is no doubt because ministers have a greater administrative role and no Methodist church can constitutionally be without a Minister, so that records tended to be kept in manses rather than passed from officer to officer (and often lost in the process!). The full gamut of chapel records can be expected, but the

most useful (after baptismal registers) are class registers (all members were grouped into classes for pastoral care and study); leaders' meeting minutes, recording the proceedings of the main church body dealing with the 'Society', or human assets and activities; and the trustees' minutes, dealing with church property. There are often great amounts of correspondence, invoices, Sunday school registers, collection registers, papers of church societies, records of missionary collections, and so on.

Anyone finding any Methodist records and wanting to preserve them should contact the appropriate district archivist - in the first instance the writer, who is district archivist for the Cymru district, would be pleased to advise (telephone 0286 679089). Many chapels, especially in Gwent and Glamorgan, and to a lesser extent in the North-east and the Severn Valley, which used to be Welsh-speaking, decided rather than close to change to English - and thus changed to an English-speaking district. The records of such causes will be of particular value, as they have a relevance to the study of the fortunes of the Welsh language as well as the chapel; officials of such chapels are particularly asked to take care of their Welsh-language records and make sure they are handed over.

Some books which will answer most questions about the denomination are:

- Rupert E Davies *Methodism* (Penguin, 1963).
- Eric Edwards *Yr Eglwys Fethodistaidd, Hanes Ystadegol y Taleithiau Cymraeg*
(Gwasg Gomer, 1980 and 1987).
- Hugh Jones *Hanes Wesleyaeth Cymreig* (Llyfrfa Wesleyaidd, 1911).
- A H Williams *Welsh Wesleyan Methodism, 1800-1858*
(Llyfrfa'r Methodistiaid 1935).

Jones's book has a potted history of every Welsh-speaking Methodist chapel, while Rev. Eric Edwards' compilation is full of useful statistics and details of every Welsh Methodist minister. The English churches are less well served, but many circuit or chapel histories are available in pamphlet form.

Gareth Haulfryn Williams

CAU EGLWYS Y TABERNAEL TALYBONT

Mewn cwrdd eglwys ar 19 Tachwedd 1990, penderfynwyd cau eglwys y Tabernacl Talybont, Ceredigion, gan fod yr adeilad bellach, ym marn y pensaer Mr Harri James, yn beryglus fel cyrchfan i gynnal oedfaon ynddo. Y mae pydredd yn y ddau brif drawst a byddai trin ac adnewyddu yr hyn a oedd yn weladwy yn unig yn golygu gwariant o £25,000 o leiaf. Gan nad oedd gan yr eglwys erbyn hyn ond un ar ddeg o aelodau, barnodd yr ymddiriedolwyr ar ôl ymgynghori â'r swyddfa yn Nhŷ Ilston, nad oedd cyfiawnhad dros wariant ar y raddfa yna ac nad oedd dewis arall ond cau.

Y mae gwreiddiau'r Tabernacl yn ymestyn yn ôl i 1793, pan bregethodd Samuel Breeze, gweinidog y Bedyddwyr ym Mhenrhyn-coch ac Aberystwyth, oddi ar y garreg farch o dan dderwen fawr yng nghanol pentref Talybont ac ym 1794 ardrethwyd tŷbychan yn dŷcwrdd yn y pentref. Bu Samuel Breeze farw yn 1812 ond parhaodd ei gydweinidog John James ei weinidogaeth yn y fro ac yn yr un flwyddyn adeiladwyd capel ar ddarn o dir a gafwyd ar brydles oddi wrth Pryse Pryse Gogerddan. Erbyn 1816 gorffennwyd talu amdano ac yn y flwyddyn honno cyfeirir at y Tabernacl yn adroddiad y Gymanfa fel cangen o'r Penrhyn a'r Dref.

Yn ystod yn agos i ddwy ganrif o dystiolaeth, ni fu gan Eglwys y Tabernacl erioed lawer mwy na 150 o aelodau, ond yn ystod y cyfnod hwnnw fe godwyd wyth ar hugain o bregethwyr, yn cynnwys prifeirdd a rhai o brif haneswyr enwad y Bedyddwyr.

Trist yw nodi diwedd pennod y Tabernacl mewn oes o ddifaterwch crefyddol - tristwch cyffredin iawn yng Nghymru heddiw, pan mae cynnal adeiladau a godwyd ar chwys ac ymdrech y tadau yn demlau urddasol i ogoneddu Duw bellach wedi mynd yn faich rhy drwm ar ysgwyddau y gweddill ffyddlon. Y mae soned Mr Huw Hughes, Y Dole, a fu'n ysgrifennydd yr eglwys am gyhyd yn cyfleu'r tristwch hwnnw.

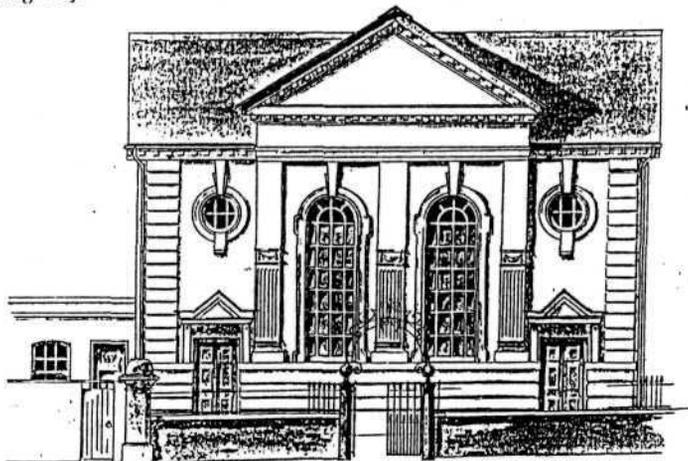
Mae yn fy mynwes dristwch, ac nid oes
Esmwythyd mewn myfyrdod nac mewn cân;
Mae f'enaid yn ymboeni dan y groes
Megis pe bawn yn herio'r Ysbryd Glân.
Trechwyd gan amser ddeunydd pren a maen
A luniwyd gynt yn nydd y cyd-ddyheu,
Yn Deml i gynnull hen werinwyr plaen
A'r fflam yn eirias yn eu cred a'u creu.

Cloi'r pyrth fu'n gysegredig im erioed,
Y mawl a'r weddi'n eco ar fy nghlyw;
Lle plygais nerfus lin fy ieuanc oed
Yn offrwm o addoliad gerbron Duw.
Ni feiddiwn droi yr allwedd yn y clo
Heb feddu ffydd yn ei faddeuant O.

Fe erys rhamant y Tabernacl Talybont ar waetha'r ffaith fod y drws ynghlo a'r adeilad yn adfeilio.

Peter M. Thomas

[On 19 November 1990 Tabernacle Baptist Chapel, Talybont, Ceredigion, after nearly two centuries of witness, had to close because rot in the main beams had made the building dangerous. The church had been founded in 1793 through the efforts of Samuel Breeze, and a chapel was built in 1812. The sadness felt by so many chapel members today at having to lock the door of the church where they have worshipped all their lives is poignantly expressed in a sonnet by the chapel's last secretary, Mr Huw Hughes].



Y Tabernacl, Talybont.

Darlun gan A. R. Mortimer

JEZREEL CHAPEL, GOGINAN

In the last issue of the *Newsletter* we reported the grave concern felt by the people of Goginan about the future of the Jezreel burial ground. A public meeting was held in the village on Monday 18 March to consider the matter. After the Chairman had opened the meeting one of those present stated that he had submitted an offer for the purchase of the building, which he intended to use for religious purposes. If this purchase went through he would be willing for a trust to be initiated to safeguard the future of the cemetery.

V.H.W.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

J B Sinclair & R W D Fenn, *Marching to Zion: Radnorshire chapels* (Kington: Cadoc Books, 1990). 160p.

In their preface the authors describe this book as 'an attempt to put the nonconformist chapel architecture of Radnorshire into its historical and social perspective and to encourage an interest in its preservation and, where necessary, its restoration'. In six brief chapters - 'Early days', 'Building and paying for a chapel', 'Nonconformist Gothic', 'Names and Inscriptions', 'Changing Values' and 'The Twentieth Century' - they present a very full picture of nonconformity in a rural county over a period of

three centuries. They clearly highlight the difference between the problems of industrial Wales and those of Radnorshire where the 'nineteenth century [was] ...a time of depopulation and economic depression so that there was not the same need to enlarge existing buildings or to found new ones as there was in ... the South Wales valleys'. The bulk of the book however consists of a collection of 144 illustrations of the chapels concerned, interiors and exteriors, and a large number of inscriptions and name plaques, some with such curious Radnorshire spelling as 'Calvanistic' and 'Heremon'.

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CHAPELS OF THE CYNON VALLEY

Another recent publication which will be of interest to many of our members is *The history of Mountain Ash*, a translation of Mr Alan Vernon Jones ARICS of William Bevan's *Hanes Mountain Ash*, the winning essay in the 1896 Easter eisteddfod in the town. To the translation, Mr Jones has added a large number of illustrations - reproductions of new and old photographs, engravings and maps and twenty pages of notes correcting and updating the facts in the 1896 publication. The story of the chapels in the town occupies pp. 45-57 and includes nine photographs. Some four years ago Mr Jones published a detailed history of one of the chapels, Providence United Reformed Church, and he is at present preparing a general history of the chapels in the Cynon Valley, from Rhigos to Ynys-y-bwl. He tells us he has already photographed all 120 of these chapels, inside and out, and he also possesses detailed drawings and has access to the records of many of them, so when it appears, the book should be a veritable mine of information for all who are interested in the chapel history of South Wales.

AN ENGLISHMAN'S VIEW OF WELSH CHAPELS

In his *First and last loves* published by Murray in 1952, John Betjeman includes some curious drawings of Welsh chapels, mostly in Pembrokeshire and South Ceredigion, and some characteristic remarks on the chapel architecture. We thought these samples of his views were worth reprinting.

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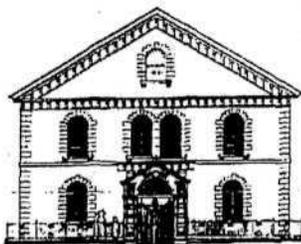
'In Wales the chapel architecture of the nineteenth century is not denominational but racial. It is hardly ever architect-designed, but the product of a local contractor who has made the fullest use of an illustrated catalogue. The congregations are often, to this day, in debt to the contractor for his work. The buildings are essentially local and vary with the districts. They have the quality of good sign-writing and a vigorous style of their own. In one the designer will have concentrated on emphasising the windows, in another on bringing out the texture of the stone, in another on arranging ingeniously the doors and windows of the west front, in another on colouring the outside plaster. These buildings have a beauty which is apart from date and akin to the naivete of the Douanier Rousseau'.

.....



'There are far more chapels in Wales and Cornwall than in the rest of Britain. They are national emblems. The chief characteristics of Welsh chapels are a disregard of the established rules of proportion, very varied proportion for each building, though not much structural originality, and strong colour schemes'.

Pontypridd Historical and Cultural Centre



The history of Pontypridd and its people, told through a variety of exhibits

Working models. Including a model railway and a model colliery.

Objects. Used at work, in the home and in recreation.

Recorded voices. People of Pontypridd telling their own history.

Archive film. Important aspects and moments of the history of the town and the valleys.

The Centre is located in a converted chapel whose pipe organ is still used for recitals. A new audio visual programme explains the origins of the chapels and traces the influence of Welsh religious dissent at home and overseas.

There is also full programme of visiting exhibitions on historical, scientific and artistic subjects.

Tourist Information Centre

Open: Tuesday - Saturday 9am - 5pm
(& Bank Holidays)

Admission: Adults 25p Children 15p

Bridge Street, Pontypridd, Mid Glamorgan CF37 4PE
Telephone (0443) 402077

How to get there: The Centre is about 500 yards from the A470 -
Ynysybwl exit (6 miles from M4 junction 32)

At the "Gateway to the Valleys"

**Canolfan
Hanesyddol a Diwylliannol Pontypridd**