

# Capel

CYMRFFHAS TREJIDDAETH Y CAPELL  
THE CHAPELS HERITAGE SOCIETY



TAFLEN WYBODAETH LEOL  
LOCAL INFORMATION SHEET

:1:

LLANFYLLIN

(CYFARFOD BLYNYDDOL / ANNUAL MEETING 1990)



LLANFYLLIN lies on the Cain, a tributary of the Vyrnwy, and inevitably the still smaller stream flowing in from the south is called the Abel! The town character dates from 1293 A.D. The present church of St Myllin was built in 1729 of local red brick, but internally it has suffered the

depredations of Victorian improvers. Those wishing to see an unspoiled early 18th century interior must visit the church at Worthenbury in Maelor Saesneg - dedicated in the same year as St Myllin's.



*Pendref (Independent) Llanfyllin — Memorial Stone*

There are four chapels, all still in use as their memberships hold combined Sunday services at each chapel in turn. The "senior" chapel is **PENDREF** Independent<sup>1</sup> first built on the present site in 1708, but destroyed by a mob in the aftermath of the 1715 Jacobite rebellion. Rebuilt in 1717, the only part of this structure which survived the rebuilding in 1829 is the memorial stone which was cleverly incorporated in its successor. It was in this chapel at Easter 1796 that Ann Griffiths first embraced non-conformity.

Calvinistic Methodism first came to the town from Llanbrynmair at the end of the 18th century. The present **MOREIA**<sup>2</sup> was built in 1857, to the designs of T G Williams, in brick but with a fashionable dressed stone front facade. Cleverly designed to make optimum use of a very restricted site, it has excellent acoustics.

The only surviving Baptist chapel in north Montgomeryshire is **SION**<sup>3</sup>. The building dates from 1856, and was extensively reworked and enlarged in 1877. Prior to the latter date, baptisms were carried out by immersion in the Abel stream (now confined in a conduit below the road in front of the chapel).

The Wesleyan Methodist **TABERNACL**<sup>4</sup> dates only from 1906, replacing an earlier structure built in 1809, whose 9 inch unbuttressed brick walls eventually proved unable to support the gallery.

Bwll-y-cibau. This little hamlet possesses a church designed by George Gilbert Scott (St Pancras Station and many churches and grandfather of Giles, responsible for the Anglican Cathedral in Liverpool) and completed in 1862.

The Wesleyan **EBENEZER**<sup>5</sup> was first established in 1813 and rebuilt in 1928. Like many small rural communities, it has recently lost its primary school and its post office and the chapel is now struggling to keep open.

The farm at **YSTUM COLWYN**<sup>6</sup> is listed as exhibiting an integrated collection of buildings spanning three and a half centuries. The farmhouse is mid 17 century modernised in 1825, one barn is dated 1650 and two other buildings were completed in 1719 and 1721 respectively.

Meifod lies close to Mathrafal and is the burial place of the princes of Powys. In and around the large churchyard there are traces of three churches. The earliest part of the present building dates from 1156 and the last major work was the rebuilding by Benjamin Ferrey in 1871.

This decade of the 19th century was a busy time in Meifod, as all three chapels were rebuilt then, too. The Wesleyan Methodist<sup>7</sup> of 1873, now closed and disposed of, played a leading part in the 1859 great revival in the area.

The new Calvinistic Methodist **SEION**<sup>8</sup>, opened in 1874 on a very restricted site opposite the church, was described in a contemporary newspaper account as "...Gothic of an early English type with a touch of French character..." Its architect was Richard Owen and local builder John Pickstock (whose family are still in business in Meifod) was responsible.

The Independent chapel<sup>9</sup> was rebuilt in 1881 of more traditional local brick and during its rebuilding some traces of an early church were uncovered.

Some 1½ miles from the village is a small Calvinistic chapel at **PONT NEWYDD**<sup>10</sup>. This chapel is integral with a range of farm buildings. It possesses a stable for the use of itinerant ministers, and uniquely displays photographs in the chapel at the sides of the pulpit. One of these is recognisable as the Rev E Griffiths (author of "Hanes Methodistiaeth Trefaldwyn Isaf" and one-time minister in Meifod). The other is of a grand Edwardian lady reputed variously to be either Mrs Griffiths or the lady of Dyffryn Hall, Meifod (former residence of Clement Davies M.P.).

DOLOBRAN. Since the middle of the 15th century, the Hall<sup>11</sup> has been the home of the Lloyd family, long associated with banking and iron-founding. In the mid 17th century, as Quakers they were much persecuted. Before Thomas Lloyd left for Pennsylvania in 1683, he gave a piece of land for a meeting house.

About 1700 a small meeting house<sup>12</sup> was built in this ideally-secluded spot. Later in the century it closed and remained disused for almost 200 years until reopened in 1957. During the closed period, the interior fittings and furnishings were removed for installation in meeting houses in the USA.

The forge<sup>13</sup> was built in 1719 and was used also as a woollen mill for some 100 years. It was in use until quite recently as a forge and agricultural machinery workshops.

PONTROBERT possesses a church dated 1853 designed by the county surveyor R K Penson and three operational chapels.

The Independent SION<sup>14</sup> rebuilt 1891 and the Wesleyan Methodist<sup>15</sup> rebuilt 20 years before are both excellent examples of Victorian workmanship in polychromatic brickwork.

The Calvinistic Methodist **CAPEL NEWYDD**<sup>16</sup> was built across the river in the adjoining parish of Llangynyw when the older chapel of about 1810 was closed in 1865. This latter, Hen Gapel John Hughes<sup>17</sup>, was used as a carpenter's shop until recently and is now the subject of a restoration appeal. John Hughes was a weaver who, having been apprenticed at Cyfie in Llanfihangel, com-

menced his ministry in Pontrobert at the beginning of the 19th century and was largely instrumental in the building of the chapel. After the death of Ann Griffiths in 1805 he married her maid, Ruth and is credited with recording the hymn-writer's work as memorised by his wife. He is buried opposite the chapel.

**GWAENYNNOG.** This township takes its name from a nearby farm. The Wesleyan Methodist **SARON**<sup>18</sup> was built in 1827 and with some minor restoration work of 1855 and 1896 is substantially unaltered. The chapel has an associated cottage once used for accommodation of itinerant preachers. Access to the chapel grounds is by means of slate stiles.

**DOLANOG** lies at the throat of a narrow gorge on the Vyrnwy, and it was at one time proposed that the Liverpool Corporation dam should be built in this rocky defile. In the event, the work was carried out higher up the river and Llanwddyn and not Llwydiarth was drowned. The church is another of R K Penson's designs, dating from 1855 and being largely paid for by "Sir Watkin" (Williams Wynn).

The early Independent chapel<sup>19</sup> of 1810, already closed before the 1905 Royal Commission census, is now only a pile of rubble stone.

The Calvinistic Methodist **CAPEL COFFA**<sup>20</sup> of 1904/5, paid for by national subscription as a memorial to Ann Griffiths, replaced an earlier building of 1803. The architect was C Dickens-Lewis and the builder was W H

Thomas of Oswestry (still in business as a builders' merchants).

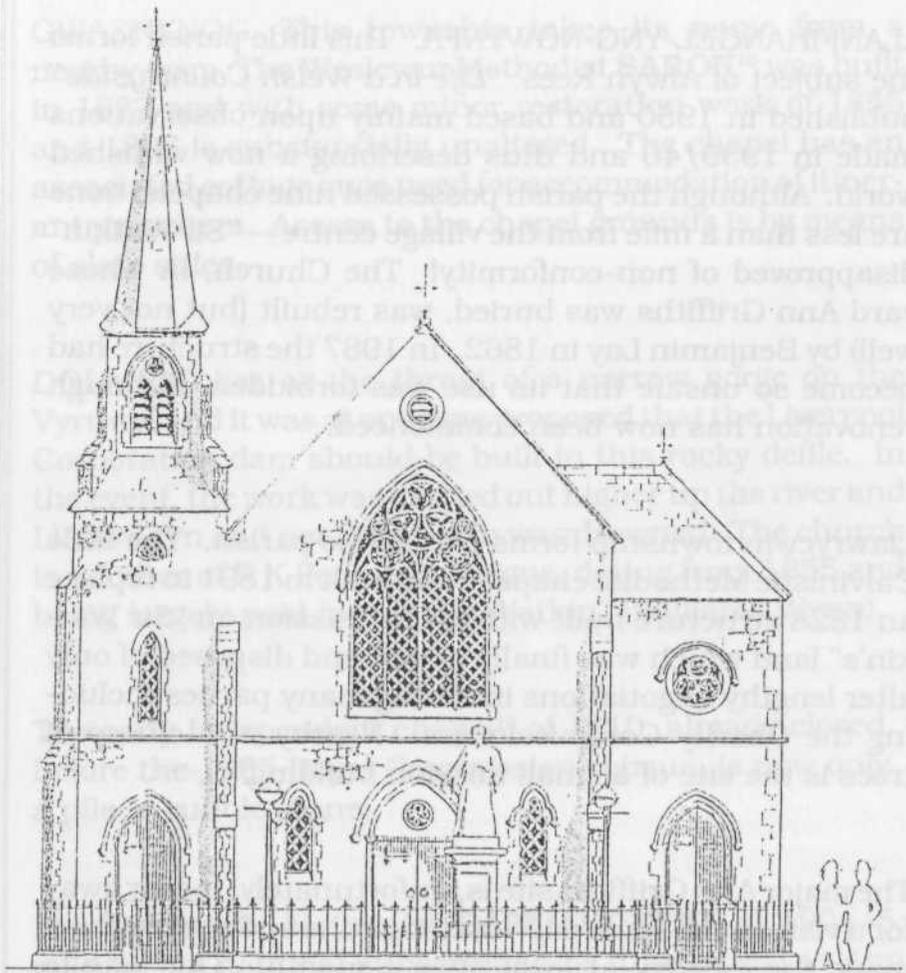
The farm of **DOLWAR FACH**<sup>21</sup> was home to Ann Thomas for most of her short life before she married Thomas Griffiths of Meifod in 1804.

LLANFIHANGEL-YNG-NGWYNFA. This little parish forms the subject of Alwyn Rees' "*Life in a Welsh Countryside*" published in 1950 and based mainly upon observations made in 1939/40 and thus describing a now vanished world. Although the parish possessed nine chapels, none are less than a mile from the village centre -- "Sir Watkin" disapproved of non-conformity! The Church, in whose yard Ann Griffiths was buried, was rebuilt (but not very well) by Benjamin Lay in 1862. In 1987 the structure had become so unsafe that its use was forbidden, although renovation has now been commenced.

Llawrycwm township forms part of the parish. The little Calvinistic Methodist chapel<sup>22</sup> was built in 1891 to replace an 1828 structure built without permission on "Sir Watkin's" land which was finally closed and disposed of only after lengthy negotiations involving many parties including the Charity Commissioners. Nearby in a clump of trees is the site of a small mission building<sup>23</sup>.

The major Ann Griffiths site is, unfortunately, too far away for a visit on the same day - although she and her brothers made the journey at least once a month! This was to Thomas Charles' chapel in Bala (now Capel Tegid), and the three Thomases (John, Ann and Edward) walked over the

Berwyns to attend communion there regularly for almost ten years.



Genl. Reg'd  
Bald