

Capel

CYMDEITHAS TREFTADAETH Y CAPELI
THE CHAPELS HERITAGE SOCIETY



TAFLEN WYBODAETH

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INFORMATION SHEET

Abergele has long been a centre of Christianity, for it was a *Clas* church responsible probably for the whole of the cantref of Rhos. The medieval document *The Annals of Cambria* records in the year 718A.D. the 'consecration of the Church of S. Michael the Archangel' and scholars equate this reference with Abergele. This would be the first step taken by the Celtic Church towards the Roman Church; the next step would be taken 50 years later with the adoption in 768 of the Roman mode of calculating the date of Easter. The present church building was rebuilt in the early 16th century and is the largest of all the Denbighshire double-nave churches.

Four hundred years after the Reformation, the Roman Catholic church of S. Teresa was built in 1934 by an Italian born and trained



Mynydd Seion (Welsh Presbyterian)

architect, G. Rinvolucri of Conwy, (1891-1963), who also designed churches at Borth y Gest and Amlwch. It is built on a Greek cross plan with dome and round apses and the cost was £4,000.

Mynydd Seion (Welsh Presbyterian)

The Calvinistic Methodists reached the parish just before 1778 and by 1791 a large chapel had been built. This building has been altered in living memory and is still used as a large general purpose hall. The present chapel was built on the adjacent site in 1869 at a

cost of £4,000 though materials had been transported free to the site by twenty eight local farmers. The design was by one of the foremost chapel architects, Richard Owen (1831-91). Born at Plas Bel, Four Crosses near Pwllheli, he practised in Liverpool and built 250 chapels. Mynydd Seion is a Gothic design built with a narthex, transepts and an apse, with a gallery at the rear. The stone used is the lifeless, dark grey, polygonal Penmaenmawr granite instead of the cheerful local limestone. A small schoolroom was also built in 1887, also probably designed by Richard Owen, in a new up-to-date style.

Wesleyan Methodism was first propagated in Abergele in 1800. The first chapel was built on Rhuddlan Road in 1804 and extended in 1825; a new chapel was built in 1860 with a membership of 150. This has now been demolished. The Town had a general holiday to



Eglwys Crist (Congregational)

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celebrate the laying of the foundation stone for the present chapel, opened in 1880. In recent years an English cause has shared the building. St. Paul's was designed by another famous chapel architect, Richard Davies of Bangor, who was a native of Llanfairfechan. This is a fine and very typical example of his work.



St. Pauls (Methodist)

The first **Baptist** services were held in a smithy in 1831, with the support of the Baptist chapel in Llanddulas, which had been founded in 1815. Services were discontinued until 1842 when they restarted in a private house. In 1856 they took over the church of the Latter Day Saints who had finally emigrated.

In 1863 a new church was opened - a pleasant, simple design - and is still in use. It cost £460 to build but the architect is unknown. The membership was then 31. The new schoolroom was built alongside in 1930, the architect being Sydney Colwyn Foulkes of Colwyn Bay.

In 1843 a **Congregational** chapel was built at the bottom of Chapel Street. The present chapel, Eglwys Crist, was opened in 1861 as an English language cause, which is probably why a London architect, T

Roger Smith, was employed. Eventually the chapel in Chapel street was closed and the new one became entirely Welsh-speaking. The building is Gothic, of stone and timber, with a stone tower, surmounted by the only spire in Abergele.

Pensarn had two chapels. One, the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Capel Bach, built in 1859 has long been closed. The other, the English Presbyterian Church, another example of Richard Owen's work, was opened in 1870 at a cost of £3,000, to the strong disapproval of Emrys ap Iwan. We shan't be visiting either of these chapels.



Salem (Baptist)

Perhaps the most unusual feature of Abergele chapel history is that in 1849 a Mormon cause was started and a chapel was soon built and, although it is now altered, it still exists and its history is known almost completely . It closed when the members almost all went to Salt Lake City. We shall be visiting the building for it is now part of the building of the Bull Hotel and we look forward to hearing the history of the cause from Mr R Fred Roberts.

Vernon Hughes