

Capel

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THE CHAPELS HERITAGE SOCIETY



TAFLEN WYBODAETH LEOL

CAS-LLWCHWR A GORSEINON

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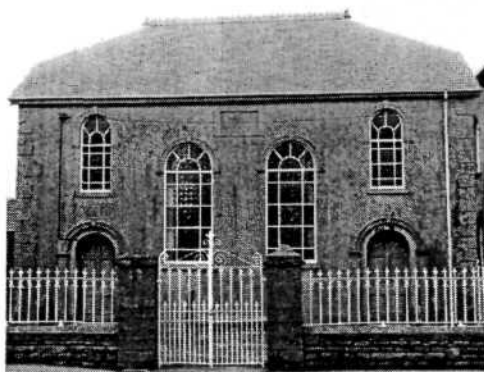
LOCAL INFORMATION SHEET

LOUGHOR AND GORSEINON

Moriah Calvinistic Methodist Chapel, Loughor

Howell Harris visited this area in 1739 and shortly afterwards a small congregation began to meet in the kitchen of Ty-fry Farmhouse, Loughor, as a branch of Goppa, Pontarddulais. Numbers grew, and by the 1820s the need was felt for a meeting house. Accordingly, a barn standing opposite the farmhouse was converted for use as a chapel and opened on 11 October 1828. Like many local buildings of the time, it was thatched, hence its name 'Capel To Gwellt' (thatched roof chapel).

Numbers increased still further during the Revivals of the early 19th century, and by



The old chapel, built 1842

the 1840s the congregation had outgrown the little chapel. In 1842 a new chapel was built on the same plot of land and named Moriah, with a graveyard attached. Chapel records indicate that it was whitewashed. A gallery was added in 1849, and later a chapel house and stable were built at the eastern end. During the second half of the 19th century, the church was involved in the establishment of Bethel, Gowerton in 1873 and Libanus, Gorseinon in 1890.

As the population of the locality grew, so did the membership at Moriah, and by the 1890s the old



The new chapel, built 1898

chapel, which seated three hundred, was inadequate for the congregation. It was decided to rebuild the chapel once again. The new chapel was opened on 12 September 1898, and seated 650. In 1903 the old chapel was restored and converted into a schoolroom.

Evan Roberts

Moriah Chapel is probably best known through its connection with Evan Roberts the Revivalist. His parents, Henry and Hannah Roberts, had been members at Moriah since 1873. Evan was born in 1878 and baptised at the chapel soon afterwards. The family lived



The Evan Roberts memorial

at Island House in Bwlchymynydd. From the age of twelve he worked locally, first as a collier and later as a blacksmith, and became a member at Moriah in 1891. His dramatic experiences in the meeting at Blaenannerch, whilst



away studying at Newcastle Emlyn, are well documented elsewhere, but it was here at Moriah and nearby at Pisgah and Libanus chapels, that he conducted his first week-long mission in October and November 1904, before embarking on his wider ministry. After his death in 1951 he was buried here and there is a prominent memorial to him in the chapel grounds.

Pisgah Calvinistic Methodist Chapel, Loughor Road, Bwlchymynydd

The cause at Pisgah began on 15 January 1893 when the owner of the local Broadoak Colliery, Samuel Thomas, instituted a Sunday School in a room above the colliery offices. After two years he decided that a permanent building was desirable, so he set aside a plot of land nearby and asked Evan Roberts, who worked at the colliery and was involved with the Sunday School, to



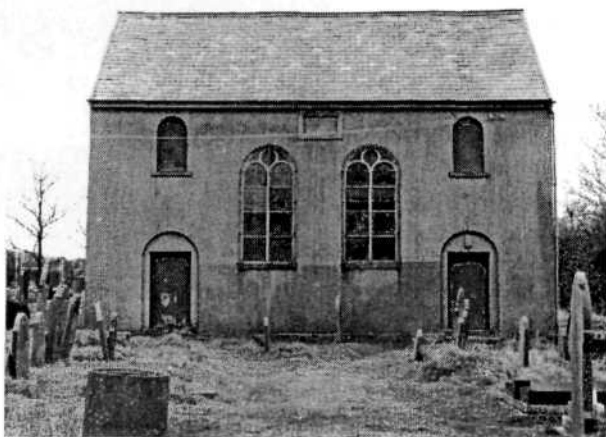
superintend the construction of a schoolroom. This was named Pisgah, and served both as a schoolroom and as a place of worship for a branch congregation of Moriah chapel. Evan Roberts continued as overseer of the Sunday School here, and it was one of the places where he conducted his mission in October and November 1904. It continued to receive financial support from its mother church for many years, and in 1914 a new organ was purchased at a cost of £15 10s.

Brynteg Independent Chapel, Gorseinon

The cause here began in the 1690s when a branch of the church at Tirdwncyn (which was later to grow into Mynydd-bach Independent Church), began to hold meetings in Loughor. These were held at a farmhouse in the Upper Town area of Loughor, believed to be Ty-fry, where Moriah had its beginnings some fifty years later.

Over the next two centuries the congregation grew steadily and successively outgrew one home after another. First of all they moved to an area about a mile from Ty-fry, at Rhyd-y-maerdy, which was later to become part of Gorseinon. Here a meeting house was built and the surrounding land used as a burial ground. This was to remain their home for nearly a century, throughout which time the membership grew gradually, until in the early 19th century the chapel was too small for the congregation. Accordingly a new chapel was built nearby at Penyrheol, and named Brynteg. Two cottages stand on the site of the old meeting house today, but it is unclear whether it was demolished before they were built, or whether it was converted into houses.

In 1847, Brynteg Chapel was found to be too small once again and it was rebuilt on the same site. Later on, the growth of industry in this area during the late 19th century brought about a great many changes, as the population expanded massively and the town of Gorseinon spread across what had once been open countryside with sparse habitation. As the population grew, so did the church membership and some fifty years later Brynteg Chapel was once again found to be too small to



The old Brynteg Chapel, built in 1847



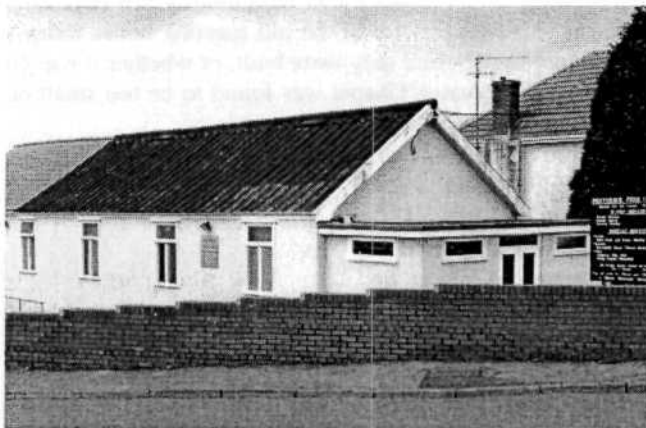
The new Brynteg Chapel, built 1897

accommodate its congregation. The old chapel could seat four hundred, and even in 1851 the Religious Census suggests that it was full to capacity.

Accordingly a new site was purchased a little to the north of the old building. In 1897 a new chapel was built there at a cost of £1738 13s, able to seat 550, considerably more than the old chapel. The old chapel was retained for use as a schoolroom. Churches planted by Brynteg include Horeb, Loughor in the 1860s and Ebenezer, Gorseinon in 1887.

Penyrheol Free Evangelical Church, Llannant Road

This small chapel had its beginnings in the years after the 1904 Revival. Young people from various churches in the area came together and began to meet in a house on the outskirts of Gorseinon. There they formed a congregation which was not affiliated to any of the old denominations. Then



in 1908 they were given a plot of land opposite the house where they met by a local person, and the Gospel Hall was built there. It was a prefabricated structure, initially of corrugated iron, but more recently rebuilt in a more sturdy form.