

Capel



CYMRITHAS TREFTAETH Y CAPEL
THE CHAPELS HERITAGE SOCIETY

Local Information Leaflet 39: Lampeter Taflen Wybodaeth Leol 39: Llanbedr-pont-Steffan

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Brondeifi



Brondeifi was established as a daughter house of Caeronnen, which, founded in 1654 on a local farm as a Presbyterian chapel, became an Unitarian cause in the 1840s. The first Brondeifi chapel, on a site donated by a local benefactor, was opened in July 1876. It seated about 400 people at a cost of approximately £1,000 with the debt soon cleared. Severe problems were experienced with this building which had to be taken down and replaced by a new building on the site in 1904. The cost of this work was £1,899 and the total expenditure amounted to slightly over £2,043. 1,164 families were claimed to have contributed to the expenditure, which included a payment of £74 to the architect, and the debt was immediately cleared. An illustrated address was presented to the Rev Rees Cribyn Jones at the time of his retirement in 1915 and may be seen in the chapel today. He is commemorated in a memorial stone placed in the chapel in 1930; and another

memorial stone, placed in 1968, commemorated his successor, the Rev. T. Oswald Williams and his wife. Another notable feature in the chapel is John Petts's stained glass window in memory of Tecwyn Williams who died in Northern Ireland whilst serving with the Royal Regiment of Wales.

In 1996 a new vestry was opened with vastly improved facilities following the demolition of the old one in the previous year. The vestry was designed by the Owen Davies Partnership, Aberystwyth and the building was constructed by J and E Woodworks, with a considerable amount of work undertaken by local volunteers. Financial support was received from a number of bodies, including Ceredigion County Council, the Dyfed Churches Fund, and the Lottery Arts Fund, but a substantial sum was also raised by the chapel itself.

From 1876 to the present day, Brondeifi has been served by only three ministers: the Rev. Rees Cribyn Jones until his retirement in 1915; the Rev. T. Oswald Williams from 1915 until 1936, and the Rev. D. J. Goronwy Evans, 1964-

Noddfa



An important event in the early history of Noddfa was the visit of the Rev David Hussey to the town in December 1896 with the intention of establishing a Baptist church. The first Sunday school associated with Noddfa was held on Sunday afternoon, 1 January 1897 in 3 Victoria Terrace, the home of David Jones who was later in the year elected one of the first two deacons of the church established in the Town Hall on Easter Monday, 19 April 1897. The new church comprised 29 members, there were 40 members in the Sunday School, and the first baptism

was arranged in August in the river Dulas when four females were baptised at a service conducted by the Rev. David Hussey.

Following the decision to build a chapel, land was provided by the local landowner, Major Harford on a 99-year lease. An agreement was signed with a local builder, in February 1898 for the sum of £603, to construct the chapel, designed by the George Morgan practice, Carmarthen. A substantial sum was raised to build the chapel, and in October 1898 a large congregation assembled to place the foundation stone for the new chapel. The total costs were estimated to be slightly over £700, and the whole sum was soon collected. The debt-free church later acquired the lease and thereby the land was held on freehold tenure. In April 1898 Daniel Jones had been ordained and inducted as the minister, and his ministry at Noddfa, commenced the previous month, continued for a total of 48 years until his retirement in 1946. A memorial tablet has been placed above the door leading from the chapel to the vestry. The minister at present is the Rev. Jill Tomos.

Soar



This church had its origins in the activities of a group of Dissenters meeting in the mid-seventeenth century at Cilgwyn Isaf farm, near Llangybi, which resulted in the establishment of a number of chapels in central Ceredigion.

Members of the Independent church which had evolved at Cilgwyn, Llangybi and who resided in Lampeter held services in the town in 1831. They met in an old brewery, located near Harford Square, for which they paid £5 a year, and where a pulpit and some seating had been placed. A Sunday School was established but

soon discontinued and very little progress was made in the early years. David Davies, a schoolmaster at Cellan, was ordained the minister in 1841, when there were 45 members and it was realised that the old brewery was too small. Land was offered by the local squire, J.S. Harford, Falcondale, for a new chapel on the Commons on condition that the members would support him at a parliamentary election. The land measured 32' x 24' and the cost of the chapel was £ 160.

Contributions were received from the county's churches and the debt had been cleared by 1850 when the membership had increased to 120. The chapel had originally only comprised a few pews surrounding the pulpit, with some of the congregation required to stand but the chapel was later extended with the addition of a gallery and pews provided throughout the chapel. In 1851 there were 180 free seats, 36 others and room for 150 to stand. On 30 March 1851 53 were present in the Sunday School held in the morning, 350 in the afternoon service and 150 in the evening service. The 1859 Revival resulted in 50 persons admitted to membership on one Sunday, 98 new members were added during this year and the minister's stipend was increased from £5 to £27. The church was evidently in a flourishing state and, following the Rev. David Davies's death in 1871, and the induction as minister of the Rev. John Thomas in 1872, a new chapel was opened in 1873. This cost £700 and special services were held in 1881 to celebrate the clearance of the debt. In 1896 the chapel was extended and renovated at a cost of £1,000 which was repaid by 1901. The purchase of two houses and gardens for £200 in 1900 had enabled the building of a vestry. A pipe organ was purchased for £250 in 1904, and in 1920 Victoria, an inn near to the chapel was bought for £525, and adapted for use as a home for the chapel caretaker.

At the time of the induction as minister of the Rev. T. Eirug Davies in 1927 the chapel was painted, which, together with the provision of electric heating and lighting, cost £ 400. This sum was soon paid, and a major expenditure was incurred in 1931 with the building of a new vestry to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the cause at a total cost of over £1,400. Extensive renovation-work has been completed in recent years, but a considerable amount of work requires to be undertaken, especially to remedy the problem of dampness. The minister, the Rev. J. Elwyn Jenkins, who was also the minister of Shiloh, recently retired. An unusual feature is that the Greek Orthodox Church in Lampeter holds a service every Sunday morning in the vestry.

St Thomas

The first Wesleyan Methodist chapel in Lampeter was opened in 1810, following preaching visits in 1806, and a meeting of a local congregation in 1808, on a site later occupied by St. David's University College, which was built in 1822-27. A new chapel was opened in 1828 on the side of the Commons and near to a supposed site of the medieval chapel of St Thomas. The 1851 Census recorded that there was seating for 270 persons, of which 120 were free and 150 others,

and standing room for another 100. On 30 March 1851 53 were present in the morning service, 39 scholars in the afternoon Sunday school, and 150 in the evening service. A new chapel was built on the same site, measuring 42' long and 32' wide, and based upon plans prepared by John Jones, Lampeter, a Mr. Evans, Llanybydder and a Mr. Davies, Cilgwyn, and opened in April 1875. This new chapel cost £800, and the debt was soon cleared, with subscriptions from members, together with a sum of £ 300 collected when the memorial stones were laid, and £ 100 at the opening service. *The Cambrian News*, the local newspaper, provided a detailed account of the new chapel, whose workmanship was described as being of a high order, and also of the opening services, held on the Sunday morning, 4 April, and on the following Thursday, Friday and Sunday. It was reported that the interior was approached through a spacious lobby, and comprised a rostrum and communion table, two aisles and a gallery with seating for 300 persons. The ceiling had five centre pieces, and whilst most of the windows were filled with obscure glass, with ornamental margins, those near the platform were glazed with enamelled stained glass and ornamental borders, and the one between the chapel and the lobby was of painted glass with a figure representing Christ blessing little children.



Services were held in Welsh over a long period but there was an increasing use of the English language in the late-twentieth century, and in 1977 the church joined the English Circuit. The diminishing number of members, together with concern with regard to their ability to maintain the large chapel led to fears being

expressed with regard to the continuation of the church. However the determination of local members, who raised a substantial sum for the new chapel, which, designed by the Owen Davies Partnership, Aberystwyth, eventually cost £130,000. Following the demolition of the old chape, the new chapel was opened in December 1992. Seats are provided for 100 persons and another 20 in the gallery. The minister at present is the Rev. Brian Yardy.

Shiloh

The early history of the cause may be traced to 1741 when 24 members belonged to a society (*seiat*) meeting in Lampeter, and by 1744 the number had increased to 29. They encountered some opposition and in 1743 a meeting was disrupted by a justice of the peace and his servants who took away as a prisoner one of the members who was at the time offering a prayer. Howel Harris is reported to have preached on a stone in the middle of the town, and Daniel Rowland was associated with the society, and to have supervised the chapel which had been built at Creigiau, located on the turning of the road to Cellan from Cwm-ann. The Tabernacl chapel was built in the town of Lampeter, in High Street, in 1806. The 1851 Census recorded that there were in the chapel 90 free seats, 288 others and room for 120 to stand, and that the congregations on 30 March amounted to 220 in the morning, with 95 scholars in the Sunday School, and 200 in the evening service.



Land for a new chapel was purchased for £450 in 1873, and Shiloh chapel was opened in June 1874. Whilst Hall Caine, Liverpool, was named as the architect, Richard Owens was also probably involved as he was paid on 5 June 1874 a fee of £50. Many farmers were among the early members, and they assisted in carrying building material for the new chapel. The cost of the new chapel was in the region of £2,000, and nearly £1,400 was collected locally with a contribution of £200 from the County Presbytery. Difficulty was experienced in selling the old chapel and chapel house, but the chapel was eventually sold for £ 170 and the chapel house for £225. Items from the former chapel incorporated in Shiloh included the stone on the front wall, bearing the name 'Tabernacl' and the year of its construction, 1806, which was placed on the wall of the new vestry; and the clock in Tabernacl placed behind the pulpit of Shiloh, and then moved to the front of the gallery in 1892. Also, the old communion cup, jug and plates continued to be used in Shiloh until the acquisition of individual communion cups. To meet the debt, annual preaching services were held, and by 2 August 1890 the debt had been cleared. The surplus collected enabled the purchase of an organ in the following year despite initial opposition from some of the members. This organ was replaced by a pipe organ installed in 1940. The purchase of additional plots of land in 1903 and in 1912 enabled the building in 1913 of a new vestry at a cost of £594, Water pipes were installed to heat the chapel, and it was decided to allow free access to the pews and thereby terminate the regulations enforced since 1872. By 1914, thick felt seating carpets had been placed on all the seats and linoleum on the floor, which was replaced by a carpet installed in 1972.

Since the opening of Shiloh improvements have regularly been made to the chapel which has been repainted several times, with the latest occasion in recent weeks. The chapel was re-roofed in 1950 and 1962, and new equipment to heat the chapel was installed in 1968 and the boiler adapted for the use of oil instead of coal. The chapel buildings are now heated by two gas boilers. Extensive renovations during the past 15 years have included the provision of insulation, and a new ceiling and windows. The minister, the Rev.J. Elwyn Jenkins, whose pastorate was shared with Soar, has recently retired.