

Local Information Leaflet 76: Caernarfon

Taflen Wybodaeth Leol 76: Caernarfon

Saturday / Sadwrn 11 October / Hydref 2014

10.00 Assemble at Noddfa, Cil Peblig, Caernarfon.

In 1955 Emily Roberts came to live and work in Ysgubor Goch; a new housing estate built by the local council on the outskirts of Caernarfon. Sister Emily came as part of the Forward Movement of the Presbyterian Church of Wales. She said in an interview with the Rev Harri Parri in 1965:

“For the first year I ministered in the area without a building to facilitate my work. I tried to encourage the residents to go and worship in the chapels in town but to no avail”.

And so a second-hand chapel was acquired – the old Wesleyan chapel from Porthmadog which was moved to Caernarfon! As it was the 150th anniversary of Ann Griffiths’ death the building was called ‘Noddfa’ apparently on the basis that the name appears in some of her hymns.



It was realised early on that this first building was too small for the mission work undertaken and it was decided that a larger building was needed if the cause was to flourish. In September 1964 building work started on a new chapel, and by the end of the summer 1965 the building was ready. During that time three services were

held every Sunday and many children attended the Sunday School and Band of Hope. Sister Emily was devoted to the area and the people, and today she and her work are still spoken of.

Unfortunately, by the beginning of the 1970's Noddfa was facing financial difficulties and it was decided in 1975 to transfer the building to the County Council. It was used for the County's community work on the promise that the church had full use of the building on Sundays.

After Sister Emily left, Noddfa struggled and in the early 1980's the mission board of the Presbyterian Church of Wales decided once again to place mission workers here. This new era started with Awel Irene. Since then PCW have employed full time mission workers at Noddfa to serve the area that is classed as 'deprived'. Today, Mererid Mair Williams is the Church Community Worker having started in her post in 2006, while Llinos Mai Morris has been the Youth and Children's Worker since 2007.

The worshipping community is the heart of all the activity in Noddfa. The congregation is small, varying between 15 and 25, but the cross section of age is wide and the commitment of the members and 'friends' is to be commended. Noddfa is an extremely informal church that is much more than a church for Sunday's only! There is a strong sense of serving the local community and this is paramount in forming the vision of the church. Noddfa has an 'open door' policy throughout the week and is a 'haven' for many.

12.30 – Lunch in Wal Restaurant, Palace Street



Afternoon Tour:

Seiio Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Chapel, Bangor Street (NPRN 11902)

Seiio Methodist Chapel was brick built in 1976 in the late twentieth century style. It is the Presbyterian Church in Wales' largest church in terms of membership



Salem Welsh Independent Chapel, Pool Lane (NPRN 6864)

Salem Welsh Independent Chapel was built in 1862 to the Italianate design of Rev. Thomas Thomas of Landore. In 1877-8 the chapel was modified by Richard Owen of Liverpool, and in 1890-1 it was extended and refurbished, and the turrets were added, to a design by Owen Morris Roberts of Morthmadog. H. Glanfor Thomas carried out further work on the building in 1911-2. It is Classical in style, with a snecked stone façade and pale freestone dressings. The roof is of slate behind a coped gable. The front of the chapel has five bays, including a later lean-to porch, with rusticated quoins, round columns and a keyed moulded arch. The outer bays each have a pair of two-light round-headed windows with pink granite central columns with fluted capitals. There are projecting three-stage stair towers following a rectangular plan, topped by pyramidal slate roofs. The side bays are roughcast with round-headed windows. There is a narrow gabled projection from the rear elevation, which houses the organ and vestry.



The majority of the internal fittings of the chapel date to 1862, with a late eighteenth century set fawr, pulpit and organ. The gallery covers three sides and is mounted on fluted cast iron posts with foliage capitals. The ceiling is plastered with a central rose and slender ribs.

Caersalem, Garnon Street (NPRN 6866)

Caersalem was established in 1815 and in 1832 Christmas Evans became the minister. The original building can be seen on the maps of 1834 and 1852 of Caernarfon, showing that the chapel faced the back lane known as 'Baptists Lane'. The present chapel was rebuilt on the same site in 1869, this time facing Garnon Street.

Some interesting architectural points are the carving of a bust Christmas Evans' head in the pulpit. The pulpit itself is located within a shallow apse, lit by three round stained glass windows depicting Alpha, Omega and a dove.

As a result of neglect to the building through lack of financial means, the chapel became unsuitable for worship in 2006. Since then the congregation has been using the vestry located under the chapel to hold church meetings. However, during the last four years the congregation has increased and the church is once again in a position to renovate the chapel so it can again be used by the congregation.

In 2014 the church received permission from CADW to undertake major renovation work, remove the pews and redesign the rear of the chapel to include a prayer room, disabled toilet and install a lift. The design project was undertaken by the Caernarfon based architect Sel Jones and, with the input of the church and CADW, the result is a building that maintains the key architectural aspects of the chapel whilst allowing adaptation for the needs of a 21st century congregation. The renovation work is underway, with a planned completion date of 2015 - ready to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the church.



Caersalem is a relatively small church in regards to membership but it is a warm and lively one. When the present minister, Rev. Rhys Llwyd, started his ministry at the church in September 2011 the Sunday congregation was around 30. Over the past few years this has increased to 50-60

which is heartening. It is a contemporary and moderately charismatic church compared to many Welsh churches, hence the desire of the congregation to renovate the chapel and return there. Every Sunday morning a worship band leads an extended period of worship, the minister or visiting preacher responsible only for the sermon as the worship leader leads the rest of the service. The evening service is still a traditional nonconformist service.

A variety of mid-week meetings are held. A lively Bible study is held every Tuesday evening, a lunch time prayer meeting every Friday and a youth club every Wednesday. An important development in the last few years has been the establishing of 'house groups'. These meet every Monday and Thursday evenings in each other's houses to share experiences, and to support and pray for each other.

The church has recently extended into the local community, organising various mission projects including the Alpha course held in Caffi Maes. It is also a partner with other churches in the town as part of the Food Bank project. The church admits that mission is a weakness; a situation faced by many churches today, and to address this a mission working group has been established to explore new ways of reaching the people of Caernarfon who have no connection with any church.

The vision of the church for the future is to know, worship and follow Jesus and to present Him to others.

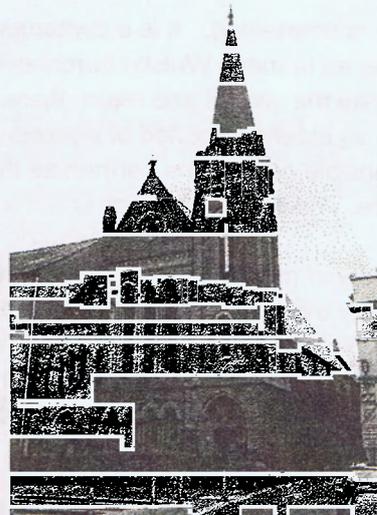
Castle Square Presbyterian Church/Capel y Maes, Castle Square, Caernarfon (NPRN 6869)

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the Calvinistic Methodists began to establish English language congregations in North Wales to serve the growing number of English speakers. The church in Caernarfon was started in 1873 in Turf Square, by members from Moriah Chapel, and the present building at Castle Square was opened ten years later on 8th July, 1883.

The architect was Richard Owen. Born near Pwllheli, he developed a prosperous architectural practice in Liverpool, and was one of the most prolific chapel architects in Wales, with some 250 chapels to his credit. In Caernarfon, for example, he was also responsible for Engedi Chapel (now closed) and the town council's Institute Building. The total cost of the work at Castle Square amounted to £4,359, though for purposes of comparison it is interesting to note that the salary of the first minister was £75 a year.

The interior contains some fine woodwork, including an ornate pulpit and handsome wagon ceiling, and much ornamental coloured glass. The two manual organ has 20 stops, contains 880 pipes, and was installed in 1887 by William Rushworth at a cost of £260. It was subsequently rebuilt by Gray & Davison in 1907. There is a memorial in white Sicilian marble to the church members who lost their lives in the Great War. The schoolrooms were added in 1896-7 at a cost of £702, to the designs of Richard Lloyd Jones of Caernarfon. By 1907 meetings took place on every day of the week except Saturday.

Today, although without a minister, a small congregation still works hard to maintain the Church at Castle Square. There is a weekly Sunday service (in English) at 10.30, Christmas and Easter services, a Drop-in on the second Saturday morning each month (March-October), and a Ramblers Group among its other activities. The Church also welcomes visitors, and is open on Wednesdays during the summer.



Ebeneser, Chapel Street (NPRN 6877)

This was one of the first chapels in Wales built in the Gothic style and is the largest Wesleyan chapel in Wales. It was erected in 1826, near to the site of the first Wesleyan chapel in Caernarfon, built c.1805 as a result of the missionary efforts of Owen Hughes and John Hughes who preached in the town in 1800. W. Evan Roberts, a carpenter from Denbigh, designed a schoolroom built in 1805 and this was extended in 1815. An engraving of the 1826 chapel, designed by John Lloyd, is displayed today in the schoolroom. The 1851 Census recorded that the chapel contained 82 free seats and 1,116 others. The chapel was renovated in 1875-6 at the cost of £2,300. Ornamental features were added to the porch in 1893 and in 1905 it was recorded that there were 780 seats in the chapel and 680 seats in the schoolroom. A mission room was built beside the chapel in 1912 with an effort made to evangelise among the poorer townspeople, and thereby complement the similar campaign by Seilo by means of Seilo Bach.



Pendref, Bangor Street (NPRN 6863)

Even though Pendref has closed its doors, no visitor of Caernarfon's chapels should ignore the significance of this chapel. The history of the building of the town's first non-conformist building is stated in: *Hanes Eglwysi Annibynnol Cymru* (A History of the Welsh Independent Churches) by Thomas Rees & John Thomas, published 1871, Vol 3 Page 237:

'In 1785 Mr George Lewis (Dr Lewis hereafter), on a visit to Caernarfon received a call here and he was established as minister sometime in that same year. It is during Dr Lewis' ministry and through his effort that the first independent chapel was built in the town; Pendref in 1791. Even though the strength of the persecution from the 'werin' had been diminished, the prejudice against the non-conformists was very strong, and so it was in difficult times the chapel was built. It was not an easy prospect to find land to build a non-conformists chapel in the town at all as all the land was



the property of those who opposed non-conformism. There was a wealthy religious lady living at Cefnmein, Lleyn who was called Mrs Edwards, the grandmother of the present R. Lloyd Edwards, the squire of Nanhoron, who used to visit Caernarfon and other places to attend 'cyfarfodydd pregethu'. It was this lady who obtained land to build the chapel in Caernarfon. As the land was in the hands of those who opposed non-conformism, cunning means had to be adopted to obtain the land. Mrs Edwards bought the land as a spot to build one or two houses and the seller thought she would build a house for herself and one for her servant. But when he realised that the land had been sold to build a chapel on it he became very angry. It is reported that he visited Mrs Edwards to say he thought she wanted a place to build a house and a house for the servant in Bangor Street. You thought correctly was her answer, it is a place to build the Lord's House and a house for his servant.

When the building work started on the place of worship in Caernarfon there were great threats by the enemy to destroy the building work. So great was the animosity against the non-conformists that the children of those opposed would persecute the chapel children; they were not allowed to play with the other children and they kept away from them as if they were lepers.'