

Capel

CYMRDEITHAS TREPTADAETH Y CAPELI
THE CHAPELS HERITAGE SOCIETY



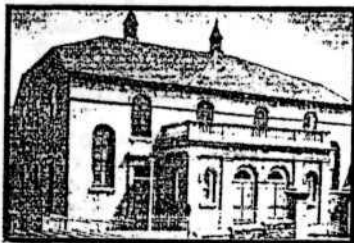
NEWSLETTER/CYLCHLYTHYR 7 SPRING/GWANWYN 1989

In Issue 5 of the Newsletter the editor appealed for better attendance at the meetings arranged by the regional committees of the Society. Attendance might be improved if both reports and advance notice of any such local meetings could be sent to the Secretary or the Editor of the Newsletter so that our activities are better publicized.

Not all regional groups are yet formally established with committees and officers but I thought members would find it useful to have a list of the officers in those regions where committees have been set up together with names of 'contact persons' in the other regions.

This issue contains a report by Mrs Patricia Moore on a recent meeting of the South Glamorgan Group and notes by Mr A F Mortimer on the present situation of chapels in eastern Montgomery. Similar reports from other counties and regions would be most welcome.

CYFARFOD Y GWANWYN/SPRING MEETING



Gyda'r rhifyn hwn dosberthir manylion am y cyfarfod a gynhelir eleni yn Ninbych ar Fai 13eg.

Enclosed with this issue are details of the Spring Meeting which is to be held this year at Denbigh on 13 May.



NEWSPLETTER Y CHLYTHYR
 SPRINGGAWNYN 1999

In Issue 2 of the Newsletter the editor appealed for better attendance at the meetings arranged by the regional committees of the Society. Attendance might be improved if both reports and minutes of any local meetings could be sent in to the editor. The editor would be pleased to see the activities of the various regions.

All regional committees are invited to formally collaborate with the editor. The editor would find it helpful to have a list of members in those regions where committees have been established with names of 'conspicuous persons' in the other regions.

This issue contains a report by the editor on a meeting of the South Glamorgan region held by A F Mortimer on the present situation in the region. Similar reports from other regions would be most welcome.

CYFARFOD Y GWANWYNSPRING MEETING

Yn y cyfarfod hon byddwn yn trafod y
 gwaith a roddwyd i'r amlwg yn y
 gyfarfod hon.



Yn y cyfarfod hon byddwn yn trafod y
 gwaith a roddwyd i'r amlwg yn y
 gyfarfod hon.

PWYLLGORAU RHANBARTHOL CYSYLLTWYR REGIONAL COMMITTEES, CONVENORS

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Mr Richard Morgan

County Archivist
Powys Libry H Q
LLANDRINDOD WELLS
Powys
(Tel: 0597 2212)

THE CHAPELS SOCIETY

Mr Richard Morris, Research Officer with the Council of British Archaeology, met members of the Executive Committee of CAPEL at Aberystwyth on 10 December. At this meeting discussion centred on the respective aims and objectives of CAPEL and 'The Chapels Society', which was to be established following a meeting sponsored by the C.B.A. in London in September 1988.

CAPEL members emphasised the central importance of Non-conformity in the modern history of Wales. Concern was expressed with regard to a possible confusion of purpose between the two societies and that this was reflected in their respective titles. Reference was also made to the apparent pre-occupation of The Chapels Society with architecture, whilst CAPEL sought to safeguard the 'architecture, archives and associated artefacts of Non-conformity in Wales'.

At the same time we were conscious of the advantages of co-operation, with the two societies keeping each other fully informed of their respective activities and publications. Several Welsh-based enquiries addressed to The Chapels Society have already been directed to CAPEL and valuable information has thereby been acquired. Details of our Spring Meeting at Denbigh will also be publicised by The Chapels Society and it is hoped that many of their members will join us on 13th May.

We have no information yet as to the officers of The Chappells Society, but Mr Morris may be contacted at the Northern Office of the Council of British Archaeology, The King's Manor, York, YO1 2EP.

TANYSGRIFIADAU / MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Gofynnir yn garedig i'r aelodau dalu eu tanysgrifiadau cyn gynted ag sy'n bosibl i'r Trysorydd / Members are kindly asked to pay their subscriptions as soon as possible to the Treasurer (Mr R C Carter, 129 St Fagans Road, Tyllgoed/Fairwater, Caerdydd/Cardiff, CF5 3AG.

Aelodaeth Unigol / Individual Membership £3 00 p a;
Aelodaeth Teulu / Family Membership £5 00 p a;
Sefydliad / Corporate Membership £5 00 p a.

SOUTH GLAMORGAN GROUP

The sixth meeting of the South Glamorgan Group was held on 14 February. Members of the Mid-Glamorgan and Gwent Groups were invited to attend, and the meeting was held at the Pontypridd Heritage Centre, itself a most successfully converted chapel building.

After the business meeting, contributions by three speakers dealt with different aspects of graveyard recording.

SUSAN EDWARDS, the Senior Assistant Archivist of the Glamorgan Archive Service spoke on the involvement of the Record Office in hosting a Graveyard Liaison Committee. This, over the past five years or so, has brought together representatives from chapels, churches, family history societies, the Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments, Welsh language academics and others with various reasons for their interest in graveyards and the recording of the monuments.

The Record Office has devised a recording form, and attempted to persuade all those who record to do so to a common and consistent standard. The Manpower Services Commission had agreed to refer all applications for work in graveyards to the Record Office and so bring MSC funded schemes into the net. With the demise of the MSC the impact of the present Employment Training Schemes has not yet become clear. Examples of the recording form, and of the eventual booklets and indexes multi-reproduced by the Record Office for each graveyard were also on view.

NOEL ISRAEL of the Glamorgan Family History Society spoke on the enthusiasm of volunteers who set out to record monumental inscriptions, and of the great number of chapel yards which were at risk. He also underlined the realisation that recording was not a simple or easy process, and was most pleasantly undertaken on sunlit days and evenings, rather than in pouring rain.

HOWARD LLEWELYN of the Glamorgan Family History Society showed a selection of excellent slides which not only illustrated the vast variety of tombstone styles, but also showed the disastrous effects on many of polluted air and of weather.

.The evening concluded with coffee and biscuits.

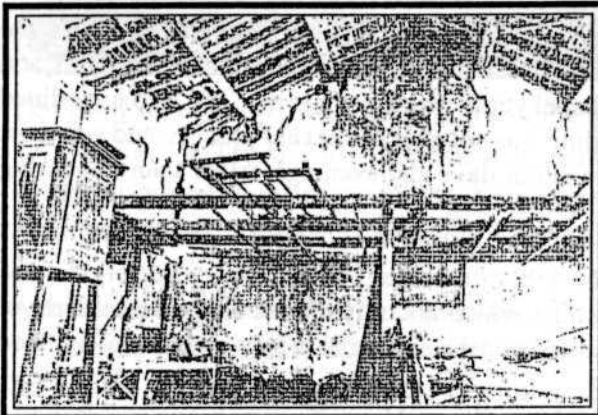
Apel Hen Gapel John Hughes John Hughes Chapel Appeal

Members of CAPEL will know of the appeal which was launched some time ago for £50,000 to restore and preserve John Hughes's house and chapel at Pontrobert. The building continued as a chapel for a few years after his death but from the 1860s to the end of the century it was used as a wainwright's workshop. It has now fallen into the sad state of repair shown in the picture below.

The appeal committee applied to CADW for a grant but the application was refused on the grounds that the building was not of outstanding historical interest. An appeal has now been made to CAPEL to support the local committee's case that the chapel is indeed of outstanding importance, not only as an excellent example of the kind of building used by the early Methodists but also because of its connection with Ann Griffiths, one of the greatest of Welsh hymn writers.

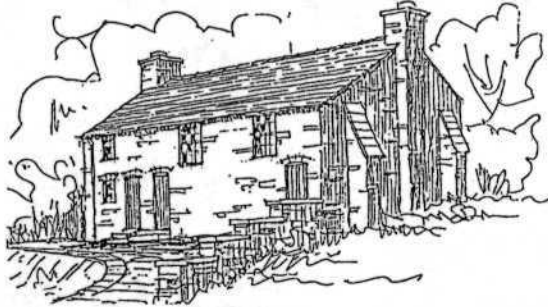
On behalf of CAPEL a visit was made to the chapel on 15 March by Ann Rhydderch, Huw Owen, A F Mortimer and Alun Jones. They were met by Mr Don Jones and Mr Mervyn Roberts representing the appeal committee, who gave them an account of the history of the

building and the hopes and problems of the trustees.



The Executive Committee is to discuss the matter at its next meeting and any further developments will be reported in the next issue of the *Newsletter*.

CAPEL JOHN HUGHES PONTROBERT



Mae'n siwr fod llawer ohonoch yn gofyn ac yn holi beth sy'n digwydd ynglyn a'r Hen Gapel erbyn hyn? Wel, mae pethau'n symud ymlaen yn ara bach; arian wrth gwrs sydd wrth wraidd y mater. Mewn pwyllgor a gynhaliwyd ar Ragfyr 12fed cafwyd trafodaeth ar sut i godi mwy o arian i ddechrau atgyweirio'r adeilad. Deallwyd gan y Trysorydd, Mrs Beryl Vaughan, fod yr Hen Gapel wedi ei dalu amdano am y swm o £10,000, lelly mae'r fangre gysegredig yma yn eiddo'r genedi a bod oddeutu £1,200 mewn llaw, ac fe enwyd amryw o gronfeydd lle y medrem wneud cais am grant.

Penderlynwyd gwneud yr atgyweiriadau gam wrth gam. Y cam cyntaf yw rhoi to newydd a bwtresi i gryfhau y waliau, clirio a lefelu'r tir o'i gwmpas i wneud gwell mynedfa a lle i barcio. Amcangyfrif y gost am y gwaith yma yw £12,000.

Fel pwyllgor teimlem mai da fyddai gallu o leiaf cychwyn ar y gwaith yma cyn mis Awst eleni, gan fod digwyddiad pwysig yn y cylch, sef Pererindod Genedlaethol i ardal Ann Griffiths a John Hughes. Bydd y Pererinion yn cerdded o'r Bala i Bontrobert a gellir eu noddi tuag at apêl yr Hen Gapel. Feily ar ran yr Ymddiriedolwyr a'r Pwyllgor apeliat yn daer arnoch os ydych yn gweld gwerth mewn cadw'r adeilad hanesyddol hwn i roi yn hael ar fyrder er mwyn ein galluogi i roi cychwyn ar y gwaith. Rydym yn ddiolchgar i deulu Dolwar Fach am ganiatau i flwch castglu gael ei roi yn y ty a phleser mawr yn y pwyllgor oedd agor y blwch a darganfod fod ymwelwyr wedi rhoi £153.58 ar eu hymwelriad a Dolwar Fach. Yn y llun gwelir fel mae'r penseri Merfyn Roberts a Don Jones yn rhagweld sut y bydd yr hen Gapel yn edrych pan gwblheir y gwaith i gyd.

Plu'r Gweunydd Chwef. 1989

Trefor Owen.



LOCAL RECORDER

... Methodism's new face in Aberystwyth

Start for historic project

AFTER a two-year delay, English and Welsh Methodists in Aberystwyth are proceeding with their historic plans for a joint Methodist centre in the town.

Queen's Road English church and St Paul's Welsh church will unite in a new church complex on the Queen's Road site, to be known as St Paul's eglwys Fethodistaidd St Paul. Work on the £200,000 development is due to start early this year.

Spot-listing

The delay was caused by the stipulating of the old Queen's Road building by the Historic Monuments section of the Welsh Office (Cwmwl) only five days before planning approval was unanimously agreed by the local authority in 1987.

In response to the church's subsequent application for listed building consent to demolish, the decision was effectively taken out of local

authority hands by the Secretary of State for Wales. Rather than incur the high costs of a public inquiry, the church opted to make its case through a written statement, which took the form of a 312-page report covering all aspects of the building and site. It was submitted last June and permission for demolition was finally received in August.

Queen's Road minister the Rev Peter Hether and that as a direct result of the building being listed against all independent advice, re-development plans were delayed for two years and a further £120,000 added to the original estimate, mostly due to the imposition of VAT on all new building work after next April.

The church has now made a submission through the local MP to the Parliamentary Ombudsman, seeking exemplary damages against Cadw alleging 'serious maladministration and a notable miscarriage of the rules of natural justice'.

Methodism in Aberystwyth was formally established with the opening of a Welsh Wesleyan chapel in 1807, where the needs of English speakers



were also catered for until a separate small English Methodist chapel was set up in 1841. This was the first English Nonconformist church in Aberystwyth. Both causes steadily merged their accommodation and each planned and built much larger churches with seating capacities far in excess of their immediate requirements.

The English Methodist Queen's Road church was opened in 1818 and the St Paul's Welsh Methodist church in 1850. At this time, with the opening of the rail-

way link and the birth of the University of Wales, the town was growing as a holiday resort and educational centre.

Uneconomic

Over the intervening century, both properties deteriorated to the point where they are uneconomic to repair. The English cause is experiencing steady growth in its work and witness within the town and university, only serving to highlight the deficiencies and inadequacies of the present facilities.

For these reasons, the Queen's Road members decided over six years ago to demolish their existing premises and rebuild a new church on the same site. Discussions with the St Paul's church were also initiated, to see if a way could be found to establish a joint Methodist centre for work in both English and Welsh.

Welsh speaking members later agreed by an overwhelming majority that they wished to share in this major development, so the first new church building in Aberystwyth this century means that

historically the wheel has come full circle.

As pictured with a model of the new English/Welsh church are (left to right): The Rev Tudor Davies (St Paul's minister); Mr Geoffrey Brown (secretary of the new church committee); Mr Donald Carmichael (architect); Mr Henni Evans (St Paul's treasurer); the Rev Peter Barber (Queen's Road minister); Mr Eric Evans (St Paul's church secretary). Picture: "Cannowan News".

An earlier stage of this saga was reported in Newsletter No.3, see also adjoining advertisement.

BETH YW EI DDYFODOL?



Y Gwladfa Chwefror 1989

Mae nifer o iecynnau bach hyfryd a thawel yng nghefn gwlad Cymru. Lle felly yw Soar, rhyw filltir o bentref Nantglyn. Mae yno gapel bychan a thri thdyddyn yn ymyl a nifer o ffermydd o amgylch. Ond ers pedair blynedd bellach mae rhyw gwmwl wedi bod dros y capel. Penderfynwyd mewn pwyllgor arbennig o Henaduriaeth Dyffryn Clwyd yn Hydref 1985 adrofnu gofalaethau. Gan fod nifer yr aelodau yn fychan penderfynwyd nad oedd Eglwys Soar i gael gwasanneth Gweinidog na phregethwyr ar y Sul, er bod 28 o aelodau a 16 o blant ar y Hyfrau, ond caniatwyd iddynt gynnal Ysgol Sul a disgyrilydd iddynt ymledol mewn eglwys cyfagos. Gan i nifer o'r capel gael eu codi gyda llawer iawn o swrylys da, mewn cyfnod pan deiniwyd boed gwir angen lle i addoli a chynnal Ysgol Sul. Os yw'r diben hwnnw wedi dod i ben, onid gweli fyddai tynnu'r adeiladau i lawr yn lle eu gwerthu am bris uchel i ddiethriaid a hwyrach ychwanegu at y mewnlifad?

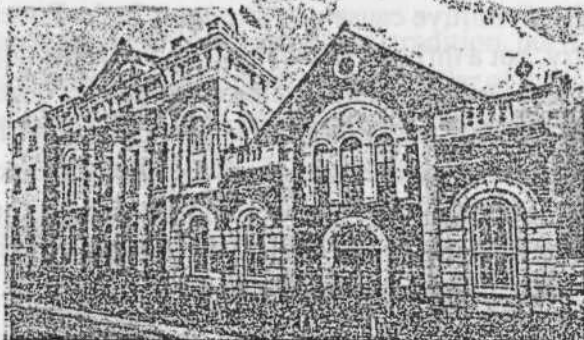
Estate Agents
Valuers
Surveyors
Auctioneers

KING THOMAS

Hoyd-Jones & Co

23 Terrace Road, Aberystwyth

By directions of the Methodist Church (Property Division)



EGLWYS FETHODISTAIDD — ST. PAUL'S — METHODIST CHURCH

(plus school rooms)

Great Darkgate Street, Aberystwyth

Option to purchase Church house at 5 Princess Street, Aberystwyth, at the rear of the building. The house will not be sold separately in advance of the church.

Welsh Office Circular No. 61/81 — Historic Buildings and Conservation Area — Policy and Procedure — is available for inspection at Agents Office.

PRICE — Church and School Buildings — £300,000.00
Princess Street — £50,000.00

Vendors' Solicitors are LOOSEMORES Solicitors, 18-20 High Street, Cardiff, South Glamorgan.

The Welsh Methodist Church has decided to share with the English Methodist Church in their proposed new church building.

**** TODAY Monday March 20 1989 17



PRISTINE CHAPEL: This could be your immaculate home

£42,000 HOUSE

IF YOU fancy living in this delightful former chapel, then our fabulous £42,000 HOUSE jackpot could be the answer to your prayers.

The 1820 chapel, at Rhuddlan, Clwyd, has been extensively renovated and converted into a large, centrally-heated family home with five bedrooms, one with en-suite bathroom.

And for those who really like to make a splash,

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To claim your prize, you must ring the special number on your entry coupon between 10am and 5pm today.

If you have not yet entered HOUSE, there is still time to join in. Entry forms are printed regularly in your Newspaper Of The Year.

1 7 15 22 24 32 37

A Born-Again Sinner?

Primitive Methodism in the Marches

Primitive Methodism originated in an open air meeting held in 1801 at Mow Cop, almost in the shadow of what is now the Jodrell Bank radio telescope. The Primitive cause was strongest in the Potteries and the Black Country, but a thriving circuit built up in the Montgomeryshire marches south of Oswestry amongst the communities dependent upon the Cambrian railway, the Shropshire Union canal, the Llanymynech quarries and the many small holdings around the confluence of Severn and Vyrnwy. Although the Primitive and English Methodist movements amalgamated in 1932, until 1964 the Llanymynech circuit consisted entirely of Primitive chapels.

From 1826, Primitives in Deytheur (Deuddwr) had met in a farmhouse until in 1877 a chapel was erected by local builder, Henry Pearce of Sarnau. The brickwork is of a very high order being in the tri-chromatic style then much favoured consisting of locally-made Ruabon type stock red bricks with decorative bands and details work in more expensive Ruabon buffs and Staffordshire blues. The porch, with its decorated barge-boards, although harmonising perfectly with the main structure, is a later addition and probably by the same hand - Mr Brown, a mason and heavy drinker who was converted either during his work on the chapel, or soon afterwards.

Nearly 20 years later on 28 February 1895, the "camp" meeting at Carreghoffa (Wern) established in 1882, resolved to build themselves a corrugated iron chapel and for £5 purchased a plot of 9 yards frontage and 11 yards depth. Amongst those signing the conveyance was one "John Brown, The Ney, Llandrindod, Master Mason", who is recorded in the minutes of the Wern Trustees Meeting of 17 January 1896 as having persuaded the members to build in more permanent fashion. The Wern was, in fact, built largely by the members themselves under the guidance of John Brown being a very simple structure in good local

red brick with no fixed fittings other than a very simple pulpit. Nevertheless, it is testimony to the enthusiasm and industry of our Victorian ancestors that the opening service was held at the end of August 1896. Imagine in 1989, a communal self-build, project, however simple, being completed in barely eight months - and being structurally sound 90 years later!

It has not been possible to confirm the local tradition, but it is generally believed that John Brown, master mason and pillar of the Wern Chapel in 1896, was none other than Mr Brown the dissolute bricklayer of 1877.

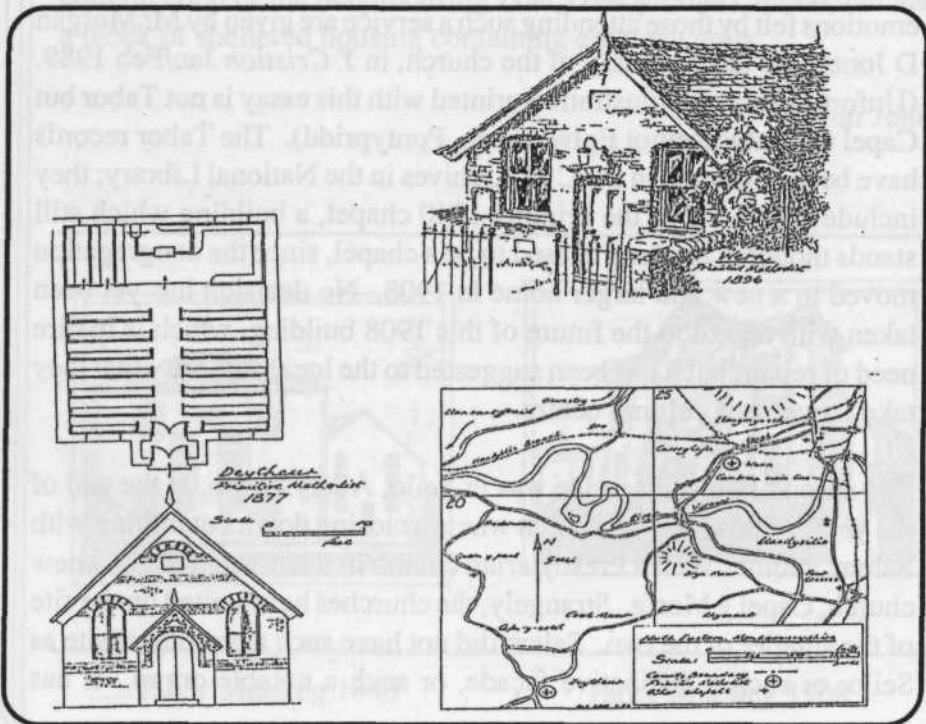
Acknowledgements:

Rev Irving Penberthy

Mr 'Charlie' Edwards, Deytheur

Mr 'Reg' Edwards, Pant.

A F Mortimer



LAST RITES

Most issues of the Newsletter contain stories of chapels threatened with closure or press cuttings relating to the demolition of chapels or their conversion to other uses. Indeed, our Society's publicity and membership leaflet opens its resumé of The Facts with the depressing statement that 'Chapels are closing in Wales at the rate of one a week'.

I myself had the experience at the turn of the year of attending three last services in chapels in different parts of Wales.

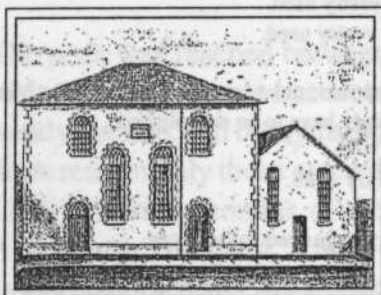
The first was the service of disincorporation, on 13 September, of the Tabor Welsh Presbyterian Church, Maesteg, the chapel which I attended as a child, and which at the time was one of the most flourishing in the Llynfi valley. An account of the service, by Mr J M Wilde can be read in *Y Goleuad* 21 October and a more personal account of the emotions felt by those attending such a service are given by Mr Morgan D Jones, the last secretary of the church, in *Y Cristion* Jan/Feb 1989. (Unfortunately, the illustration printed with this essay is not Tabor but Capel Coffadwriaethol Eglwysbach, Pontypridd). The Tabor records have been deposited in the C M Archives in the National Library; they include a drawing of the original 1840 chapel, a building which still stands though it has long ceased to be a chapel, since the congregation moved to a new and larger home in 1908. No decision has yet been taken with regard to the future of this 1908 building, which is in dire need of repair, but it has been suggested to the local authority that they take it over as a cultural centre.

The second farewell service was in Seilo, Aberystwyth, at the end of the year. In this case the church was not closing down but uniting with Salem, another Welsh Presbyterian church in the town, to form a new church, Capel y Morfa. Strangely, the churches have united on the site of the smaller of the two. Salem did not have such a prominent site as Seilo, or such a distinctive façade, or such a notable organ. It has

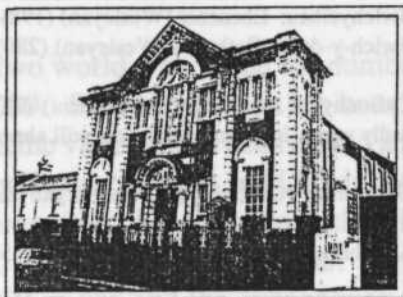
however apparently escaped the dubious fortune of having foundations laid in sand which has troubled so many buildings in the Queen's Road area of Aberystwyth and the equally dubious system of wall construction which, it seems, was used in many of the town's chapels erected in the mid-Victorian period.

The third service was a wedding at the Glyn United Reformed Church, Tredegar Street Risca. This was unusual in that the chapel had already been closed and was reopened specially for the marriage service. The building, erected in 1890, was the second on the site, the first chapel dating back to 1841. The present building has to be demolished because a severe crack has appeared in the façade, caused either by subsidence or by the undermining of the foundations by the periodic flooding of the river Ebbw. Though the building is now to be demolished, the church is still active. When the site has been cleared, it will accommodate not only a new chapel, to be shared with the congregation of the neighbouring Zoar Presbyterian Church, but also a block of sheltered housing containing eighteen units.

Alun Jones



Tabor Maesteg 1840



Tabor Maesteg 1908

News of Chapels in Eastern Montgomeryshire

Llanfyllin: For several years the four chapels have pooled resources and services are held at each in rotation.

Pen-y-bont-fawr: The two congregations in this village are now holding combined services at the two chapels in turn.

Llangynog: Ebenezer. (Independent) (132)*. Closed two years: now being converted to a craft workshop and house.

Llan-sant-ffraid: Zion (Calvinist) (160) and Bethesda (Independent) (163). Both now unused. Services and meetings still being held in vestries.

Llanfechain: Penuel (Wesleyan) (105). Not now used - but vestry still in use.

Dolobran: The Quaker meeting-house of 1700, long closed, is now in regular Sunday use again, and quite a lot of maintenance is being done.

Cymdu: Hermon (Calvinist) (185) and Moriah (Wesleyan) (322) now share services held at the two chapels in turn.

Llanfihangel: Braich-y-wain Uchaf. Salem (Independent) (109) has not been in use for about a year.

Hirnant: Hebron (Calvinist) (52) Demolished August 1988.

Penygarmedd: Nantffyllon. Bethel (Baptist) (114). Disused since January 1988. Deteriorating rapidly - dry rot in stonework.

Bwlchycibau: Ebenezer (Wesleyan) (198) - only vestry used.

Bwlch-y-ddâr: Bethesda (Wesleyan) (280) - only vestry used.

Cyffronnydd: Jerusalem (Independent) (22) Now closed; move started for disposal. Very badly worm-infested woodwork; will almost certainly have to be demolished.

Geuffordd: (Calvinist) (47) New organ installed July 1988.

Llanrhaeadr: Tabernacl (Independent) (156) vestry only used for services.

Treflach Wood (Shropshire): Primitive Methodist chapel closed 1986. Sold Nov 1988 for conversion to house.

*Nos in Appendix to 1905 Royal Commission Report for reference.

A F Mortimer

SYNAGOGUES IN WALES : AN OLWEN HUGHES EXHIBITION

During February and March the Welsh Folk Museum housed an exhibition of the work of Olwen Hughes, one of Wales's best topographic artists. Although she now lives and works in Leicester, she was brought up in Rhymney and in this collection of pictures, commissioned by Cardiff's Jewish Representative Council, she has created an artistic record of the synagogues of Wales.

Many of the synagogues resemble nonconformist chapels, and this is not surprising as they were designed by the same architects. Like the Welsh chapels too they were for the scattered Jewish communities not only places of worship but also social centres and schools for the children.

Most of the Jews came to Wales in the half century before the first World War in search of work and peace. One, named David Michael came from Germany to Haverfordwest as early as 1749 to set up a banking business, and from 1860 on Jewish communities grew up in most of the South Wales valleys and in places such as Bangor, Llandudno and Colwyn Bay on the North Wales coast.

The peak was reached between the two world wars when the number of Jews was estimated at around 5000. Since then there has been a steady decline. All the synagogues in the valleys have been closed and there remain only those at Cardiff, Swansea, Newport and Llandudno. Little evidence remains of the communities that once flourished in Abertillery, Bridgend, Ebbw Vale, Pontypool and Tredegar. The Jewish cemetery in Brynmawr is still in use and the synagogues at Aberavon, Aberdare, Llanelli, Merthyr Tydfil and Pontypridd still remain though they are now used for other purposes.

Argraffwyd gan wasg
Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru

*Printed by the press of the
National Library of Wales*