

# Capel



CYMDEITHAS TREJTADAETH Y CAPELI  
THE CHAPELS HERITAGE SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER/CYLCHLYTHYR

8

SUMMER / HAF 1989

## CYFARFOD BLYNYDDOL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Cynhelir Cyfarfod Blynyddol Capel ar ddydd Sadwrn y 14fed Hydref, 1989 am 11.00 o'r gloch yng Nghapel Seion, Twynyrodyn, Merthur Tudful.

Yn dilyn, cyflwynir darlith fer â sleidiau gan Mr Martin Snead a threfnir ymweliadau â nifer o gapeli'r dref yn y prynhawn.

The Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held on Saturday, 14th October, 1989, in Seion, Twynyrodyn, Merthyr Tudful, at 11 o'clock.

Following, there will be a brief illustrated lecture by Mr Martin Snead and arrangements are being made to visit a number of chapels in the town in the afternoon.

## CHAPELS OF CLWYD

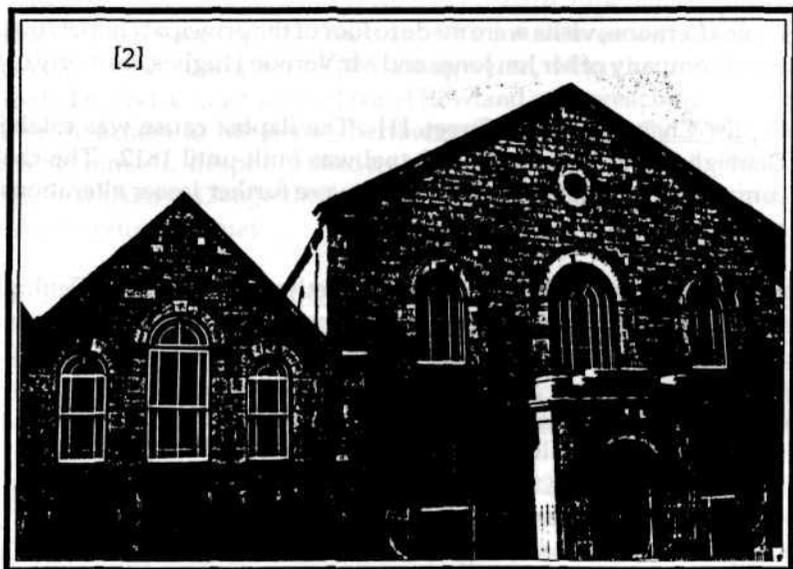
(Denbigh Meeting, 13 May 1989)

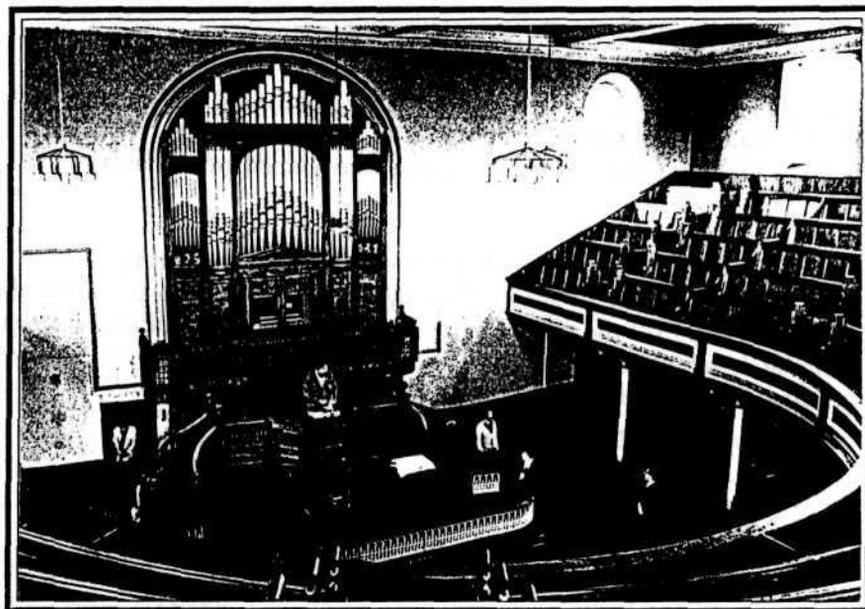
The Spring meeting of the Society at Denbigh opened with a talk on the Chapels of Clwyd by Jon James, the Conservation Architect for the county. Aiming to dispel the prevailing impression that the Welsh chapel is no more than an uninteresting god-box, he began with a wide-ranging account of the sociological and religious background to the buildings, tracing the history of Protestantism and Nonconformity from Luther and Zwingli through John Penry, Morgan Llwyd and Walter Cradoc to Howel Harris and the mushroom growth of Calvinistic Methodism in the nineteenth century.

[1]

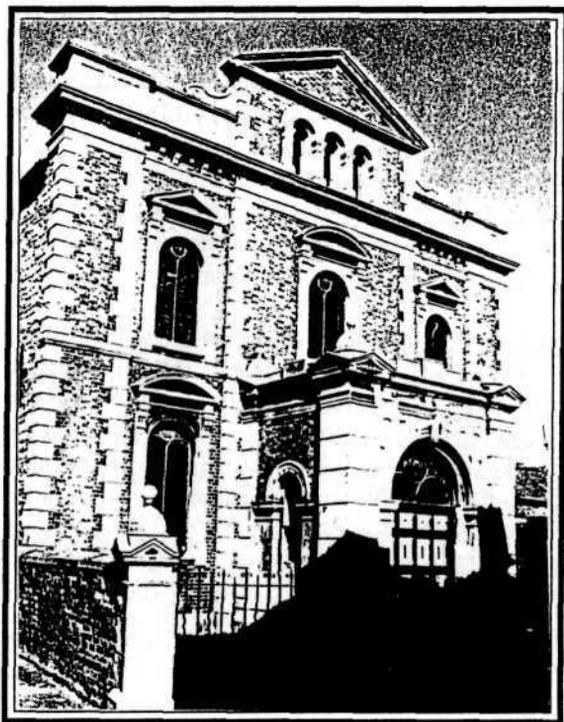


[2]





[3]



[4]

meetings had been held in a barn on Beacon's Hill. A chapel 10 yards square was built on the site and had to be extended in 1805 and 1813. A new chapel measuring 20 yards by 24 was erected in 1828 but in 1880 this was closed for a year for alterations and renovation costing £2,000, including refronting and reseating the chapel and replacing the square-shaped gallery by a semi-circular one.

Swan Lane Independent Chapel. [4] The first Dissenting meeting house in Denbigh was built on the site in 1742. By 1769 it became necessary to add a gallery and in 1812 the chapel had to be rebuilt at a cost of £900. It was completely rebuilt again in 1839. A new gallery, pulpit and seating were installed in 1875 and a schoolroom was added in 1907.

## Y CAPEL BACH

Trefnwyd nifer o gyfarfodydd llwyddiannus ym mis Mehefin i ddathlu hanner-canmlwyddiant ail-adeiladu capel Ebeneser, Penparcau, ger Aberystwyth. Traddodwyd darlith ar 'Y Capel Bach' gan yr hanesydd enwog, Dr Geraint H Jenkins, a fagwyd yn Ebeneser. Tynnodd sylw at nodweddion arbennig hanes y capel ers sefydlu Ysgol Sul yn 1812 mewn pentref a dyfodd yn aruthrol o ran poblogaeth yn ystod y ganrif hon.

Cyhoeddwyd y ddarlith mewn cyfrol ddeniadol sy'n cynnwys casgliad diddorol o ffotograffau. Dangoswyd y rhain mewn arddangosfa a drefnwyd adeg y dathliadau ac maent yn darlunio'r hen gapel, y capel newydd, rhai o gymeriadau amlycaf Penparcau a datblygiad y pentref.

A number of successful meetings were arranged in June to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the re-building of Ebeneser chapel, Penparcau near Aberystwyth. A lecture on 'Y Capel Bach' was delivered by the distinguished historian, Dr Geraint H Jenkins, who was brought up in the chapel. He drew attention to significant features in the history of the chapel since the establishment of a Sunday School, in 1812, in a village whose population has grown remarkably during this century.

The lecture was published in an attractive volume which contains a fascinating collection of photographs. These were displayed in an exhibition mounted during the anniversary celebrations, and they illustrate the old chapel, the new chapel, some of the more notable characters of Penparcau and the development of the village.

**Rhai cyhoeddiadau diweddar eraill ar hanes capeli**  
**Some other recently published chapel histories**

**HARRIS, J B**

Gyrfa canrif a hanner achos y Bedyddwyr ym Mlaenwenen, 1838-1988.

Aberteifi, 1988.

**THOMAS, W G**

The history of Galilee Baptist Church, Llangwm, 1832-1988.  
Haverfordwest, 1988.

**WILLIAMS, Alwyn I**

O'r blychau hyn: hanes yr achos yn y Capel Mawr Porthaethwy, 1838-1988.

Porthaethwy, 1988.

**WILLIAMS, Idris**

Tabor, Llysfaen.

Llysfaen, Clwyd, 1989.



## WEST GLAMORGAN GROUP

A meeting of the Group was held on 10 July in the College House, Swansea, with Mr Jeff Harrison in the chair and Dr Prys Morgan as note-taker. Following the business meeting, the main discussion of the evening centred on the endangered chapels of West Glamorgan. We feel sure that the information contributed by the members present at the meeting will be of interest to the membership of the Society generally.

1. Crug Glas, Swansea (Presbyterian) has now been demolished, but as a result of swift warning arising from the previous meeting of the branch in 1987 the graveyard memorials have been carefully recorded and a report on them will be published.
2. Babell, Swansea (Presbyterian) has been demolished but the site has not yet been sold and the graveyard has recently been cleaned by the local authorities. Attention was drawn to the importance of some of the memorials, e.g. that of the musician, Silas Evans.
3. Horeb, Morriston (Independent) Mr Harrison reported on his dealings with the company which had attempted to convert the redundant chapel into old people's flats, over a period since July 1988, although the chapel was part of the Morriston conservation area, though not individually listed. The chapel structure was now deteriorating and an application was being made to demolish. Members were asked to watch out for any planning applications in the local press, or applications for demolition.
4. Calfaria, Ravenhill, Swansea (Baptist). Congregation now to worship in the schoolroom, while some at least of main chapel is to be demolished for road-widening. Members asked to note any change in condition of graveyard.
5. Argyle, Swansea (Presbyterian). A large listed building, causing immense problems for a small congregation. The façade will be maintained but the main body of the chapel will probably be replaced by a block of flats. The Group felt that Chapel should oppose demolition of this important building or at least fight to retain as much as possible of the structure.
6. Saron, Gendros (Independent). Congregation now shares common ministry with Bethel Welsh, Sketty. There is a proposal to make the chapel buildings redundant; but it was felt that since these buildings are in such a fine condition they could well be turned into a community centre. Prys Morgan was asked to convey these sentiments to the minister and ask him to remind the congregation of the need to record the building before any sale and to make proper arrangements for the deposition of all church records.

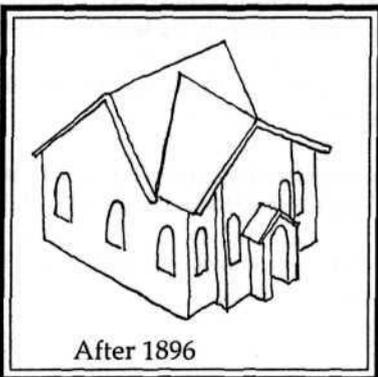
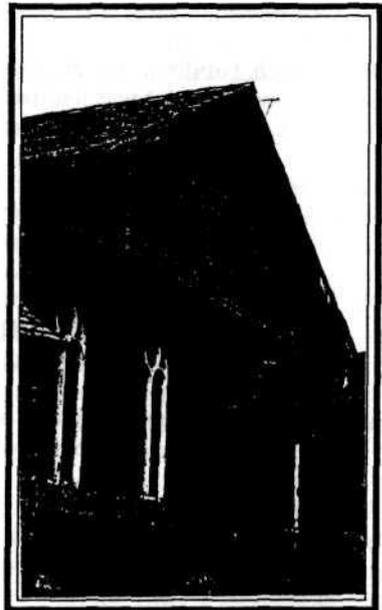
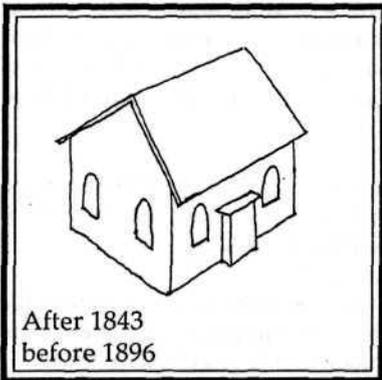
7. United Reformed Church, Gowerton. Has been well converted to a community centre while retaining a part of the building for worship. During the discussion reference was made to the recent document of the Presbyterian Church of Wales *Strategy for redundant buildings*, which proposed turning many unused chapel buildings all over Wales into housing for local people.
8. Mynydd Bach. Miss S Lewis reported on the continuing difficulties of this chapel, the mother church of many causes in the area. Funds were still being sought and the architectural history of the building still had to be unravelled. It was proposed that Capel should again press Cadw and its architectural staff to make a proper survey of the building.
9. Manselton United Reformed Church. The chapel is in a bad state of repair and the large congregation has decided to demolish and rebuild on the same site. It was felt that they should be pressed to make a full record of the present building before demolition.
10. Capel y Gwryd (1865) and Capel y Baran (1804-5). Mrs Jeremiah reported that these two Independent chapels north of Swansea both need repairs and improvements. A further search for financial aid must be made and Mrs Jeremiah would be sent copies of the Capel leaflet on architectural grants, &c.
11. Siloh, Landore. The state of the 1826 schoolroom called the Coleg was discussed and it was felt that Capel committee should draw the attention of Cadw to this early 19th century nonconformist academy.
12. Siloam, Pentre Estyll (Independent). Though the congregation now uses the schoolroom, the condition of the chapel was still good. Members were asked to keep a careful watch for any changes or signs of dilapidation.
13. Horeb, Loughor. (Independent). Has closed. The exterior is not striking but the interior is very fine. The attention of Cadw should be drawn to it and it should be recorded as soon as possible in case the building is demolished.
14. Ebenezer, Llansamlet. Has recently suffered a fire which gutted the schoolroom. The chapel and records were saved.
15. West Glamorgan Archives have recently received deposits of records from Neath Wesleyan Methodists, Town Hill Baptists and Jerusalem, Raven Hill.

It was decided to hold the next meeting of the Group on Monday 30th October, if possible at Capel Ebenezer Newydd, Henrietta Street, Swansea.

## FOLLOW THE FASHION

We are familiar with the gradual evolution during the nineteenth century of the layout of the dissenting chapel from a long wall frontage to a gable end main façade and entrance. Even if the need to reduce expensive frontages dictated the change in towns, it was largely a matter of conforming to prevailing trends in rural areas.

An excellent example of following the fashion is shown in Bethesda Independent chapel in Llansantffraid-ym-Mechain. The cause was first established in the village shop by licence on 30 April 1805 and the chapel was built on the present site in 1827 and extended in 1843. It then appeared as in John Thomas' photograph taken probably in the late 1870s. In 1896 a further extension was made, but this time the opportunity was taken to introduce a fashionable gable end façade on the road frontage, and incidentally to build in Mr Edwards' recently introduced machine-pressed Ruabon red bricks



(their first use in a chapel building in this part of Montgomeryshire). Unfortunately maintenance of such a relatively large chapel, seating 250, is now beyond the resources of a small membership and services are now held in the vestry and schoolroom.

My thanks to:

Mrs Thomas, Llansantffraid

The National Library of Wales for permission to reproduce John Thomas' photograph

Mr John Hilling, for inspiration and instruction.

A F Mortimer



## WILLIAM HENRY SPAULL

The last issue of the Newsletter included a copy of the report in the Methodist Recorder that the Queen's Road Methodist Church, Aberystwyth, had received approval, after a two year delay, for their project to demolish the existing building and erect a new church on the same site. The new church will be shared by the congregation of St Paul's Welsh Methodist Church, whose building is also in a dangerous condition and is advertised for sale.

The last service in the present Queen's Road building was held on 11 June and included a pageant of the history of the Church. While preparing the pageant and their application for planning permission to demolish, the church officers have been trying, without much success, to find information about the original architect.

The building is believed to have been designed by William Henry Spaul of Oswestry. A letter from Mr Parkinson of the Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales to the British Architectural Library produced a copy of Mr Spaul's statement of his professional career submitted when he applied for admission as a Fellow of the R.I.B.A. in 1890. Among the buildings built, restored or altered by him, the only ecclesiastical ones he listed are a 'Cemetery Chapel' at Aberystwyth in 1864, Bala College in 1865, Oswestry Congregational Church in 1868 and several parish churches restored between 1875 and 1885, when he was surveyor for the diocese of St Asaph. The Building Trades Directory for 1868 says that he also built Calvinistic Methodist chapels at Bala and Machynlleth, but of course no mention is made of Queen's Road Methodist Church, built 1869. The Oswestry & Border Counties Advertiser, in the obituary it published on 12 May 1915, states that Mr Spaul 'designed numerous churches, chapels and church institutions in North Wales and Shropshire' but gives no details.

If any member of Capel has information relating to Mr Spaul's work as architect of Queen's Road, the church officers would be very glad to have details. Information of the whereabouts of any of his drawings or papers would also be of interest to the British Architectural Library, who could then include it in their Biographical File and their database of Victorian architects.

## YR ARCHIF BORTREADAU CYMREIG

Sawl capel yng Nghymru sy'n cadw printiau fel yr un yma o William Williams Pantycelyn? Ni wyddom pwy oedd yr arlunydd na'r cyhoeddwr na hyd yn oed y dyddiad cyhoeddi yn bendant.

Dyma waith Yr Archif : archwilio a chasglu gwybodaeth am bortreadau o Gymry. Mae'n debyg bod amryw bortread mewn capeli a festriedd, ac ystyrir y rhain bron yn rhan o'r adeilad. Pan fo'r adeilad hwnnw mewn perygl, peryglus hefyd yw sefyllfa'r portreadau.

Ga' i ofyn a oes gwybodaeth gan unrhyw un am bortreadau mewn capeli ac yn enwedig capeli mewn perygl? Hoffwn wybod cyn colli golwg arnynt.

Dr Paul Joyner  
Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru



## THE WELSH PORTRAIT ARCHIVE

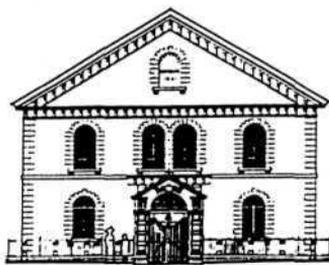
How many chapels in Wales have prints like this of William Williams Pantycelyn. We do not yet know who the artist or engraver was, or even the date the print was produced.

The Welsh Portrait Archive seeks to discover and collate information on the numerous portraits extant which relate to Wales. In many a vestry and chapel, portraits almost form part of the very fabric of the building, and, like the architecture, may be in danger when closure, sale or demolition threatens.

Would members who know of portraits in chapels please inform me. I would be specially glad to hear of portraits in immediate danger as these should not be lost or forgotten.

Dr Paul Joyner  
National Library of Wales

## Pontypridd Historical and Cultural Centre



A beautifully restored Welsh Valleys chapel beside the River Taff  
and next to Pontypridd's famous Old Bridge

### VISITING EXHIBITIONS 1989

Aug	Heath Robinson	&	Synagogues in Wales
Sept	Jurdy Burford - Stencil work	&	Rhondda Community Arts
Oct	Wally Waygood (Photography)	&	Electrical Energy
Nov	Winter Art Exhibition		
Dec	Heraldry in Wales	&	Local Camera Clubs

*Exhibitions on Local history and Chapels in Wales*

*Tourist Information Centre*

Open: Tuesday - Saturday 9am - 5pm  
(& Bank Holidays)

Admission: Adults 25p      Children 15p

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Telephone (0443) 402077/480786

How to get there: The Centre is about 500 yards from the A470 -  
Ynysybwl exit (6 miles from M4 Junction 32)

At the "Gateway to the Valleys"

## Canolfan Hanesyddol a Diwylliannol Pontypridd

Argraffwyd gan wasg Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru

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