

Capel

CYMDEITHAS TREFTADAETH Y CAPELI
THE CHAPELS HERITAGE SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER/CYLCHLYTHYR 19

GWANWYN / SPRING 1993

EGLWYS BRESBYTERAIDD CYMRU STRATEGAETH AR GYFER Y DYFODOL

[Fis Tachwedd y llynedd, teledwyd rhaglen deledu ar S4C a ddangosai cryn wrthwynebiad yng nghefn gwlad Ceredigion i'r polisi a fabwysiadwyd gan Eglwys Bresbyteraidd Cymru o uno grwpiau o eglwysi bychain ac yna cau a gwerthu nifer o adeiladau na fyddai eu hangen bellach ac a fyddai'n gostus iawn i'w cadw a'u cynnal. Ymhlith y rhesymau dros y polisi oedd y gred mai pobl nid adeilad yw hanfod eglwys ac mai gwastraff anghyfrifol ar adnoddau prin ariannol a dynol fyddai ymdrechu i gadw pob capel a godwyd yn y ddwy ganrif ddiwethaf i wasanaethu cymdeithas sydd wedi newid a symud gymaint. Yn erbyn y polisi, dadleuwyd y byddai diddymu capeli yn lladd cymunedau bychain ac na fyddai'r gost o'u cadw mor uchel ag yr honnid.]

Yn yr erthygl ganlynol y mae Ysgrifennydd Cyffredinol Eglwys Bresbyteraidd Cymru yn gosod allan y rhesymau a arweiniodd at lunio'r strategaeth a fabwysiadwyd gan yr Eglwys. *Gol.*]

Amcan y **Strategaeth** yw rhyddhau adnoddau sydd wedi'u clymu mewn adeiladau y gellid eu hepgor i ddiogelu a chryfhau'r eglwysi fydd yn parhau. Y nod yw sefydlu rhwydwaith o **Ganolfannau Cenhadu ac Addoli** yn enwadol ac mewn cydweithrediad ag enwadau eraill.

Trefnwyd i dirfesurwyr siartredig wneud arolwg i gyflwr adeiladau'r Cyfundeb ac o ganlyniad darganfuwyd fod y sefyllfa'n argyfyngus. Amcangyfrifir y byddai angen o leiaf £35 miliwn i'w hadfer i gyd i gyflwr boddhaol. Er waethaf hyn, pwrpas y Strategaeth yw troi argyfwng yn gyfle i osod sail newydd a chadarn i ddatblygu a chryfhau y dystiolaeth Gristnogol yn y gymuned leol, drwy sianelu cymaint ag sy'n bosibl o adnoddau mewn arian, amser a phobl o gynnal adeiladau i genhadu. Felly

rhoddir ystyriaeth ofalus i'r arolwg i gyflwr yr adeiladau ynghyd â natur, patrwm a nod tystiolaeth yr eglwysi i'r dyfodol a pha adnoddau mewn gweinidogion, gweithwyr, arian ac adeiladau fydd eu hangen i gyrraedd y nod.

Daeth yn amlwg na allwn gynnal a chadw pob capel. Nid yw hyn yn bosibl yn ariannol nac ychwaith yn angenrheidiol o safbwynt parhad a thwf y dystiolaeth Gristnogol. Y ffaith yw fod mwy o seddau i addolwyr mewn capeli ac eglwysi o bob enwad mewn sawl pentref ac ardal wledig nag sydd o boblogaeth. Mewn astudiaeth a gyhoeddwyd yn ddiweddar *The Myth of the Empty Church* gan Robin Gill (Athro Diwinyddiaeth Fodern ym Mhrifysgol Caint) ceir gwybod bod hyn yn ffaith hyd yn oed yn 1851 yn ôl cyfrifiad y flwyddyn honno o Addoliad Crefyddol yng Nghymru a Lloegr. Er waethaf hyn fe adiladwyd mwy a mwy o gapeli yn ail hanner y bedwaredd ganrif ar bymtheg. Erbyn 1951, ym mhlwyf Llangower a Llanuwchllyn ger y Bala, roedd digon o le i 286% o'r boblogaeth mewn addoldai yn perthyn i'r Eglwys yng Nghymru, yr Annibynwyr, y Bedyddwyr a'r Presbyteriaid. Bellach, er fod tri addoldy wedi cau, mae deg yn aros ar gyfer cyfanswm poblogaeth (oedolion) o 598.

Oherwydd lleihad yn nifer gweinidogion amser llawn y Cyfundeb, mae nifer cynyddol o gapeli ym mhob gofalaeth. Mae hyn yn anad dim arall, yn lladd ysbryd ac yn dihysbyddu egni gweinidogion ac yn gwneud ein gweinidogaeth yn llai effeithiol o lawer nag y gallai fod. Y tebygolrwydd yw y bydd lleihad pellach yn nifer y gweinidogion yn ystod y blynyddoedd nesaf. Felly, drwy ddod â chynulleidfaoedd at ei gilydd, lleihau nifer yr adeiladau, a sefydlu gweinidogaethau bro fe ellir trefnu cylch rhesymol a gobeithiol o wasanaeth ar gyfer pob gweinidog ac offeiriad.

Fel canlyniad i'w astudiaeth fanwl, daw Robin Gill i'r casgliad: 'Rural overbuilding and city-centre church retention soon acted as mill-stones around churches' necks. In the twentieth century most denominations have been increasingly weighed down by their outmoded structures. Perhaps it is not too surprising that they have lost vision and been unable to decipher their own structural problems. However, a combination of theological vision and strategic common sense might radically change the current situation'.

Dyma yw nod ac amcan y Strategaeth.

Dafydd H Owen
Ysgrifennydd Cyffredinol

[The preceding article, written at the Editor's request by the General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church of Wales, explains the reasons why the Church has formulated a policy of uniting groups of small chapels into single congregations.

He states that a surveyors' report has revealed a critical situation: at least £35 million would be required to restore all the Denomination's chapels to a satisfactory condition. This would not be financially possible and is not essential for the continuation and growth of Christian witness. At the time of the 1851 religious census there were more seats in churches and chapels than the total population, and yet more chapels were built in the second half of the nineteenth century. For years the number of full-time Presbyterian ministers has been falling and there has been a consequent increase in the number of chapels in each pastorate and a reduction in the effectiveness of the ministry of individual ministers. By bringing congregations together, by reducing the number of buildings and by setting up district (interdenominational) pastorates, it becomes possible to organise a reasonable field of service for each minister and priest.

The article closes with a quotation from Prof. Robin Gill's recently published study 'The Myth of the Empty Church'.]

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The Presbyterian church at Capel Dewi near Aberystwyth which was closed in 1990, was demolished on the eve of St. David's Day 1993

SURVEYS OF CHURCHES AND CHAPELS IN WALES (1992)

As a preliminary stage in the forthcoming architectural survey of churches and chapels throughout Wales, to be undertaken by the Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments, the following sources of information have been identified.

Originator	Area	Type of Survey	Notes
Capel	Merioneth	Notes, photos	On-going
National Library of Wales	All-Wales	Index to archives	
Glamorgan Record Office	Glamorgan	Archive sources Index of sites	
Mid Glamorgan C. C.	Mid Glamorgan	Architectural drawings	In Glamorgan Record Office
Clwyd Archives	Clwyd	Photos	
Delyn Borough Council	Delyn Borough	Photos, notes	Selective
Pembrokeshire National Park (Dyfed CC)	S.Pembs., Preseli & S.Cards.	Notes, photos	On-going
Ogwr Borough Council	Llynfi, Ogwr & Garw valleys	Photos, notes & assessments	Survey for internal use of Planning Dept.
RCAHMW (Threatened Buildings)	All-Wales	Notes, plans & photos	Highly selective
<i>Buildings of Wales</i>			
Glamorgan	Glamorgan	Notes	On-going
Dyfed	Dyfed	Notes, photos	On-going
Powys	Powys	Notes	
John H Thomas	West Glamorgan	Photos	
Anthony Jones	All-Wales	Photos	Selective
John Hilling	South Wales	Notes, slides	Selective
Malcolm Seaborne	Flintshire	Notes, plans & photos	Selective
J Freer	Gwent	Notes, photos	On-going
A R Mortimer	Montgomery, Merioneth	Photos, drawings, plans	On-going
R W D Fenn & M Sinclair	Radnorshire	Notes, photos, drawings	Comprehensive

In terms of coverage of the old counties of Wales, the pictures seems to be as follows:

Anglesey: no systematic information.

Breconshire: selective notes, few photographs.

Caernarvonshire: no systematic information.

Cardiganshire: extensive notes, few photographs.

Denbighshire: extensive photographs, selective notes.

Flintshire: extensive photographs, selective notes.

Glamorgan: extensive notes, selective photography and plans.

Merioneth: extensive notes, photographs and plans (resulting from Capel pilot survey)

Monmouthshire: extensive photographs and notes.

Montgomeryshire: extensive photographs, plans, selective notes.

Pembrokeshire: extensive notes, few photographs as yet.

Radnorshire: extensive notes and photographs.

It is intended that each of these sources will be searched and the results correlated with the National Library list of chapels. This should pinpoint those individual chapels for which no architectural record is known, and that in turn will determine where additional fieldwork will be needed.

A.J.Parkinson

3 March 1993

REGISTER OF CHAPELS

As can be seen from the preceding note, The Royal Commission on Ancient and Historic Monuments in Wales is currently assessing the extent of the recording / survey work that has been completed or is at present being carried out on chapels in Wales by various bodies and individuals. Information regarding other surveys or collections of photographs, drawings, architectural descriptions and plans would be most valuable and should be sent either to a member of the Capel Executive Committee or directly to Mr Parkinson at the Royal Commission (Crown Building, Plas Crug, Aberystwyth, Dyfed, SY23 2HP).

The analysis of this information will help to identify priority areas for the next phase of recording chapels for inclusion in Capel's Register of Chapels.

Members will recall from notes in earlier issues of the *Newsletter* that this is to take the form initially of completion of a questionnaire and the photographing of each chapel. The questionnaires are being prepared by the Royal Commission and will be based on the questionnaire prepared by Capel for the pilot study of Merioneth. They are to be bilingual. The Royal Commission are prepared to provide black and white film for the purpose of photographing chapels and will be responsible for processing and printing of the film. Details of the arrangements and procedure to be followed are currently being finalised and information sheets will be issued to everyone involved.

Help is now requested from members of Capel throughout Wales to take part in further survey work, and an indication of the areas in which people are prepared to work is needed by the sub-committee. The areas need not necessarily be members' home territory, but could be adjoining areas or even areas they intend visiting on holiday.

It is hoped that with careful planning and liaison the whole of Wales will be covered. Initially however the aim will be to cover those areas most at risk for which no records or only very scant records are available.

Capel members who are prepared to take part in this important task should contact Mr Alun Jones, Bro Dawel, Coedlan Iorwerth, Aberystwyth, Dyfed, SY23 1EW, or any member of Capel Executive Committee.

Elizabeth Evans
Chairman of Register Sub-Committee

Excessive Enthusiasm **a brief note on chapel recording practice**

Examination of the 1851 Religious Census returns¹ and a comparison with those made for the 1905 Royal Commission report on the Church of England and other religious bodies in Wales shows an apparently precipitate fall in the number of Wesleyan Methodist chapels in North Montgomeryshire and the adjoining parts of Denbighshire during the second half of the 19th century. Close inspection, however, reveals that no fewer than twelve Wesleyan chapels were reported twice in 1851 - the duplicates in eleven cases being signed by the Rev. Richard Prichard (1811-82)², at that time minister of Tabernacl, Llanfyllin.

The attendances reported by chapel officials and by Prichard are in general agreement, although in most cases the latter has returned a slightly higher total. However, the most amusing aspect of the affair is that Prichard's own chapel in Llanfyllin has been omitted entirely from the Census returns!

Notes

1. *The religious census of 1851: a calendar of the returns relating to Wales*, v. II ed. by I G Jones, (1981).
2. I am indebted to the Rev. Eric Edwards for providing details of Richard Prichard's career.

A R Mortimer

RICHARD OWEN(S) 1831-1891: CHAPEL ARCHITECT

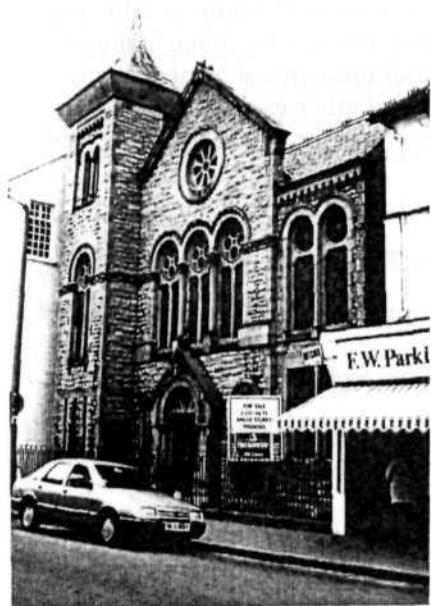
Richard Owens was born at Fourcrosses, Caernarfonshire, in 1831. He signed himself as 'Richard Owens' on the plans of the Undenominational School which he later designed at Ffynnongroyw in Flintshire (now in Clwyd Record Office, Hawarden) and he also appears as 'Owens' in the directories of Liverpool, where he spent most of his career. He seems, however, to have dropped the 's' after 1882 and is often referred to as 'Richard Owen'. He had five daughters and one son, Hugh, who carried on his father's firm of 'Richard Owen and Son'. Pevsner (*South Lancs.*, p.93) notes that this firm designed the Welsh Presbyterian Church in Stanley Road, Bootle, as late as 1951, but it appears that this firm, and its records, no longer exist.

Richard Owens' father was a joiner and taught his son the same trade. Richard moved to Liverpool in about 1851 and was employed by John Jones, Builder, of Spencer Street, Everton, a member of the numerous Welsh community in Liverpool. When John Jones emigrated to America, Richard worked for another Welsh firm, Messrs Williams and Jones of Castle Street, Liverpool, who had a large business in purchasing land and selling it to builders, many of them Welshmen. He attended evening classes in drawing at the Mechanics' Institute and was, as the *Liverpool Daily Post* later remarked, 'an entirely self-made man'. He began business on his own account in 1862 and his first chapel plan was for the Welsh C.M. chapel in Fitzclarence Street, Everton, which opened in 1864. He acted as surveyor for David Roberts and Son, who came from Llanrwst and who were also engaged in purchasing land for development in Liverpool. He planned their offices in Dale Street, laid out several housing estates and designed the large private residence of John Roberts (David's son) at Bryngwenallt, Abergele.

Owens is said to have planned over 250 chapels and it is claimed that 'no other architect planned so many Welsh chapels' (J R Jones). Hubbard notes two chapels designed by him at Abergele (Mynydd Seion, Chapel Street, and another in Marine Road, Pensarn) and two others at Buckley (Bethel, Mold Road) and Rhyl (Tabernacl, Water Street). Anthony Jones names Owen(s) as the architect of the Wesleyan Chapel, Llanidloes (p.68) and of the Presbyterian Chapel in Castle Square, Caernarfon (p.86). Tabernacl in Rhyl was a Baptist chapel, so it is clear that Owens' work was not confined to the Calvinistic Methodists, and documentary evidence has

TABERNACL

Welsh Baptist chapel in Water Street, Rhyl, designed by Richard Owens in 1867.



CARMEL

Welsh Congregational chapel in Queen Street, Rhyl, designed by Richard Owens in 1882.

recently come to light that in 1882 he rebuilt the Welsh Congregational chapel in Queen Street Rhyl, which closed for worship in 1992 and is currently for sale.

The first Congregational chapel in Rhyl was built in Windsor Street (probably without an architect) in 1841 and was called 'Tabernacl'. However, this was sold to the Welsh Baptists in 1850 and a new Congregational chapel was opened in Queen Street. This was rebuilt and enlarged by Richard Owens in 1882, though the date 1850 was carved over the new entrance. The contract price was £1175 and the chapel was later named 'Carmel'. In the meantime, the Baptists had moved from Windsor Street to a new chapel in Water Street, still called Tabernacl, designed by Owens in 1867.

Thomas Lloyd in *Capel Newsletter* 11 wrote of another notable chapel architect, George Morgan of Carmarthen, and the illustrations of Morgan's chapels given in Anthony Jones's book show that certain architectural motifs recur in his designs. Similarly, there are recurring motifs in the designs of Richard Owens, notably the three-light windows over the main entrance. It might be worth collating surviving examples of other known chapel architects as another approach to studying the very considerable architectural legacy which has come down to us. Owens' rebuilding of the Queen Street chapel at Rhyl also provides an excellent example of the way in which earlier chapels of very modest design were later given elaborate façades reflecting the growing resources and influence of Nonconformity in late Victorian Wales. There must be many other examples of Owens' work in other parts of Wales and the present writer would be interested to hear of them.

Sources:

Anthony Jones, *Welsh chapels* (1984); J R Jones, *The Welsh builder on Merseyside* (1946);

E Hubbard, *The buildings of Wales: Clwyd* (1986); S Roberts, *Hanes eglwys Fitzclarence Street*, (1915);

Liverpool Daily Post 29 Dec., 1891 (obituary); *Liverpool directories*; Queen Street Chapel, Rhyl, *Annual Report*, 1882

I am especially grateful to Mrs Evans of Rhyl Congregational chapel and Miss Organ of the Liverpool Record Office for information

Malcolm Seaborne
Pen-y-lan, Pantymwyn, Mold

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Tŷr Graig
Myddfai
Llandovery
Dyfed SA20 0NX
Tel. (0550) 21238

Dear Miss Beckley,

I am a member of *Capel* and was interested to see in the Newsletter No.18 the mention of the National Inventory of War Memorials.

I am an external part-time student of the University of Wales, researching for my doctorate on "Carmarthenshire and the First World War". Part of my work has been concerned with a demographic study of those who enlisted and those who lost their lives. I have used War memorials as an important source of information.

Would it be possible for you to publish in a future edition of *Capel* an appeal for information? I would like details of any war memorials which exist in chapels and churches in the old county of Carmarthenshire. I also act as a recorder for the Imperial War Museum National Inventory, and I will be happy to forward the required information on to them. Please do give me a ring if you would like to discuss the matter.

Many thanks,

Yours faithfully,
Robin Barlow

Top Europe award aim for hall

A PRESTIGIOUS European conservation award could be on its way to Llanelli for the renovation of a redundant chapel by Llanelli Town Council.

Glenalla Civic Hall and community centre is the result of the sensitive and tasteful conversion of the former Glenalla Chapel by the council's consultant architect Wynford Lewis and his son Philip.

The hall is now a popular venue for a variety of local functions and has already received an award from the Prince of Wales Committee, which was accepted from Prince Charles on behalf of the council by Town Mayor Coun Jan Neill last December.

Now the project could be in line for the prestigious Europa Nostra award, a pan-European award recognising schemes

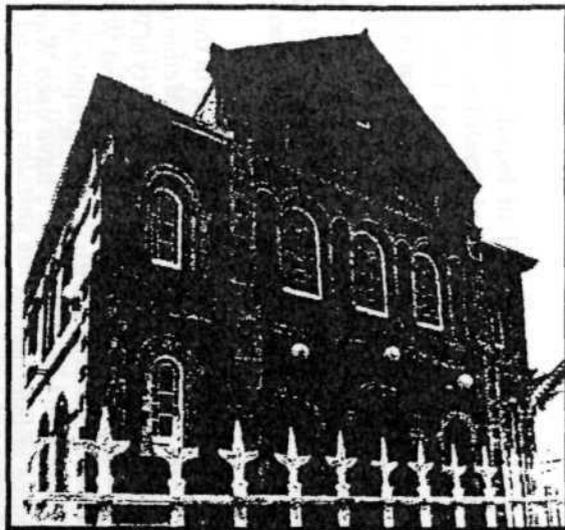
preserving the architectural and national heritage of Europe.

The Europa Nostra awards are organised by a variety of architectural and environmental bodies across the Continent.

Councillors voted to enter the Glenalla project for the award, after the architects were approached about the suitability of the scheme for the consideration of an award by the Prince of Wales Committee.

Photographs of the former chapel before and after the renovation work, together with architectural plans and a brief history of the building now have to be submitted by June 1 this year for consideration.

Council clerk John Williams said the authority was "delighted" at the interest shown in the Glenalla project.



Up for award . . . Glenalla Civic Hall