

Capel

CYMDEITHAS TREFTADAETH Y CAPELI
THE CHAPELS HERITAGE SOCIETY



CYLCHLYTHYR / NEWSLETTER 37 GWANWYN / SPRING 2001

Spring Meeting Postponed **Gohirio Cyfarfod y Gwanwyn**

This year's Spring Meeting was to have been held on 19th May at Llangefni but in view of the current situation in the Anglesey countryside the officers decided that the meeting must be postponed. The arrangements for the meeting were being made by Mrs Margaret Hughes and it is now intended to hold the meeting in May 2002.

Meanwhile the autumn meeting and AGM will be held at Neath on 20 October 2001.

Yr oedd Cyfarfod y Gwanwyn eleni i fod i'w gynnal yn Llangefni ar 19 Mai, ond yn wyneb y sefyllfa yng nghefn gwlad Môn ar hyn o bryd penderfynodd y swyddogion y dylid gohirio'r cyfarfod. Mrs Margaret Hughes oedd yn gyfrifol am drefniadau'r diwrnod a'r bwriad yn awr yw cynnal y cyfarfod ym mis Mai 2002. Cynhelir cyfarfod yr hydref a'r Cyfarfod Cyffredinol yng Nghastell Nedd ar 20 Hydref 2001.

Joint Meeting with the Chapels Society

Cyfarfod ar y Cyd gyda Chymdeithas Capeli Lloegr

In 1997 we were invited by the Chapels Society to their AGM at Shrewsbury and last October we returned the compliment by inviting them to attend our AGM at Cardiff. The meeting was very well attended, the weather, as usual, was kind, we enjoyed a fine lecture by the Rev. A J Parkinson, (who though he was formerly employed by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, looked to the future of chapel buildings), and then we were guided by John Hilling around the nineteenth century chapels in the centre of our capital city.

CHAPELS INTO THE FUTURE

Will the chapels of today meet the challenges of the church of tomorrow, or do we need to reconsider the fundamentals of design on the basis of an ecclesiology for a new millennium?

The earliest chapels were simple meeting houses for a gathered community. As nonconformity became stronger, so the chapels became more self-conscious in their design. Extravagant exteriors masked a common auditory plan, with pews and galleries focused on the pulpit. This sort of chapel was instantly recognisable as a place of worship. The urban missions of the late 19th century had a new ethos; since their purpose was to bring the gospel to the unchurched working classes, they tried to avoid an ecclesiastical appearance. Hence the new Central Halls were theatrical in design, and there were ancillary rooms for social purposes - entertainment, recreation, self-improvement and social work among disadvantaged groups.

The design of most churches since the Second World War has developed from a similar theory of mission. Many churches dating from after 1945 were designed to be dual-purpose buildings - church and social centre - providing what seemed to be a way out of the problem of cost-effectiveness combined with social relevance. The concept seems to have begun grudgingly; the sanctuary could be set apart from the rest of the building so that activities regarded as incompatible with worship could go on.

Chapels in use today may be divided into two main categories - static spaces and flexible spaces. Most chapels built up to the 1950s are static; fixed furniture, almost unalterable liturgical focus, the architectural expression of the traditional nonconformist preaching service. The inflexible layout constrains the liturgy which means that there is little to appeal to a new generation unwilling to worship in the ways of its grandparents.

By contrast, most post-war chapels, and many adaptations of older ones, are designed around flexible spaces. In some cases the dedicated worship area is

designed to be flexible. It may have a permanent liturgical focus, but all else may be moved to suit the occasion. Fixed seating is replaced by chairs, and the pulpit by staging and moveable liturgical furnishings. This has advantages liturgically; the congregation can sit in different relationships to each other and to the leaders of worship, there is scope for movement, dance or drama within services.

If, however, the flexible space is multi-functional, different factors operate. Sunday's worship space may become Monday's playgroup area. Theologically, this speaks of 'God present and active in his world'. However, the flexibility of a multi-functional building means that it is never perfect for any single well-defined function, and, if a congregation has lost the assistance of architecture in evoking an atmosphere of worship, it may be uncertain of its response. For such buildings have a fundamental problem; if the worship space is indistinguishable from the rest except on Sundays, and overt Christian symbolism is suppressed in a mistaken attempt to avoid offence in a pluralist society, the result is a building which cannot be identified as a church by the casual passer-by. This may be profoundly theological - the yeast in the dough - but the theology is too sophisticated for those who need the church most and who may require help to find God through visible symbols and familiar surroundings.

The chapel into the future

So as we look at the chapel into the future, we must ask serious questions. What are the mission implications of maintaining grossly under-used buildings? If we are to be a missionary church in the future, we may have to set light to our cherished old buildings, for if the church is to survive and grow, it must change and develop new ways of worship and witness. We must recognise the realities of a so-called 'post-Christian' society, in which worship is no longer a priority in allocating time. Instead of asking if a given area lacks a church, the question being asked is, what are the needs (social as well as spiritual) within a given community, and what can be the role of the church in meeting those needs? .

What do we understand by 'church'? Is it a community united in faith and fellowship for whom worship is part of something wider, or a gathered congregation meeting only for worship? Do our buildings reflect the needs in worship of today, without compromising their use for tomorrow? What is the

relation of our buildings to our theology of mission? Should our buildings express a theology of incarnation by being human in scale and inviting the world in, or provide an atmosphere which inspires worship of a transcendent God by their scale and design?

Is the multi-purpose church a positive expression of incarnation and the redemption of the secular, or a pragmatic solution to financial problems? We must make a clear statement about the church as community, meeting in its own distinctive way in its special place, without being held back by the inheritance of the past

Conclusion - the chapel of the future - two models

1 - The 'cell & celebration' model. The regular worship, study and fellowship of the church is carried out in small groups separated by distance, but at intervals the groups come together for worship and fellowship on a larger scale at a central venue to encourage the cells that they are part of something bigger. They will all treat their buildings as temporary - when their usefulness is over, new ones will be found - for the essential theology is that God is where his people meet in worship or fellowship.

2 - The 'tidal church' - Within an otherwise multi-functional complex there is a permanent set-apart worship space. For large services it may expand into the areas used for the community - during the week it will reduce to a smaller space - but it will always sufficiently different from surrounding rooms that no-one can ask 'Where is the church?' Theologically this speaks of the tension between a God who is part of his creation and intimately involved with it, yet also holy and apart, to be worshipped with awe and wonder.

Whether we see the chapel of the future in one of these models or another, we must hold on to our distinctiveness, our self-understanding and our beliefs confidently, consistently, calmly and without compromise. For that reason, whatever it may look like, the chapel of the future should be designed first and foremost around the worship of God. Even a multi-functional church should be a church first, and all else afterwards.

A.J.Parkinson

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 15th Annual General Meeting of the Society was held at Cardiff on Saturday 21st October 2000

- 1) The Chairman welcomed members of both CAPEL and the CHAPELS SOCIETY to the meeting held at City United Reformed Church, Cardiff and thanked Mr John Hilling for organising the day.
- 2) Apologies for absence were received from: Mr Malcolm Jefferies, Ms Nia Rhosier, Mr David Barton, Mrs Naomi Hughes, Mr Neil Sumner, Miss Muriel Bowen-Evans and Mr David E Gillman.
- 3) The minutes of the 14th AGM held in Abergele on 23rd October 1999 were accepted and signed.

4) **Matters Arising**

No matters were raised other than those in the agenda

5) **Secretary's Report**

- a) The Spring Meeting at Brecon in May was very successful, with nearly 50 present. Thanks are due to Ms Elizabeth Evans for organising the day with the help of Mr Len Morgan and Mrs Dilys Glover. Capel would also like to thank Rev. Herbert Hughes for his very interesting talk on the chapels of the Epynt area, Rev Dr Hazel Sherman for her warm welcome at Watergate Chapel and Mr Mervyn Jenkins for his interesting comparison between the working practices of his grandfather, who built the Plough United Reformed Chapel, and his own building firm's late twentieth century working practices.

b) **Correspondence**

We have had a great many letters, e-mails and telephone enquiries this year, ranging from students needing material on chapels and their architecture to family historians wanting information on individual chapels where their relations were once members.

We were invited to have a speaker at the conference 'New Uses for Old Churches - A National Debate' in Glasgow on 31st March 2000. Mr John

Hilling kindly represented CAPEL at this meeting and spoke to them about the situation concerning chapels in Wales and the work of CAPEL.

We were also invited to have an exhibition and stall at both the Powys Family History Society Fair in August and the Glamorgan Family History Society European Heritage Day in September. Both were a great success and it is hoped we will be involved in many more of these events. The Society wishes to thank everyone who manned the stalls and helped out.

Archive Leaflet - the archive leaflet has been updated and is now ready for distribution.

Grants Leaflet - the grants leaflet is still undergoing revision but if anyone has any queries concerning funding for chapels, please contact the Secretary or Elizabeth Evans, our buildings advisor, and we will do our best to give you the information you require.

Threatened Chapels - This new section of the Newsletter has generated a very good response and we are now being informed of many more chapels under threat. Thank you to everyone who has written in. May we repeat my request, however, for information on chapels that are closing, being converted or demolished. If you see sales particulars in Estate Agents, please let CAPEL have the details.

Building Applications - We have been consulted on approximately 25 building applications this year from the archaeological trusts and local planning offices. I would like to thank Elizabeth Evans for all her hard work and help this year in responding to many of these. It is still our intention to ask all planning offices in Wales to make CAPEL consultees on planning applications pertaining to chapels.

Website - We are intending to employ a website designer this year to revamp the CAPEL website and make it more attractive and informative. It will remain at its current location being hosted by the Royal Commission. The website addresses are:

<http://www.rcahmw.org.uk/capel/index.html> for the English version
and <http://www.rcahmw.org.uk/capel/capel.html> for the Welsh.

Meeting dates

Spring Meeting May 2001 Llangefni (date still to be finalised, hopefully 19th May)

AGM will be at Neath on 20th October 2001

Spring Meeting May 2002 Bala (date to be announced)

6) Treasurer's Report

a) The Treasurer presented the Statement of Accounts for the year ending 31st August 2000.

b) The membership has remained fairly constant at about 280 members.

c) The Treasurer thanked Mr Kevin Matthias, Mrs Naomi Hughes and everyone who helped in the production of the balance sheet.

The Treasurer was asked whether it was possible to arrange for subscriptions to be paid by direct debit and he agreed to look into the matter and report back.

7) Chairman's Report

a) The Chairman paid tribute to Mr Kevin Matthias, who stepped down from the Chair last year, and thanked him for all the work he had put in to CAPEL over the years. The Chairman will write to him expressing the members' thanks for this.

b) The Chairman reported on our response to the Preservation and Conservation Discussion Paper we were consulted on and thanked Ms Elizabeth Evans for all her help with this.

c) Last February the Chairman and Secretary met with the Trustees of the Religious Buildings Trust for Wales to discuss our roles and how we can complement one another's work without duplication. It is hoped that these meetings will be a regular occurrence and CAPEL and the Religious Buildings Trust for Wales will work closely together.

d) The Secretary and Chairman had a meeting with the Secretary of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, Mr Peter White, where the Royal Commission underlined their support for CAPEL and suggested a compact be drawn up between the two

organisations.

- e) Education Pack - Miss Muriel Bowen-Evans is presently working on an education pack with help from Miss Susan Beckley. The pack is progressing well and should be out next year.
 - f) Membership Secretary - This new post has been made to try to ease the work load of the Secretary. At present the role has been taken on by the Chairman as part of his duties.
 - g) Liaison Officer - This new post has been taken on by Mrs Dilys Glover to help in the organisation of meetings and the promotion of these meetings and the Society as a whole.
 - h) The Chairman thanked the National Library of Wales and the Librarian for allowing the Executive Committee to meet there.
 - i) The Executive Committee had met four times during the year, and the Chairman thanked the officers and committee members for their support.
- 8) Election of Officers and Committee Members
A vote was held that all Executive Members should remain in post for another year. This was proposed, seconded and carried by the meeting
Chairman: Dr J Lionel Madden
Treasurer: Mr Geoffrey Veysey
Secretary: Ms Penny Icke
- 9) Any Other Business
There being no other business, the meeting closed and was followed by a lecture by the Rev Anthony Parkinson on 'Chapels into the future'.

Penny Icke
Honorary Secretary

CYFARFOD CYFFREDINOL BLYNYDDOL

Cynhaliwyd 15^{fed} Cyfarfod Cyffredinol Blynyddol y Gymdeithas yng Nghaerdydd ddydd Sadwrn 23 Hydref 2000.

1. Croesawodd y Cadeirydd aelodau CAPEL a'r CHAPELS SOCIETY i'r cyfarfod yn Eglwys Ddiwygiedig Unedig y City a diolchodd i Mr John Hilling am drefnu'r diwrnod.

2. Derbyniwyd ymddiheuriadau am eu habsenoldeb oddi wrth Mr Malcolm Jefferies, Ms Nia Rhosier, Mr David Barton, Mrs Naomi Hughes, Mr Neil Sumner, Miss Muriel Bowen Evans a Mr David Gillman.
3. Derbyniwyd ac arwyddwyd cofnodion y 14^{es} Cyfarfod Blynyddol, a gynhaliwyd yn Abergele ar 23 Hydref 1999.

4. **Materion yn Codi**

Ni chodwyd unrhyw faterion nad oedd ar yr agenda

5. **Adroddiad yr Ysgrifennydd**

- i) Bu Cyfarfod y Gwanwyn yn Aberhonddu ym mis Mai yn llwyddiannus iawn, gyda bron 50 yn bresennol. Diolch i Ms Elizabeth Evans am drefnu'r diwrnod, gyda chymorth Mr Len Morgan a Mrs Dilys Glover. Mae CAPEL am ddiolch hefyd i'r Parch. Herbert Hughes am ei sgwrs ddiddorol ar hanes y capeli ar Fynydd Epynt, i'r Barch. Ddr. Hazel Sherman am ei chroeso cynnes i gapel y Watergate ac i Mr Merfyn Jenkins am ei sylwadau yn cymharu arferion gwaith ei dadcu, a adeiladodd Capel Diwygiedig Unedig y Plough, gydag arferion gwaith cwmni adeiladu Mr Merfyn Jenkins ei hun yn ail hanner yr ugeinfed ganrif.
- ii) Gohebiaeth. Derbyniwyd nifer fawr o ymholiadau eleni, drwy lythyr, e-bost a'r ffôn, yn amrywio o geisiadau gan fyfyrwyr am ddeunydd am gapeli a'u pensaernïaeth i haneswyr teuluol yn gofyn am fanylion am gapeli unigol lle y bu eu perthnasau gynt yn aelodau.
Fe'n gwahoddwyd i anfon siaradwr i gynhadledd yn Glasgow ar 31 Mawrth 2000 ar y pwnc 'Defnydd Newydd i Hen Eglwysi'. Yn garedig aeth Mr John Hilling i'n cynrychioli yn y cyfarfod a siaradodd am y sefyllfa yng Nghymru a gwaith CAPEL.
Fe'n gwahoddwyd hefyd i osod arddangosfa a chynnal stondin yn Ffair Cymdeithas Hanes Teuluol Powys yn Llandrindod ym mis Awst a Diwrnod Treftadaeth Ewropeaidd Cymdeithas Hanes Teuluol Morgannwg ym mis Medi. Bu'r ddwy arddangosfa'n llwyddiannus iawn a gobeithiwn fedru cymryd rhan mewn rhagor o ddigwyddiadau o'r fath yn y dyfodol. Diolch i bawb a gynorthwyodd i ofalu am y stondin.
- iii) Taflen Archifau. Mae'r Daflen Wybodaeth ar Archifau wedi'i

- diweddarau ac yn barod i'w dosbarthu.
- iv) Taflen Grantiau. Mae'r Daflen Wybodaeth ar Grantiau yn dal i gael ei diwygio ond os oes gan unrhyw aelodau gwestiynau ynglŷn â ffynonellau cyllidol i gapeli dylent ysgrifennu at yr Ysgrifennydd neu Ms Elizabeth Evans, ein cynghorydd ar faterion yn ymwneud ag adeiladau, ac fe wnawn ein gorau i roi i chi'r wybodaeth y mae ei hangen arnoch.
 - v) Capeli dan Fygythiad. Cafwyd ymateb da i'r adran newydd hon yn y *Cylchlythyr* ac yr ydym yn awr yn derbyn mwy o wybodaeth am gapeli sydd dan fygythiad. Diolch i bawb a anfonodd wybodaeth inni. Ond hoffem apelio eto am wybodaeth am gapeli sydd yn cau neu sydd ar gael neu yn cael eu trawsnewid neu eu dymchwel. Os gwelwch fanylion am gapeli ar werth mewn swyddfeydd gwerthwyr tai, anfonwch y wybodaeth i CAPEL os gwelwch yn dda.
 - vi) Ceisiadau Cynllunio. Cawsom ymholiadau ynglŷn â rhyw 25 o geisiadau adeiladu eleni oddi wrth ymddiriedolaethau archaeolegol a swyddfeydd cynllunio lleol. Hoffwn ddiolch i Elizabeth Evans am yr holl waith y mae wedi'i wneud eleni mewn ymateb i'r ymholiadau hyn.
 - vii) Safle ar y We. Yr ydym yn bwriadu defnyddio cynllunydd gwefannau i ailwampio safle CAPEL a'i wneud yn fwy deniadol a chynnwys mwy o wybodaeth. Bydd yn cadw ei leoliad presennol fel gwestai i'r Comisiwn Brenhinol ar Henebion Cymru. Y cyfeiriad yw:-
<http://www.rcahmw.org.uk/capel/index.html> i'r fersiwn Saesneg
a <http://www.rcahmw.org.uk/capel/capel.html> i'r fersiwn Gymraeg.
 - viii) Dyddiadau a Lleoliadau Cyfarfodydd.
Cyfarfod y Gwanwyn 2001. Llangefni, 19 Mai
Cyfarfod Blynyddol 2001. Castell Nedd, 20 Hydref
Cyfarfod y Gwanwyn 2002. Y Bala (Dyddiad i'w bennu eto)

6 Adroddiad y Trysorydd

- i) Cyflwynodd y Trysorydd Ddatganiad Cyfrifon am y flwyddyn hyd 31 Awst 2000
- ii) Nododd fod rhif yr aelodau yn dal yn gyson o gwmpas 280.

- iii) Diolchodd i Mr Kevin Matthias, Mrs Naomi Hughes a phawb arall a helpodd i gynhyrchu'r fantolen.
Gofynnwyd iddo a oedd yn bosib i drefnu talu tanystrifadau drwy ddebyd uniongyrchol a chytunodd i chwilio i mewn i'r mater ac adrodd yn ôl.

7 Adroddiad y Cadeirydd

- i) Talodd y Cadeirydd deymged i Mr Kevin Matthias, a ymddeolodd o'r gadair y llynedd, a diolchodd iddo am yr holl ymdrech a roddodd i waith CAPEL dros y blynyddoedd. Dywedodd y byddai'n sgrifennu at Mr Matthias i fynegi diolch yr aelodau.
- ii) Rhoddodd y Cadeirydd adroddiad ar ein hymateb i'r Papur Trafod ar Gadwraeth yr ymgynghorwyd â ni yn ei gylch a diolchodd i Ms Elizabeth Evans am ei holl help yn y mater yma.
- iii) Ym mis Chwefror y llynedd cyfarfu'r Cadeirydd a'r Ysgrifennydd ag Ymddiriedolwyr Ymddiriedolaeth Adeiladau Crefyddol Cymru i drafod ein rôl a'r modd gorau inni gydweithio ac osgoi dyblygu gwaith. Gobeithir y byddwn yn cyfarfod yn rheolaidd ac y bydd CAPEL a'r Ymddiredolaeth yn gweithio'n agos gyda'i gilydd.
- iv) Cyfarfu'r Cadeirydd a'r Ysgrifennydd gydag Ysgrifennydd y Comisiwn Brenhinol ar Henebion Cymru, Mr Peter White, a danlinellodd gefnogaeth y Comisiwn i CAPEL gan awgrymu llunio cytundeb rhwng y ddau sefydliad.
- v) Pecyn Addysg. Mae Miss Muriel Bowen Evans ar hyn o bryd yn gweithio gyda chymorth Miss Susan Beckley i baratoi pecyn addysg. Mae'r paratoi yn mynd yn ei flaen yn dda a dylai'r pecyn fod yn barod y flwyddyn nesaf.
- vi) Ysgrifennydd Aelodaeth. Crewyd y swydd hon i ysgafnhau'r baich ar ysgwyddau'r Ysgrifennydd. Dros dro mae'r Cadeirydd wedi ymgymryd â'r gwaith fel rhan o'i ddyletswyddau yntau.
- vii) Swyddog Cyswllt. Ymgwymerwyd â'r swydd newydd hon gan Mrs Dilys Glover er mwyn helpu trefnu a hysbysebu cyfarfodydd a hyrwyddo gwaith y Gymdeithas yn gyffredinol.
- viii) Diolchodd y Cadeirydd i'r Llyfrgell Genedlaethol a'r Llyfrgellydd am ddarparu lle i'n Pwyllgor gyfarfod.

- ix) Cyfarfu'r Pwyllgor bedair gwaith yn ystod y flwyddyn a diolchodd y Cadeirydd i'r swyddogion ac aelodau'r Pwyllgor am eu cefnogaeth

8 Ethol Swyddogion ac Aelodau'r Pwyllgor

Cynigiwyd bod y Pwyllgor Gwaith a'r Swyddogion yn dal eu swyddi am flwyddyn arall. Eiliwyd y cynnig a'i dderbyn gan y cyfarfod. Enwau'r Swyddogion yw

Cadeirydd: Dr J Lionel Madden

Trysorydd: Mr Geoffrey Veysey

Ysgrifennydd: Ms Penny Icke

9 Unrhyw Fater Arall

Gan nad oedd mater arall i'w drafod daeth y cyfarfod i ben ac fe'i dilynwyd gan ddarlith gan y Parch. Anthony Parkinson ar y testun 'Capeli i'r Dyfodol'.

Penny Icke

Ysgrifennydd Mygedol

Chapel Tour

After lunch the members joined John Hilling for a tour of chapels in Cardiff's city centre. The first chapel to be looked at was, of course, the City United Reformed Church, Windsor Place, where the AGM had been held. This chapel, one of the finest in Cardiff, was originally designed by FT Pilkington in a spiky, late Gothic style for the Scottish Presbyterians who had been drawn to the city in the wake of the Marquess of Bute. It was opened in 1866. It was extended in 1893, by Bruce Vaughan, and later, after a fire in 1910, the interior was rebuilt.

After passing the site of the Central Congregational chapel, designed by Beddoe Rees ca. 1901, the group looked briefly at the former United Methodist chapel, Guildford Street (John Hartland, 1864), later converted to a Masonic Hall. We then visited the former Capel Pembroke Terrace (Calvinistic Methodist, 1878), the best of a handful of buildings by Henry C Harris. The French-Gothic design with its innovative T-shaped plan and red, cream and black brick interior was exhibited at the Royal Academy in the year that the chapel opened. In 1983 the building was sensitively converted to an architect's office.

The group noted the unostentatious Friends' Meeting House (1888) in Charles Street and the site of the earliest Capel Ebeneser (which had been built in 1828 but later swallowed up by shopping development) before stopping to visit the present Ebeneser, the Welsh language congregational chapel, which was originally built in 1855 for the English Congregationalists. Designed in Decorated Gothic style by R G Thomas, it is notable for the wide range of stones used in its construction and said to have been brought from all over the world as ships ballast.

Finally the group visited Capel Tabernacl (Bedyddwyr) in The Hayes - a splendid example of John Hartland's Regency Classical style. The original Tabernacl was built in 1821. The present building dates from 1842 and was enlarged and refronted in 1865. Two giants of the Welsh pulpit preached there: the Rev. Christmas Evans from 1828 to 1832 and the Rev. Charles Davies from 1888 to 1926. After viewing the fine interior and stained glass windows, the group sat down to a fine tea in the schoolroom.

JOTTINGS ON THE CHAPELS OF SOUTH WALES

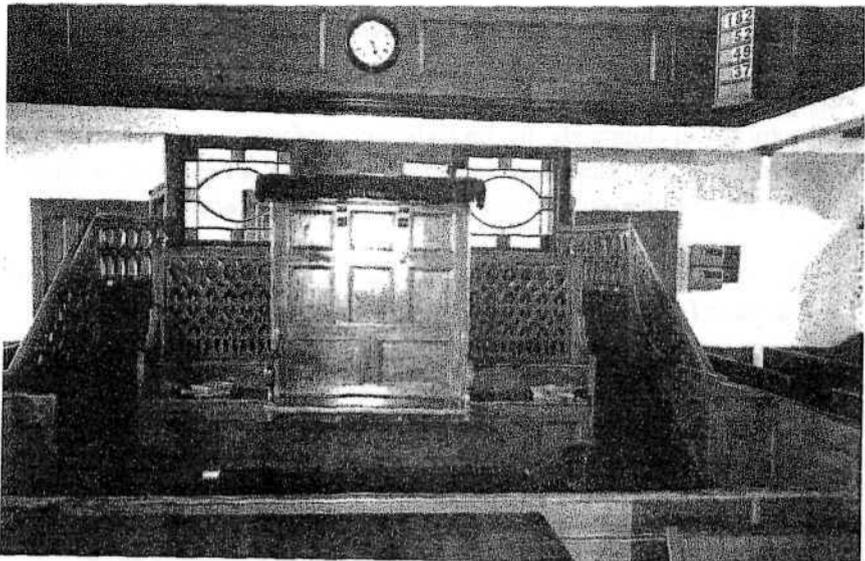
by Robert Scourfield

In the article in *Capel Newsletter 36*, I examined the evolution of the chapel from the late 17th century, showing that Welsh chapel builders knew of architectural developments in English Nonconformity and also in the Protestant Low Countries. Here, we will briefly look at the evolution of the chapel in terms of plan, and form of worship, and how these and other factors influenced design.

Little attention has been given to the relationship between denomination and plan. As stated above, the early nineteenth-century format had the back-lit pulpit facing the three-sided gallery. Interestingly, many of the galleries have deeply canted angles, perhaps a distant echo of Wesley's known liking for octagonal chapels. From c.1830-50 some chapels were built on a square plan, with hipped roofs, the extra space allowing for a shallow lobby, off which generous stairs led to the galleries. The lobby allowed for some mingling before and after services, while more importantly, the pulpit was relocated to the rear wall, still back-lit. By the late nineteenth century, the gable entry plan allowed for a larger lobby, and more windows along the *side* walls, which dispensed with the need for windows behind the pulpit, the glare



The interior of Capel Als, Llanelli (rebuilt 1953 by Rev. T Thomas, London)



*An unusual platform pulpit of 1860, complete with built-in elders' seats!
Nebo, Efail-wen, Pembrokeshire*

of which often obscured the preacher. One factor remained constant - the need for the central pulpit would always require two aisles in order to avoid the minister facing an empty central aisle - thus the lobby provided the intermediate space between single gable entry and paired inner doors. Twin aisles also reflected the once-common and ancient practice of the separation of men and women during services. In the late nineteenth century many larger chapels had two or three doors at the gable end, eliminating congestion in lobbies, the central door in a triplet perhaps intended for weddings and funerals. At this time also, architects such as George Morgan liked to place the gallery stairs in turrets, adding drama to the façade, and giving more space in the lobby.

It can be seen then that chapels did not simply become gable-ended so that detail could be added to greater effect: improvements in interior planning were equally important. One crucial factor, apparent to many town congregations, was the need to expand during population increases or revivals - the easiest way of course was to lengthen a gable-ended chapel, in either direction according to the space available. It is common to find chapels extended to the rear, the new interior work copying the existing to the last detail. The older plan-forms did not allow for such expansion: rebuilding was often the only option.

The Baptists and Methodists in particular had special requirements. The Baptists, who believe in believer's baptism, tend to place their baptismal pools inside chapels by the mid-nineteenth century, while the Methodists required a communion rail (the Baptists and Independents both taking their communion seated). Lateral fronted chapels made the insertion of a pool almost impossible, whereas a long chamber focused on the pulpit allowed more room for a pool under the dais (the elders' 'Big Seat') and allowed provision for handy vestries behind, where the minister and recipients of baptism could change their clothing. It is unusual that, with rare exceptions, the pool is only exposed during baptisms. The Methodists could also use an end-wall pulpit to great effect by running the communion rail conveniently from wall to wall and providing a step in front, just as in an Anglican church.

It is interesting too to see how elements within the church changed through the nineteenth century. The vitally important pulpit changed from a tub-like panelled structure, raised on a pedestal, to a wide rectangular platform structure, often as lavishly detailed (in wood) as a church altar. This perhaps reflects the effect of the 1859 revival, after which preaching became markedly more eloquent; a larger pulpit allowed for this. Increasingly, as ministers

became settled rather than nomadic, assistant ministers would help in services, and at funerals, several ministers were often in the pulpit. In addition, the congregation took a more active part in concerts and anniversaries, requiring the pulpit for solos and part-pieces. A close look at some pulpits will often reveal side panels added to the original front panels by a skillful joiner. Now that windows behind the pulpit were dispensed with in the late nineteenth century, this allowed the rear wall to be ornamented - usually by a plaster moulded arch, often with a painted scriptural text. At the end of the century many architects insisted on elaborate timber pedimented frames behind the pulpit, highlighting the importance of the Minister and the uttered word.

Space does not permit discussing the importance of the organ, increasingly introduced after the visitation of Sankey and Moody, and the increased tendency to singing hymns in harmony. The introduction of an organ, often impossible in the older chapel, usually meant moving the pulpit forward, but towards the end of the century, it was common to add a small organ chamber to the rear of the building, often further elaborating the pulpit end by the provision of a small extra gallery and a grand pipe organ, which, according to every individual congregation, is reckoned to be the best in Wales!

It is heartening to see real efforts being made to appreciate the architecture of Welsh chapels. We have strayed so far from our spiritual roots in Wales that another great revival seems almost impossible.....or is the wheel about to turn its full circle? Whatever the future, we can hope that whatever their use will be, many Bethels and Tabernacles will remain in our landscape, testimony to Nonconformity as probably the most potent ingredient in the making of modern Wales.

Chapels now Closed or Demolished Breconshire

Location	Name	History and Present Condition
Aberysgir	Siloam	Calv. Ind., then Welsh Cong. Built before 1830. Now a dwelling
Berth Ddu Crossing		A dwelling
Blaen-Dyryn	Sardis	Baptist. 1822-1994. Demolished.
Brecon,	(Glamorgan St)	Eng. Ind. Built 1836. Old Museum. Now part of hotel.

Brecon	Dr Coke's Chapel	Demolished some years ago. Leo's store on site
Brecon (Nr)	Bryn Capel	Cong. Built after 1864. A dwelling.
Brecon (The Struet)	Tabernacle	Welsh Wesleyan. Built 1824. A shop in 1871
Brecon (The Struet)	Huntington House	Welsh Calv. Meth. Built 1780. Now a dwelling.
Builth Wells		Chapel closed many years ago. Now a veterinary surgery
Clydach (Cheltenham)		Demolished some time ago
Crickhowell		Closed ca. 1960. Now a warehouse.
Cwm Capel		Congregational. Demolished ca. 1985
Darren Felen	Carmel	Calv. Meth. Demolished
Darren Felen	Bethel	Cong. Demolished
Darren Felen	Bethsheba	Baptist. A dwelling
Darren Felen	Nazareth	Baptist. A dwelling.
Defynnog	Tabernacle	Demolished June 1992. Built 1862. Date stone on site.
Dolygaer, Pontsticill		A dwelling
Dyffryn Crawnon (Nr Neuadd Farm)		Ruins of chapel shown on 6" map of 1877-85
Dyffryn Crawnon	Soar	Indep. Rebuilt 1870. A dwelling
Felindre	Ebenezer	Presb. Built 1862. A dwelling.
Ffawyddog		Sunday school of Llangattwg Ind. Cong chapel. Now a dwelling.
Garn Pontsticill	Bethel	Cong. Now a dwelling
Garn Pontsticill	Sion	Bapt. Now a dwelling.
Gilwern		Disused building
Halfway	Horeb	Cong./U.R.C. Built 1814 Graveyard. A ruin for years.
Hay on Wye		U.R.C. Now Globe Gallery
Hirwaun		English Wesleyan. Built 1876. Closed
Llanbedr Ystrad Yw		Worcester School Activity Centre
Llanddew		Presb. A dwelling.
Llanfrynach	Mizpah	Prim. Bapt. Built 1835; rebuilt 1862. A dwelling for 12 years.
Llanfrynach (Cefn Brynach)	Bethel 'The Lock'	Wesleyan. Built 1848. Now no trace of chapel. Demolished for road-widening

Llanwrtyd	Gelynos	Site of first Cong. chapel in area, 1693-1906. Graveyard
Llanynys	Libanus	Calv. Meth. 1890. A dwelling
Llyswen		Presb. Built 1832, closed 1995.
Pengeuffordd		A dwelling
Penkelly		Calv. Meth. A dwelling.
Pontestyll		Chapel remains. Graveyard.
Pwllgloyw	Bethel	Bapt. Built 1855. Closed.
Sennybridge	Salem	Built 1918. Now Welsh Shearers Co. warehouse
Talybont		Meth. with graveyard. Now a dwelling.
Trallwng	Salem	Calv. Meth. Built 1831. Now used as a storehouse
Trecastle	Soar	Built 1850. Rebuilt 1914. Now derelict
Ystradfellte	Penuel	Calv. Meth. Built 1808. A dwelling.

How I Photographed the Chapels and Churches of Breconshire and Radnorshire

The first task was to look at Ordnance Survey maps, National Grid, 7th Series, 1 inch to the mile, published in 1952. Also the *Diocese of Swansea and Brecon Yearbook and Directory* and the *Cardiff Province Directory and Yearbook*. Study of the maps showed me the major and minor roads, and noting the three symbols for religious buildings adjacent to the roads enabled me to make a list of the buildings with their grid references.

Choosing a fine day, off we went, my wife and I, to explore Breconshire and then Radnorshire, both now in Powys. Weather in the latter part of 2000 slowed our progress. I cannot claim to have photographed all the religious buildings in the two counties, 99%, perhaps. The majority of churches were open though a few were locked. In two churches we found coffee and tea-making facilities, which was very welcoming. Most of the nonconformist buildings were locked, but, to our surprise, two chapels were open. Churches may be open because they were sanctuaries in past times whereas chapels are of a younger age. The same story was told of falling congregations in all my visits. I was made welcome by people everywhere when I explained that I was not working for gain in any way but photographing for posterity, placing the

photographs in the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth. Members of the churches were only too glad to show me around and find me copies of the buildings' history. Also I was told how I could gain access to the buildings I was to visit next.

Some churches stand in out of the way places. One wonders why, only to discover they were once in the centre of a town or village and therefore you must read the ground for clues of the remains of the buildings. Many churchyards are enclosed by circular or partially circular stone walls, to make sure the Devil has no corners to hide in. One church looked, from the map, fairly easy to visit but I could find no obvious way to get to the building. I telephoned one of the churchwardens, who, having explained that the way of entry was not marked and difficult for a stranger to find and having fixed a day and time to meet, guided me in. Another church I visited with a friend. We travelled along miles of country lanes, passed farms and arrived finally at a place where we should have been able to see the church. We'd been told by a farmer it was on the side of a hill. From where we were standing it was out of sight but when we moved a few feet there it was, two fields away, tucked into the edge of a wood. In the northern corner off the churchyard was a holy well, said to cure eye problems.

A few chapels have been found in ruins, or demolished to ground level, many with graveyards unkempt. Some have been converted into dwellings. There are very few Roman Catholic churches in the two counties. There is evidence that a strong Society of Friends once existed in Radnorshire but only a few meeting places now remain. Most of the buildings were constructed from stone, a few from stone and brick and some from more modern materials.

We thoroughly enjoyed our journeys of discovery in Breconshire and Radnorshire: a peaceful countryside, quiet lanes, beautiful rolling hills and green valleys - it was a delight.

John Freer

[*Note:*

Further information on the important photographic collection donated by Mr Freer to the National Library of Wales and his involvement in the photographic survey of chapels in Monmouthshire was given in our *Newsletter* 35 (Spring 2000) p.6]

LLANDUDNO CHAPELS AND CHURCHES STUDY

Some CAPEL members may wonder why it is necessary to have a local study of chapels, since the Royal Commission have their most comprehensive Chapels Database Study already available at Aberystwyth and the Welsh Religious Buildings Trust has now been established. Monitoring of the position here in Llandudno over a period however suggests that local action in addition would be beneficial.

There was already in existence, locally, a registered charity called Llandudno Seaside Buildings Preservation Trust, formed in 1997 to preserve the Llandudno National School of 1846. Early primitive style schools have suffered an even worse fate than chapels, with only around one third having survived in any reasonable state. Armed with the detailed knowledge of this particular Victorian seaside resort and its buildings, themselves also under some threat due to social trends in travel and holiday destinations, it was clear that some action was required with regard to chapels.

Experience had been gained back in 1975 with the saving of the then recently listed St. John's English Methodist Church (W.M. 1866) that still stands next to the Marks & Spencer store and thus has a strong site value. The situation for the five town-centre Welsh chapels was rather different. They were on the edge of the retail area with far less redevelopment potential and whilst it might be possible to save one using listed building legislation and possibly a second through other means, two were not listed and the fifth, Ebeneser had already become the Emmanuel Christian Centre. In addition to the fate of the buildings themselves, concern also centred on creating a record of the internal layouts, often unknown even to local people, and the various artifacts of chapel life such as furniture, plaques and crockery. And over the years many documents such as registers, plans and letters of interest to future historians would have been created. It was felt that our proposed data collection project would probably gather sufficient information to raise the profile of at least some of the chapels. This could then be made public as a report and possibly a local exhibition which would possibly alert local councillors to the importance to the historic

environment, other potential uses and townscape issues,

The Conservation Architect of Conwy County Borough Council was contacted and he immediately welcomed the initiative and agreed to host meetings. Gruff Owen of the Welsh Religious Buildings Trust was consulted and he gave valuable advice and support on such matters as protocol to ensure that chapels understood who they were allowing into their premises. CAPEL's Secretary, Penny Icke, passed the word to several members and David Percival, Chapels Coordinator at RCAHMW, and Geoffrey Veysey, CAPEL's Treasurer, agreed to attend meetings. An extremely supportive chapel elder, Gwilym Williams of Tabernacl, ensured chapel liaison and the Rector of Llandudno, Philip Cousin also agreed to help.

From the outset it was intended that the survey, should be undertaken quickly but in some detail. Chapel visits were to be made weekly, with a prior visit by two members to discuss technique and complete a questionnaire that covered briefly the history and organisation of the chapel. The survey has now been completed in four chapels, Seilo (C.M.), Deganwy Avenue (W.C.) Christ Church (U.R.C.) and English Presbyterian and the programme will continue to early July. About six people are required to accomplish the survey - a member who is a professional photographer using a digital camera, two people to compile a full inventory of everything that would go if the building closed and two more to measure the building internally. The chairman provides liaison between the chapel secretary and the team and generally sorts out any problems and writes up reports. Up to 120 photographs are envisaged per building. The intention is that a complete internal understanding of the chapels should be possible in the event of a worst scenario of demolition. Application has been made to the RCAHMW for copies of their Chapels Database information. In addition we are fortunate that one team member who has professional knowledge of archive work is checking all archive locations for chapel material and has even found some material in the P.R.O. at Kew.

It was decided from the start that rural village chapels in Penrhynside and Glanwydden that are within the Llandudno Town Council area would also be included, as well as some selected suburban chapels in Craig y Don and

Penrhyn Bay. We will defer the churches to a second phase and will possibly look at all chapels on the Creuddyn Peninsula, so encompassing Deganwy, Llandudno Junction and Llandrillo yn Rhos. Some work is also in hand to identify redundant chapels and houses where services took place before establishment of a chapel.

It is likely that an interim report could be available by perhaps September 2001. It is hoped that most copies will be issued in the form of a CD-rom but a limited information edition should also be available in hard copy form. Efforts will be made to ensure that published information does not compromise security of the buildings or their contents. A further announcement will be made in *Chapel Newsletter* when the report is ready.

As a spin-off from the study, a Chapel Trail is under consideration and could be launched in time for the European Heritage Open Days in September 2001.

Stuart Rivers

Chairman, Llandudno Seaside Buildings Preservation Trust

CHAPELS UNDER THREAT 10/04/2001

Following our publication in recent issues of the *Newsletter* of lists of threatened or demolished chapels, the following further examples have been brought to the Secretary's attention. CAPEL has been consulted officially on some of these closures / changes of use, but in most cases the information has come from our members. If you know of any chapel that has closed, is about to close or is under threat in any way, please let the Secretary know. We are trying to construct a register of such chapels and would greatly appreciate input from any interested parties. Any extra information on the outcome of these chapel closures would also be very useful. How is the chapel building now used? Is it a 'good' conversion? Has the building been demolished or neglected since closure? Please send all information to Penny Icke, RCAHMW, Plas Crug Aberystwyth, Ceredigion SY23 1NJ, Tel: 01970 621210, e-mail: penny.icke@rcahmw.org.uk

Capel Tegid, Bala - demolition of the spire

Capel Berea, Bangor - proposal to demolish for a road development scheme

Salem Chapel, Colwyn Bay - proposal to make alterations to interior

Wepre Presbyterian Chapel, Connah's Quay, Deeside - demolished

Hen Gapel, Congregational Chapel, Cymmer, Porth, Rhondda - under threat from a new road scheme

Rehoboth Chapel, Cwmcych - proposed conversion.
 Baptist Chapel, Henllan Place, Denbigh - proposal to convert into dwelling
 Salem Methodist Chapel, Ruthin Road, Denbigh - sold
 Bethania, Independent Chapel, Derwenlas - closed on 12/12/1999
 Capel Salem, Mynydd Bach, Devil's Bridge - proposal to convert into a
 non-denominational retreat centre
 Bethel Chapel, Gowerton - closed 2000.
 Salem Chapel, Johnstown - change of use.
 Leeswood Chapel, nr Mold - for sale
 Pantycelyn Memorial Chapel, Llandoverly - disused (congregation meet in
 vestry)
 Capel Saron, Calvinistic Methodist Penrhynside, Llandudno - closed
 Capel Moriah, Wesleyan Methodist, Penrhynside, Llandudno - sold
 Capel Aion, Baptist, Glanwydden, Llandudno - temporarily closed due to
 flood damage
 Capel Uchaf, nr Llangurig - for sale
 Bethel Chapel, Pendine Road, Plashet, Llanmiloe - proposed conversion
 Tabernacle Chapel, Middle St., Milford Haven - proposal for change of use.
 English Congregational Chapel, Penmaenmawr - closed 1991, now to be
 converted for residential use
 Sion Chapel, Pentre Halkyn - for sale planning permission for demolition
 Soar Chapel, Aberderfyn, Ponciau, nr Wrexham - for sale
 Capel y Porth / Capel y Tabernacl, Porthmadog - demolition. A new
 purpose-built chapel will be constructed on the site
 Bethany Presbyterian Chapel, Station Road, Port Talbot - for sale
 Jerusalem Baptist Chapel, Bryn, Port Talbot - proposal for change of use
 from chapel to dwelling
 Lavister United Reformed Chapel, Wrexham Road, Rossett - for sale
 Baptist Chapel, St Mellons - for sale
 Baptist Chapel, Sennybridge - for sale
 Mount Pleasant Baptist Chapel, Swansea - for sale
 Swansea Baptist Church, Prince of Wales Road, Swansea - closed
 Methodist Chapel, Tintern - for sale in 2 lots, the Chapel and Sunday School
 English Calvinistic Methodist Chapel, Station Road, Treorchy - closed
 Horeb y Mynydd Church, Hope Mountain, Wrexham - sold by auction
 Capel Maesglas, Ysbyty Ystwyth - proposal to demolish and build one
 bungalow.

Subscription Reminder

Subscriptions were renewable on 1 January and remain at £7.50, or £10 for husband and wife or two persons living at the same address. I encourage members to pay their subscriptions by Banker's Order and would be pleased to send one to you.

Gift Aid Scheme

In the last Budget, the Chancellor simplified the rules by which charities can recover from the Inland Revenue the income tax which you will have already paid on any donation that you make to a charity. **Please complete and sign the Gift Aid Declaration and return it to me.** CAPEL will benefit and it involves no extra money from you if you are a UK taxpayer.

Tanysgrifiadau - Nodyn Atgoffa

Ionawr 1af oedd dyddiad adnewyddu tanysgrifiadau; maent yn aros fel y llynedd: £7.50, neu £10 am ŵr a gwraig neu ddau berson yn byw yn yr un cyfeiriad. 'Rwy'n cymell aelodau i dalu eu tanysgrifiadau trwy archeb banc a byddaf yn falch i anfon ffurflen i chi.

Cynllun Rhoddion Cymorth

Yn ei Gyllideb ddiwethaf fe symleiddiodd y Canghellor y rheolau sy'n caniatáu i elusennau hawlio ad-daliad oddiwrth Gyllid Y Wlad y dreth incwm a dalwyd gennych ar unrhyw rhodd a wnewch i elusen. **Os gwelwch yn dda a wnewch chi gwblhau'r Datganiad Rhodd Elusennol a'i ddychwelyd i mi.** Bydd CAPEL yn elwa'n sylweddol ac ni fydd unrhyw gost ychwanegol i chi os ydych yn drethdalwr yn y Deyrnas Unedig.

Geoffrey Veysey
Treasurer