

# Capel

CYMDEITHAS TREFTADAETH Y CAPELI  
THE CHAPELS HERITAGE SOCIETY

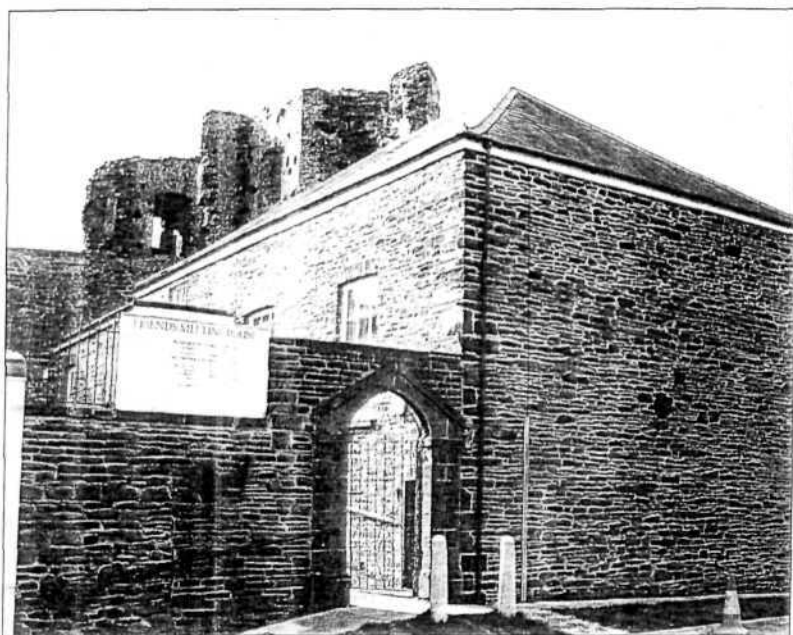


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CYLCHLYTHYR / NEWSLETTER 39 GWANWYN / SPRING 2002

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## The Quakers in Neath



Friends' Meeting House

There were Friends - or Quakers as they are better known - in Neath as early as the mid-1650s, soon after the sect was originally founded. Following early success, however, the severe persecution to which they were subjected by the state from 1660 to 1689 and the large scale immigration which resulted sharply reduced their numbers. Only as a consequence of the Industrial

Revolution of the late 18th century and the arrival in the Neath-Swansea area of a number of in-migrating Cornish Quaker families, attracted to the nascent industries, was there a vigorous upsurge of fresh enthusiasm. Symptomatic of this revival was the purchase from Lady Molly Mackworth of land near Neath castle by the Neath Quakers on which to build their own meeting-house, which was opened in July 1801. Like all Quaker meeting-houses, it is a plain, simple edifice. For the Religious Census of 1851, it was certified as being able to seat 154 persons and measuring 696 sq. feet on the ground floor and 264 sq. feet in the galleries. Although it was re-furbished in the 1870s, it remains very much the same sort of building that it has always been. Like most Quaker meeting-houses, it has two sets of bare pews facing one another, and it contains no altar or pulpit, and none of the adornments usually associated with churches or chapels.

There were no more than about 40-50 Quakers in Neath in the 19th century, but they exercised an influence on contemporary religious, moral, industrial, social and philanthropic activity wholly disproportionate to their number. In their midst they included exceptionally gifted and energetic people, like the families of Price, Fox, Tregelles and Waring, who made an enormous contribution to the society of the time. Their memorial stones are still to be seen in the surviving graveyard adjacent to the meeting-house.

The most outstanding of the Neath Quakers was Joseph Tregelles Price (1754-1854). Manager of the famous Neath Abbey Iron Works in succession to his father, he was a leading figure in the field of industry and science, an enthusiast for improved communication by water, road and rail, and a generous patron of education and philanthropy. Above all, perhaps, he was a trail-breaking pioneer in the quest for international peace and domestic Concord. His life-work typified Quaker ideals at their most sublime. The house in which he lived, now adorned with a commemorative plaque, still stands in Neath Abbey village.

Glanmor Williams

# Annual General Meeting, Neath, 20th October 2001

## Minutes

### 1. Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting.

### 2. Apologies

Apologies were received from: Richard Williams, Donald and Patricia Moore, Nia Rhosier, John Wheeler, Christopher Stell, Margaret Hughes, Malcolm Jefferies, David Gilman

### 3. Minutes of the AGM held on 21/10/2000

The minutes were passed.

### 4. Secretary's Report

- 4.1 The Spring Meeting had to be cancelled because of the Foot and Mouth epidemic. The Llangefni meeting has been rearranged for Saturday 18th May 2002. Mrs Margaret Hughes has kindly agreed to organise the meeting again. The meeting in Bala has been postponed for a year.
- 4.2 Next year's AGM will be held in Blaenafon and is being organised by Mr John Freer. It will probably be slightly earlier than usual (possibly in September) but the date is yet to be finalised.
- 4.3 Education Pack - CAPEL has been working with Jennifer Davies and a company called ESIS to produce a Wales-wide education pack for 7-11 year olds. The Executive thanked Muriel Bowen-Evans and Dr Huw Owen for all their work in taking this forward. CAPEL is in the process of applying for a grant from the National Lottery to fund this project.
- 4.4 Grant Leaflet - A sub-committee has been set up to compile a grant leaflet in partnership with The Religious Buildings Trust of Wales. It is hoped this will be completed early in the new year.
- 4.5 The Website - Work is nearly finished on the re-vamped website and it should be up and running by Christmas.
- 4.6 Family History Fairs - CAPEL has shown its exhibition and had a stall at 4 Family History Society Fairs this year. A great deal of interest has been shown towards the Society and the plight of chapels at these events. It has definitely been very worth while attending these fairs. Thanks were given to everyone who helped with the transportation of the exhibition and all those who helped on the stalls.
- 4.7 Exhibition - Because these events have been such a success, it has been

suggested that perhaps it is now time to update our current exhibition which was originally made to commemorate Capel's 10th Anniversary. The Executive will be working on this in the coming year.

- 4.8 Christmas and Greeting Cards - It was announced that a selection of Christmas and Greeting cards would be on sale from the end of November. The images are by Cefyn Burgess and depict Carmel Chapel, Conwy, Capel Cemmais, Mid-Wales, Tabernacle Chapel, Pontypridd, Salem Chapel, Cardiff.

## **5. Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer reported that membership remained pretty constant at 287. The Investment Account stands at £8432 and the Current Account at £4941. Thanks were given to Kevin Matthias and Ruthin Record Office for their assistance with the accounts.

## **6. Chairman's Report**

The Chairman announced that it had been a busy year for the Executive Committee with the new projects demanding a lot of time from those involved. He thanked everyone for their work.

## **7. Election of Officers and Committee Members**

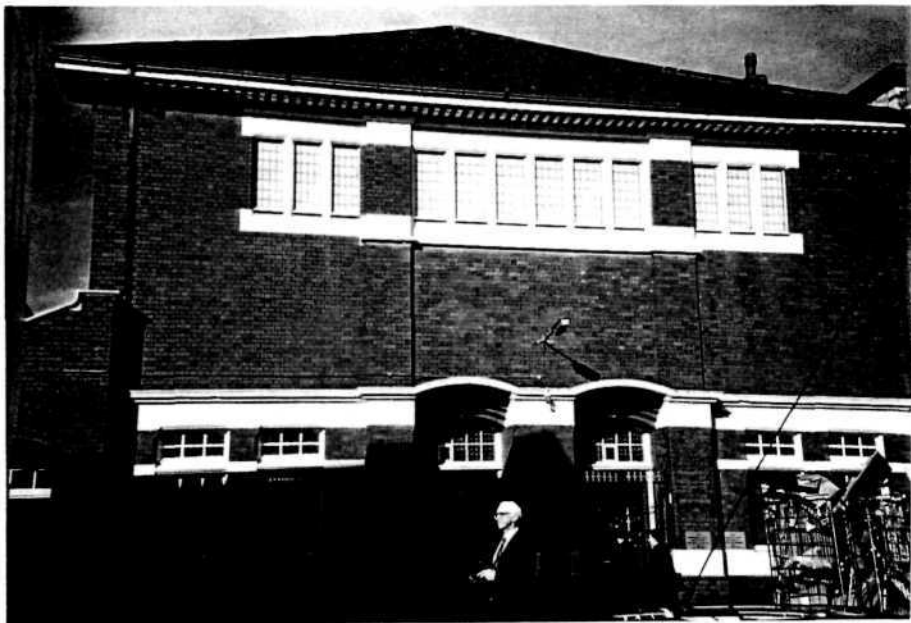
It was agreed that all officers and committee members should continue in their roles.

## **8. Any Other Business**

The Committee was asked whether there had been any television appearances by members this year. Dr Huw Owen responded that he had been interviewed for *Heno*. There have also been notices in the press in North and South Wales promoting CAPEL and its events.

The Secretary announced that she will be standing down at the next AGM.

Following the business meeting, Sir Glanmor Williams gave an enthralling talk on 'The Quakers in Neath', a summary of which is printed in this issue. Then after lunch in the Old Town Hall next door, the members walked to the Quaker Meeting House near the castle, but unfortunately were not able to view the interior. We visited in turn the striking 20th century red brick Neath Mission Hall and the stone built mid-Victorian Maesyrfhaf Chapel, which in 1995 had celebrated the tercentenary of the Independent cause in Neath. On to the gothic United Methodist Church, opened in September 1914 after the merging of three varying strands of Wesleyan Methodism



Neath Mission Hall

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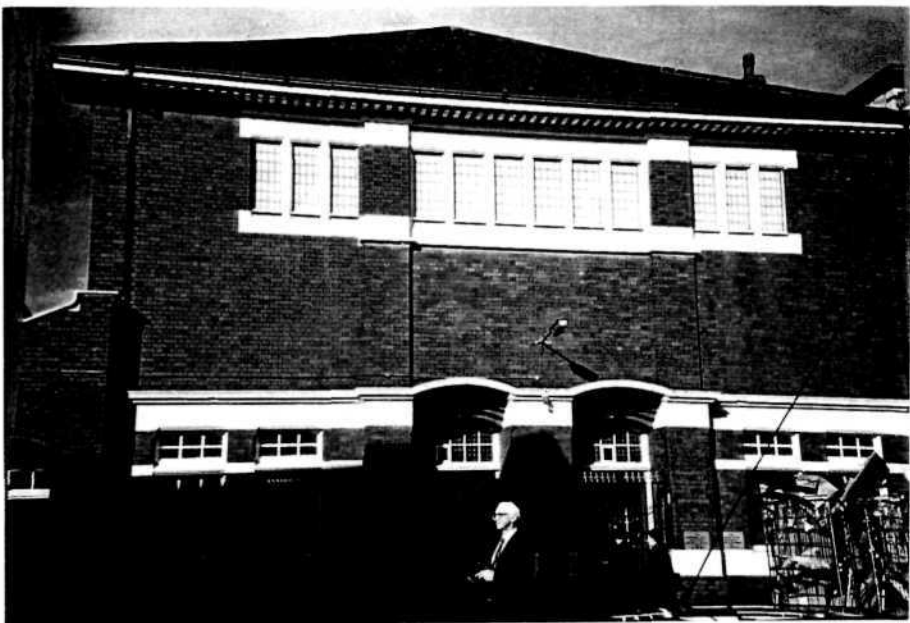
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Neath Mission Hall

in the town and known locally as the Penny Brick Church on account of the method used to collect funds to erect the chapel. The tour ended with tea at the splendid Orchard Place English Baptist Church, which was built in 1871 and is now embarking on an ambitious scheme to provide access to all parts of the church for the disabled.

## **Cyfarfod Cyffredinol Blynyddol, Castell Nedd, Hydref 2001 Cofnodion**

### **1. Croeso'r Cadeirydd**

Croesawodd y Cadeirydd yr aelodau i'r cyfarfod.

### **2. Ymddiheuriadau**

Derbyniwyd ymddiheuriadau oddi wrth: Richard Williams, Donald a Patricia Moore, Nia Rhosier, John Wheeler, Christopher Sell, Margaret Hughes, Malcolm Jefferies a David Gilman.

### **3. Cofnodion y Cyfarfod Blynyddol a gynhaliwyd 21 Hydref 2000**

Derbyniwyd y cofnodion.

### **4. Adroddiad yr Ysgrifennydd**

- 4.1 Methwyd â chynnal Cyfarfod y Gwanwyn eleni o achos clefyd y traed a'r genau ym Môn. Penderfynwyd gohirio'r cyfarfod am flwyddyn a chwrdd yn Llangefni ar ddydd Sadwrn 18 Mai 2002. Yr oedd Mrs Margaret Hughes wedi cydsynio'n garedig i drefnu'r cyfarfod unwaith eto. Penderfynwyd gohirio am flwyddyn y cyfarfod y bwriedid ei gynnal yn y Bala.
- 4.2 Cynhelir y Cyfarfod Blynyddol y flwyddyn nesaf ym Mlaenafon ac fe'i drefnir gan Mr John Freer. Disgwylir ei gynnal ychydig yn gynharach nag arfer, efallai ym mis Medi, ond ni chafwyd dyddiad pendant eto.
- 4.3 Pecyn Addysg. Bu CAPEL yn cydweithio gyda Jennifer Davies a chwmni ESIS i gynhyrchu pecyn addysgol ar gyfer plant o 7 i 11 oed ledled Cymru. Diolchodd y Pwyllgor Gwaith i Muriel Bowen Evans a Huw Owen am eu llafur yn dwyn y prosiect yma yn ei flaen. Y mae CAPEL yn y broses o wneud cais am grant oddi wrth y Lotri Genedlaethol i ariannu'r prosiect.
- 4.4 Taflen Grantiau. Ffurfiwyd is-bwyllgor i gydweithio gydag Ymddiriedolaeth Addoldai Cymru i baratoi taflen wybodaeth i gapeli ar grantiau. Gobeithir gallu gwblhau'r gwaith yn fuan yn y flwyddyn newydd.



- 4.5 Y We-fan. Y mae'r gwaith o ail-wampio'r safle ar y We bron â'i orffen a dylai fod mewn gweithrediad erbyn y Nadolig.
- 4.6 Ffeiriau Hanes Teuluol. Y mae CAPEL eleni wedi cymryd stonddin a dangos ei arddangosfa mewn 4 ffair a drefnwyd gan gymdeithasau hanes teuluol. Mynegwyd llawer iawn o ddi-ddordeb yng ngwaith y gymdeithas a chyflwr ein capeli yn yr achlysuron hyn. Yn bendant bu'n werth i'r Gymdeithas fod yn bresennol yn y ffeiriau hyn. Diolchwyd i bawb a gynorthwyodd gyda chludiant yr arddangosfa a phawb a fu'n helpu ar y stonddin.
- 4.7 Arddangosfa. Gan fod y digwyddiadau hyn wedi bod yn gymaint o lwyddiant, awgrymwyd ei bod efallai yn bryd inni adnewyddu ein harddangosfa bresennol, a grewyd yn wreiddiol er mwyn dathlu deng-mlwyddiant CAPEL. Bydd y Pwyllgor yn gweithio ar hyn dros y flwyddyn nesaf.
- 4.8 Cardiau Nadolig a Chardiau Cyfarch. Cyhoeddwyd y byddai detholiad o gardiau Nadolig a chardiau cyfarch ar werth o ddiwedd Tachwedd. Gan Cefyn Burgess y mae'r lluniau, sy'n dangos Capel Carmel, Conwy, Capel Cemaes, Powys, Capel y Tabernacl, Pontypridd, a Chapel Salem, Caerdydd.

## 5. Adroddiad y Trysorydd

Adroddodd y Trysorydd fod rhif yr aelodau wedi dal y gyson, 287 ar hyn o bryd. Y mae £8432 yn y Cyfri Buddsoddi a £4941 yn y Cyfri Cyfredol. Diolchwyd i Kevin Matthias ac Archifdy Rhuthun am eu cymorth gyda'r cyfrifon.

## 6. Adroddiad y Cadeirydd

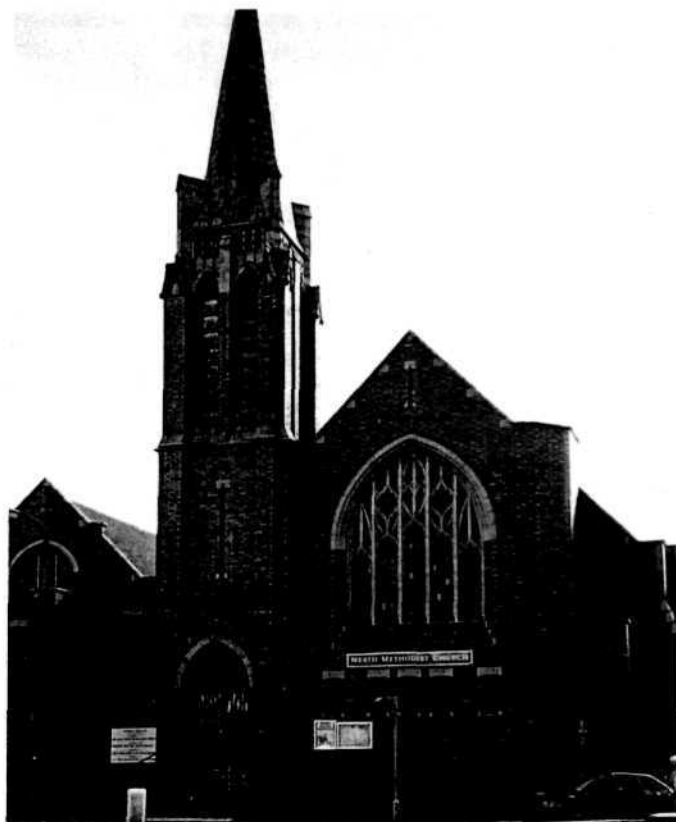
Dyweddodd y Cadeirydd ei bod wedi bod yn flwyddyn brysur i'r Pwyllgor Gwaith, gyda'r prosiectau newydd yn hawlio cryn dipyn o amser gan y rhai oedd yn cymryd rhan. Diolchodd i bawb am eu gwaith.

## 7. Ethol Swyddogion ac Aelodau'r Pwyllgor.

Cytunwyd i gadw'r holl swyddogion ac aelodau'r Pwyllgor yn eu swyddi.

## 8. Unrhyw Fater Arall

Gofynnwyd i'r Pwyllgor a ymddangosodd unrhyw aelodau ar y teledu eleni. Atebodd y Dr. Huw Owen ei fod ef wedi'i gyfnewid ar raglen *Heno*. Hefyd ymddangosodd nifer o adroddiadau yn y wasg yn Ne a Gogledd Cymru yn hysbysebu cymdeithas CAPEL a'i chyfarfodydd. Datganodd yr Ysgrifennydd y byddai hi'n rhoi'r gorau i'w swydd yn y Cyfarfod Blynnyddol nesaf.



The Penny Brick Church

Ar ôl y cyfarfod busnes, cafwyd darlith gan Syr Glanmor Williams ar 'Y Crynwyr yng Nghastell Nedd' y rhoddwn grynodedb ohoni yn y rhifyn hwn. Yna, wedi ciniawa yn Hen Neuadd y Dref gerllaw, cerddodd yr aelodau i Dŷ Cwrdd y Crynwyr wrth ochr y castell, ond yn anffodus nid oedd yn bosib gweld tu fewn yr adeilad. Wedyn ymwelwyd yn eu tro â'r Mission Hall - adeilad trawiadol o ddechrau'r 20fed ganrif mewn brics coch - a chapel Maesyrfhaf, a adeiladwyd o garreg yng nghanol y cyfnod Fictoriaidd

a lle y dathlwyd ym 1995 drichanmlwyddiant yr achos Annibynnol yng Nghastell Nedd. Ymlaen wedyn i weld yr Eglwys Fethodistaidd gothig a agorwyd ym 1914 wedi i dri amrywioi fudiad Wesleiaidd ddod at ei gilydd, eglwys a gafodd y llys-enw The Penny Brick Church ' o achos y ffordd y casglwyd yr arian i'w chodi. Gorffennodd y daith gyda the yng nghapel ysblennydd y Bedyddwyr Saesneg yn Orchard Place. Adeiladwyd y capel hwn ym 1871 ac mae ar hyn o bryd yn cychwyn ar gynllun uchelgeisiol i ddarparu mynediad i bob rhan o'r adeilad i bersonau anabl.

## A Brief History of Orchard Place English Baptist Church

In 1839 a group of people of Baptist and Independent persuasion, working for the Vale of Neath Brewery, feeling the need to worship in English, hired a room at the Mackworth Arms, Neath. Their fellowship prospered and in 1842 (thanks mainly to the efforts of Mr Buckland, one of the proprietors of the Brewery) they erected a church building, which they named Mount Zion, near the turnpike road from Neath to the Abbey. The building seated 300 and Mr Buckland acted as minister of the church. Sadly, this church ran into financial difficulties and was eventually, in 1855, purchased by the Vicar of Cadoxton. In the same year, Tabernacle Chapel in Water Street was secured as a home for these English-speaking Baptists in Neath, along with others who transferred from the Welsh Baptist congregations. The number of members so uniting themselves in membership was 39, and they worshipped at Tabernacle until 1871.

By 1864 growing congregations were causing members to think in terms of new premises. A church meeting was convened on 28th December to explore ways of raising funds for the building of a new and improved



Orchard Place Baptist Church

place of worship. By 1865 arrangements were concluded for the purchase of the land at Orchard Street for £450, and the Building Committee was authorised to decide on the plans and the architect. It was decided to build in Melincrythan stone.

The foundation stone was laid by Mr H. Lake, Mayor of the town, on 6th July 1871, and the chapel was to be known simply as the English Baptist Chapel. It was duly opened in July 1872 with a membership of 94. They could not raise all the money needed to build such a fine chapel by their immediate giving, but the debt was paid off in 1921 on the occasion of the Jubilee celebrations. In 1903, during the ministry of the Rev H J Harries, the chapel had been extended by the addition of 14 classrooms and the installation of the organ. In the seven years of Mr Harries's ministry (1901-8), church membership increased to 400, with a Sunday School attendance of 150.

On the day of the Jubilee celebrations in 1921 it was reported that 84 new members were added during the year. The average attendance at Sunday school was 500. In November 1971 a wonderful week of celebrations to mark the hundredth anniversary of Orchard Place was held under the direction of the Rev C J Thomas (minister from 1964 to 1992).

On 21st June 1993 Dr Karen Smith was officially called to the vacant pastorate of Orchard Place. Six years later, after many years of essential renovations, structural repairs and redecorating, including re-roofing, eradicating dry and wet rot, the Church embarked on an ambitious scheme to provide access to the sanctuary and all other parts of the Church for those who are less able. This involved installing a lift, building a new reception room and enlarging the vestibule - all building work to conform to the existing Melincrythan stone.

### **Three Lesser-known Architects from Anglesey and Caernarfonshire**

On the whole, not much is known about the chapel architects of Wales. Indeed, in many cases even their names are not recorded, let alone any information about them.

This is a brief attempt to record some facts about three of them, all three of whom worked mainly in the north. Their lists are not as impressive or as numerous as Richard Owen's, but do contain many fine examples of architecture.

### **Owen Morris Roberts (1833-1896)**

Owen Morris Roberts was born in Birkenhead, the son of a Porthmadog joiner. The family moved back to Port in 1850 when Edward Roberts worked on the rebuilding of Capel Tabernacl in the town. Since Porthmadog was a slate exporting port it is not surprising that Owen went to sea as a ship's carpenter before returning to take charge of his father's business. From 1860 to 1865 he attended J C Rowlands' school at Caernarfon, studying geometry, art and draughtsmanship, before setting up his own classes at Snowdon Street in his home town. He married and had one son and three daughters, all of whom were very musical. He was a very prominent Liberal, a member of the local school board, a member of the Grammar School Committee and a county councillor from 1889 onwards. His earliest discovered chapel plan dates from 1868. He was also a founder member in 1874 of the Madoc Lodge, No. 1509 of the Ancient and Accepted Freemasons. Indeed, this link with Freemasonry is, I believe, important in conjunction with other architects. By 1880 he was firmly established at Bank Place, where he died after a long illness on 15 December 1896. His firm carried on at least until 1901 under the name of O Morris Roberts and Son.

Here is an (incomplete) list of his works, collected in the main from *Baner ac Amserau Cymru* 1863-96.

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of Chapels (with names and denomination, where known)</u>
1868	2 Y Ffôr (Ind); Corris (C.M.)
1870	1 Carmel (C.M.), Llandwrog
1872	1 Capel Bontfechan, (C.M.) Llanystumdwy
1878	5 Hyfrydle (C.M.), Talysarn ; Independent chapel Dolwyddelan; Independent chapel, Penrhyndeudraeth; Capel Mawr (C.M.), Cricieth; Baptist chapel, Four Crosses, Blaenau Ffestiniog.
1879	1 Capel Coffa Emrys (Ind.), Porthmadog
1880	1 Mount Pleasant (Ind.), Holyhead
1881	1 Penmount (C.M.), Pwllheli (interior).

- 1883 1 Horeb (C.M.), Brynsiencyn  
1895 2 Moreia (C.M.), Llangefni; Garth (C.M.), Porthmadog.

Among the secular buildings planned by him were schools at Corris and Corwen in 1871 and at Llanllyfni in 1872, a large store at Talysarn in 1876, Ynys Cynhaiarn Board School in 1878 and a row of houses at Trawsfynydd in 1882. Interestingly, he also designed a tannery, bark pit and engine house for a customer at Caernarfon in 1870. This was probably either Cloth Hall or Bryn Celyn Stores.

### **Richard Griffith Thomas (1847-1909)**

Richard Griffith Thomas was born at Menai Bridge in 1847. He was educated at the local British School but it appears very little is known about his early years. One can only surmise that he was, like Owen Morris Roberts, educated privately.

When he was twenty two he designed his first chapel, at Hiracl, Bangor, for the Calvinistic Methodists. This was followed by another for the same denomination, Capel y Graig at Penrhosgarnedd near Bangor and Capel Hermon for the Independents at Bodorgan in 1871 and the Howell Harris Memorial Chapel at Trefeca in 1873. His commissions were varied and interesting. Richard Davies, the shipowner and M.P. for the county of Anglesey had in 1870 employed William Hill, an architect from Park Square, Leeds, to design a new mansion for him at Treborth. For some reason, however, two years later R G Thomas was commissioned to redesign the building or at least to add an extension to it. This was followed by another mansion in 1882 at Trescawen, Capel Coch, for George Prichard Rayner. In this context, it is interesting to note that Thomas was the architect responsible for Liscard Road (C.M.) chapel at Seacombe in 1876, where Saunders Lewis was brought up. As far as has been discovered his only chapel on Anglesey is the English Presbyterian chapel at Menai Bridge, built in 1887-88. It is possible that R G Thomas was the architect of the Victoria Hotel next door to this chapel, built some time prior to 1867. Two years before 1887, both he and his brother (?) John were designing four houses and shops in Menai Bridge for the Plas Newydd estate. In 1880 he was appointed architect of the Baron Hill estate as well. One of the projects he had from this post was that of designing a new town hall for Llangefni in 1883.

He was living at a house called Tanybryn in 1867 but by the late 1870s he had designed and built a new house for himself, *Fir Grove*, at Menai Bridge. He also had an office at 12 Market Street, Caernarfon, run by John Thomas, who was probably his brother. He was also the local agent for the Alliance Insurance Company and was also a high ranking Freemason. He was also involved with local eisteddfodau. In 1902 he was employed (probably by the Baron Hill estate) to draw up plans for major alterations to the Golden Lion in Llangefni, a noble building which though in sad decline still has two marvellously carved golden lions on the pediments, and for the Wellington Inn at Deiniolen. By then he carried the letters M.S.A. (Member of the Society of Architects ?) after his name.

Early in May 1909 he had climbed up onto the roof of the Victoria Hotel to supervise some repairs. But the ladder was not long enough. He leant over, slipped, fell, and injured himself badly. He never recovered but died on 21 May and was buried on Church Island.

Another architect. Joseph Owen, was also practising from Menai Bridge in the 1900s and he designed at least two chapels on Anglesey - Bethel Hen (C.M.), Llanrhuuddlad, in 1904 and the C.M. chapel at Llanfaethlu in 1905. Nothing has been discovered about him to date, save that he was appointed by the Anglesey County Council to survey all Board and National Schools in the county in 1904.

### **Richard Davies (of Bangor and Llanfairfechan)**

Nothing so far has come to light about the life of Richard Davies, save that in 1880 he had his office at 125 High Street, Bangor, and had closed down his office at Llanfairfechan. His first recorded chapel so far discovered was in 1870 and he was still operating in 1905. At least the following were designed by him:

- 1870 Siloh Wesleyan Chapel, Tregarth
- 1871 Fourcrosses Chapel, Rhiwbryfdir
- 1872 Wesleyan Chapel, Penisa'r Waun  
Capel Salem (C.M.) Llandwrog
- 1877 English C.M. chapel Llanfairfechan;

- Hermon (C.M.) Melin y Coed, Llanrwst  
 1878 Salem (Ind.) Caernarfon, alterations, Llanfaethlu (C.M.)  
 1881 Capel Ysgoldy (C.M.) Deiniolen  
 1891 Capel Carneddi (C.M.) Bethesda (extension)  
 Princes Road (English Presbyterian), Bangor  
 Gad (C.M.), Bodffordd  
 1904 Capel Llaethdy (C.M.), Amlwch  
 1905 Capel Mawr (C.M.), Amlwch (extension - porch and new *sêt fawr*)

From a very cursory study of his work, Richard Davies was a most original architect. In Capel Mawr, Amlwch, when the pipe organ was installed in 1905-6, the *sêt fawr* was replaced with one of his own design, with the two central panels opening to form an entrance for weddings. It was thought that this idea belonged to Richard Owen, the original architect of the building, but a photograph turned up recently showing the original interior of the chapel, and the original *sêt fawr* had no central entrance. This corrects what I said in *Capel Newsletter*, November 1987. I still wonder if there are others with the same feature or is it unique to Amlwch.

Some other secular buildings by him were new school buildings at Ffynnon Groyw and at Mostyn in 1867, villas at Upper Bangor and by the station at Caernarfon, Ysgol Talwrn, Llangefni 1878 and the Board Offices at Llanfairfechan in 1880.

Three other architects as well as Richard Davies were practising at Bangor in 1880 - Henry Kennedy, Thomas Hathaway and Goronwy O Roberts, who was architect to the Penrhyn estate. Kennedy was diocesan architect to the diocese of Bangor and very many Anglican churches in Anglesey were designed by him (see *Transactions of the Anglesey Antiquarian Society*, 1961).

Comparing this article with my previous one on Richard Owen, the same fact comes to light - that the Calvinistic Methodists and to a lesser extent the Wesleyan denomination dominate the lists. Very few Independent chapels have turned up and only one Baptist. How the Baptists consulted architects and set contracts is unclear to me. I am, however, led to believe that so far as other denominations, particularly the Calvinistic Methodists, are concerned, the first step would be to present a list of architects to the members to vote



upon. Then the contract would be offered. Tenders were then placed in the local papers for the attention of prospective builders.

This short article, I believe, serves to prove how great is the task ahead to discover the names of chapel architects and list their works. As far as my own county, Ynys Môn, is concerned, the work is still huge. A very cursory look at the denominational papers *Y Tyst* and *Seren Gomer* has not been fruitful. Other papers, such as *Y Genedl Gymreig*, *The Caernarvon and Denbigh Herald* and the *North Wales Chronicle* have only occasional worth-while references. Indeed, the work needing to be done in this field in the whole of Wales is substantial. And with so many chapels closing, time is not on our side!

Eryl Wyn Rowlands

Following Mr Rowlands' article in the last issue of our *Newsletter* Mr D Colin Dews of Leeds has suggested that the following additions should be made to the list of chapels by Richard Owen.

1866/7	Rhyl	Tabernacl (Baptist)
1867/8	Buckley	Bethel (C.M.) Bistre
1877/9	Abergele	Marine Rd. (C.M.), Pensarn
1877	Shrewsbury	Claremont St., (Baptist)
1879	Caernarfon	Castle Square (English C.M.) Dated 1882 by Mr Rowlands.
1880/1	Lowton	Lane Road Primitive Methodist

Three other chapels by Owen which have not been dated are: Liverpool, Everton C.M. (possibly the same as the Anfield Road chapel, 1877), Liverpool, Hamlet Free Church and Kensington Baptist.

Some of Owen's architectural drawings survive; they were exhibited at the Keighley Museum in 1981 and included the Hamlet Free Church and Kensington Baptist.

The architect of Bootle Stanley Road C.M. and Krby Baptist was Noah Woodward of Richard Owen and Son.

### **Chapel Consolidation in Llandudno takes Major Step**

The remaining four Welsh chapels in Llandudno have for some years been considering their joint futures in an experiment whereby each month they

have met in each other's chapel. This was a preparation for the moment when they would decide to amalgamate all of their activities and it is believed their faiths onto one site. It had previously been decided that this amalgamation would take place in 2005 and thereafter the remaining three chapels would be redundant and available for disposal to an external user.

That time scale has now been reduced and in a momentous meeting in late February 2002 it was decided to bring the amalgamation forward to 1<sup>st</sup> January 2003. In so doing it was necessary to decide which chapel would be the preferred base. Two of the chapels, Tabernacl (B 1815/75/1901) and Seilo (CM 1813/84/1905) have been listed for architectural and historical reasons. Of the other two, Deganwy Avenue (Ind. 1884/1901) had building problems and Ebeneser (formerly Rehoboth, WM 1893) had an extremely restricted site on a busy road.



Tabernacl

Seilo had appeared to many to be favourite on the simplistic grounds that it alone had parking facilities within its yard. Ultimately, however, it is thought

that the Presbyterian Council in Cardiff declined to sell the freehold to the united body of four chapels. Other issues were that a full immersion font, required for the Baptist faith would need to be constructed or at least moved from Tabernacl to Seilo. To what extent unquantified structural problems at Seilo were a consideration is not known but they were certainly mentioned. Tabernacl, Upper Mostyn Street has become the preferred chapel and will take over its full role from 1<sup>st</sup> January next. It is understood that Deganwy Avenue is to be placed on sale almost immediately with Ebeneser likely to follow shortly afterwards.

The Llandudno Seaside Buildings Preservation Trust, a local registered charity, is concerned for the future of Seilo, which has an important townscape position. They have undertaken an extensive historical survey, including over 100 internal photographs and an inventory of all the internal fixtures and fittings so that in the event of loss this important chapel is well recorded. Private discussions have been set in place with interested bodies, including the Welsh Religious Buildings Trust, to see if a full rescue can be undertaken. As a first step, funds for a feasibility study have been identified. However, considerable problems need to be faced, not least the unknown structural condition - there is movement on the main road side - and whether the complex management structure of the Presbyterian Church of Wales would contemplate the building passing into long term preservation.

Seilo is certainly an impressive chapel, with a limestone and red sandstone exterior and a grand open space and gallery, and seating for 920 people. It is one of the 129 that Anthony Jones said should be preserved at all costs. Saving it would ensure that the three Llandudno chapels on that list would now have a secure future.

Stuart A Rivers

### **Family History Society Fairs**

Last year CAPEL had a stand at several Fairs. There was plenty of interest and we attracted some new members and distributed a good deal of information about the Society. This year we have booked a place at the following Family History Society Fairs:

22 June	Gwent FHS	Cwmbran
3 August	Powys FHS	Llandrindod Wells

7 September	Glamorgan FHS	Aberdare
7 September	North Wales FHS	Llandudno
28 September	Dyfed FHS	Carmarthen

To the fairs we take a small exhibition and copies of our publications and we find there is a much better response if local members of CAPEL can be present at the stand. All that is required is a bit of knowledge about our work and an enthusiasm for chapels, especially in your area. If you are willing to volunteer or wish to know more, please contact the Secretary, Penny Icke (phone 01970 621210; e-mail: penny.icke@rcahmw.org.uk)

### **Secretaryship of CAPEL**

At the last AGM our Hon. Secretary, Penny Icke, gave notice that she will be standing down this year. We shall be inviting nominations for her successor in readiness for the AGM in the Autumn. If you can think of someone suitable, can you begin to sound them out? If you would like to know more about what is involved, please have a word with Penny (phone 01970 621210) or with the Chairman, Lionel Madden (phone 01970 617771).

#### **CAPEL ar y We**

#### **CAPEL on the Web**

Byddwn yn lansio gwefan newydd i CAPEL yn y dyfodol agos. Bydd ar gael o 18 Mai, sef dyddiad ein Cyfarfod Gwanwyn. Cyfeiriad y wefan fydd [www.rcahmw.org.uk/capel](http://www.rcahmw.org.uk/capel) a bydd modd i'w defnyddio trwy'r Gymraeg neu'r Saesneg.

*We shall shortly be launching a new CAPEL website. It will be available from 18 May, the date of our Spring Meeting. You will find the site at [www.rcahmw.org.uk/capel](http://www.rcahmw.org.uk/capel) and you may consult the site in English or Welsh.*

### **Chapels now Closed, Converted or Demolished Radnorshire**

[In our Spring issue last year, along with his description of his experiences while photographing chapels in Breconshire and Radnorshire, Mr John Freer gave a list of closed or demolished chapels he had noted in Breconshire. The following is a corresponding list he prepared in October 2001 of chapels he had noted in a similar condition in Radnorshire]

Location & Name	NPRN	O.S. Grid Ref. (SN / SO)	Denomination,History & Present Condition
Abbey Cwm-hir (Cefn-Pawl)	8222	073 705	Baptist. Demolished.
Bleddfa	8227	203 684	Primitive Methodist A dwelling.
Builth Road Railway Mission	8278	024 533	Nondenominational. A workshop.
Crug-y-byddar. Bethel		123 533	A dwelling.
Cwm-y-gaist	8262	171 710	Primitive Methodist A dwelling.
Gladestry. Zion	8279	233 552	Baptist. Closed.
Gwystre.	8299	065 657	Calvinist Methodist. Demolished.
Kinnerton	8248	244 632	Wesleyan. Disused.
Knighton	8314	284 723	Baptist. A storehouse.
Llanbadarn-y-Garreg. Salem	8258	111 469	Independent. A ruin.
Llangynllo. Tŷ Capel	8287	211 715	Primitive Meth. A dwelling.
Moity. New Zion	8293	182 422	Primitive Methodist A dwelling.
New Radnor. Zion	8295	213 608	Calvinistic Methodist. A dwelling.
Newbridge-on-Wye. Pisgah	8288	015 583	Baptist. A dwelling.
Pant-y-Dŵr	8317	984 746	Calvinistic Methodist For sale.
Pen-y-bont	8256	114 642	Calvinistic Methodist. Demolished to widen road.
Rhiwlen	8309	129 501	Primitive Methodist. A dwelling.
Rhos-y-Meirch. Bethel	12191	278 695	Wesleyan Methodist. Not in use.
St. Harmon	8313	987 729	Wesleyan Methodist. No trace.

## **Building Applications and Threatened Sites**

Since September 2001, the following have been reported to our Secretary. Please let us know if you learn of further developments in these cases or if you know of any chapel which is closed, or about to close or is under threat in any way.

**Llysworney**, The Old Chapel, formerly Ebenezer Baptist Chapel. Building application (2.9.2001) to add 2 storey extension.

**Rhosybol**, Tŷ Capel, Mynydd Parys. For sale, September 2001.

**Cardigan**, Hope English Congregational chapel. Demolished September 2001.

**Maentwrog**, Capel Uchaf. For sale for redevelopment, October 2001.

**Trawsfynydd**, Capel Bethel. For sale for redevelopment, October 2001.

**Penrhyndeudraeth**, Capel Carmel. For sale for redevelopment, October 2001.

**Talsarnau**, Capel Bethel. For sale for redevelopment, October 2001.

**Rhos on Sea**. C.M.chapel. Converted to an ice-cream parlour. December 2001.

**Caerphilly**, Van Road U.R.C. Application for restructuring interior. Dec, 2001.

**Llandysul**, Tabernacle Chapel. For sale, January 2002.

**Porth**, Mission Church, Charles St. Damaged by fire and being demolished.

**Brynmawr**, Rehoboth Chapel. Closed ca. November 2001.

**Treherbert**, United Methodist Chapel, Pen-yr-Englyn. Closed last year.

**Cardiff**, Lisvane Baptist Chapel. Application for change of use to dwelling.

**Newport**, Llanthey Rd Baptist Church. Application for removal of baptismal pool, choir pews and store, January 2002

**Hawarden**, Highway Methodist New Connexion. Now demolished and a new house erected on site.

**Bangor**, Hirael Welsh Presbyterian chapel. Sold (October 2001) 'for community use'. Marble War Memorial and framed Roll of Honour are still inside.

**Ruabon**, former Providence Chapel. The converted house on sale February 2002.

[The following list of closures and other threats to chapels has been provided

by Mr M S Lovelock of Deeside. Should any members have further details, additions or amendments, we should be very glad to hear from you.]

**Buckley St John (UR).** Demolished Dec.2001-Jan.2002. New chapel to be erected nearby. Attached graveyard unaffected.

**New Brighton Chapel, Mold.** Converted (business use) Dec. 2001.

**Pen Rhewl Chapel, Rhewl, Holywell,** (built 1867), Converted to house and on market Feb.2002. Agents: Matthews, Chester.

**Pant y Buarth Chapel, Pantymwyn, Mold.** (Built1839). Converted to house and on market Nov.2001. Agents: Beresford Adams, Mold.

**Saron Chapel, Brynford, Holywell.** Converted to house and on market Nov. 2001. Agents: Molyneux, Holywell.

**Bethel Baptist Chapel, Pen-y-Ball St., Holywell** (Built 1900), Still open in August 2001 and no closure plans.

**Welsh Baptist Chapel, South St., Caerwys.** Planning application April 2001 for conversion to house.

**Glynne St. Chapel, Queensferry.** On market Feb. 2001. Agents: Dodds, Chester. Believed sold by Feb. 2002.

**Peniel Chapel, Greenfield, Flints.** On market Dec. 2000.  
Agents: Beresford Adams, Mold.

**Trelogan Chapel, Holywell.** On market Oct.1999. Agents: Dodds, Chester.

**Ffynnongroyw Chapel, Ffynnongroyw, Holywell.** On market March 2000. Agents, Dodds, Chester.

**Leeswood Chapel, Leeswood.** (Grade2 listed). On market March 2000. Agents Dodds, Chester. Believed withdrawn from sale; and boarded up.

**Former Llwynedd Chapel, Llanbedr D.C.** Demolished and land on market for proposed house. Permission granted Dec. 1996.

**Anglican Mission Rooms, Bodfari.** On market July 2000.Demolished?

**Ebeneser Chapel, Rhosllanerchrugog.** Closed, July 2001.

**Rehoboth Methodist Chapel Coedpoeth.** Closed Dec.1999. On market August 2001. Agents: Kent Jones, Wrexham. Graveyard unaffected .

**Zion Poolmouth Methodist, Brynteg Denbighshire.** Sold after 1999, possibly to Australian businessman.

**Gryn Goch Chapel, Caernarfonshire.** On market Feb. 2002. Agents: Medforths.

**Llanddaniel Chapel, Anglesey.** On market Feb. 2002. Agents: Bob Parry, Llangefni.

**Llansadwrn Chapel, Anglesey.** On market Feb 2002. Agents Bob Parry, Llangefni.

### **Capel Caergeiliog, near Holyhead**

Some Welsh chapels appear to be shrouded in mystery, awaiting research by the historian. Others, so to speak, wear their story on their sleeves, if you will accept this mixed up saying. One such chapel would seem to be the Calvinistic Methodist one at Caergeiliog on the old Telford road (A5) just outside Holyhead. My wife Elan and I have passed this chapel many times, always in a hurry to get to Holyhead, mostly for the ferry. Recently, however, we were passing and not in a hurry and went onto the old A5 now bypassed by the A55 superhighway which must have brought tremendous relief to such villages as Caergeiliog. We pulled into the village car park near to the chapel in order to have a closer look.

The chapel is a simple gable ended structure with a single, central entrance dividing in the porch to two aisles. The date stone tablet gives a comprehensive list of dates starting with 1786, which is of course quite early. The second date, 1818, suggests an expansion of membership and perhaps a first chapel. The third date, 1872, suggests a further expansion, perhaps after the 1859 revival and the full realisation of the present chapel. The tablet reads, CAERGEILIOG TREFNYDDION CALVINIAIDD.

Inside the chapel one is immediately met by the box pews, of which there are about fifty. The pulpit backs onto the entry, with a simply decorated *Sêt Fawr*. The organ is modern and free standing in front of the *Sêt Fawr* but is quite powerful. There is also an upright piano in a very light wood. A plaque on the rear wall of the chapel commemorates Thomas Owen (1834-89) of Bodedern, a well loved deacon. By trade he was a quarry blacksmith, possibly in the quarry at Holyhead.



The chapel is set in a small yard, now probably a car park, and to the right of the chapel is the Tŷ Capel, a simple, centre entry house of two storeys. To the right of the house is the original carriage house, with next to it a stable, with the single stall for a horse still in place. The stable is now used as a coal cellar. The occupants, Mr and Mrs Hugh Rowlands, confirmed our impression that this had been the place for keeping the minister's carriage, or, as Mrs Rowlands corrected me, 'more like a wagon'. I wonder if pictures of the wagon survive? At the rear of the carriage-house a staircase still gives access to a second floor, originally perhaps a meeting house, or possibly a Sunday school, but now converted into two bedrooms 'for the lads'.

Current chapel attendance is around 20 with a membership of 40. Whist the foregoing is certainly not a history, which would need to be properly researched, there are a number of interesting clues that just might indicate the line of development. Perhaps someone knows the full story. Our thanks to Mr and Mrs Rowlands for showing us around and talking to us.

Stuart A Rivers

## Anniversaries

Several Welsh chapels are this year celebrating anniversaries. The oldest, perhaps, is **Llanwenarth Baptist Chapel** in Monmouthshire which is celebrating its 350th anniversary. The celebrations started on January the 5th when over 150 people attended a special evening at the chapel, which included lighting a new cross on the north wall of the chapel building. The anniversary celebrations continued with a St. David's Day concert on Saturday March 2nd, when members of the congregation were joined by the Abergavenny Operatic Society.

Llanwenarth Chapel is recorded as the oldest Baptist chapel in Wales. The cause was founded in 1652, and the first chapel built in 1695 on a piece of ground given by Doctor Christopher Price, an apothecary who lived in Abergavenny, and was a member of the congregation. Up to 1695 the meetings for worship were held in dwelling houses in the town and neighbourhood.



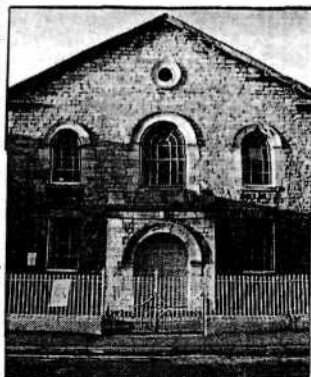
The existing building is the result of several remodellings, but has its origins in the chapel of 1695. It was doubled in size in the 18th century, and remodelled again principally in 1869-70. Further works took place in 1893, and there have been major restoration works since. The original church was the northern half of the present building.

The interior is substantially 18th century with a racked gallery on three sides and box pews. The balcony is supported on cast-iron columns, and the pulpit is to the centre of the north wall, between two tall round headed windows, with the baptistry below.

The burial ground retains a good collection of Georgian and Victorian tombstones, and the remains of an exterior baptistry.

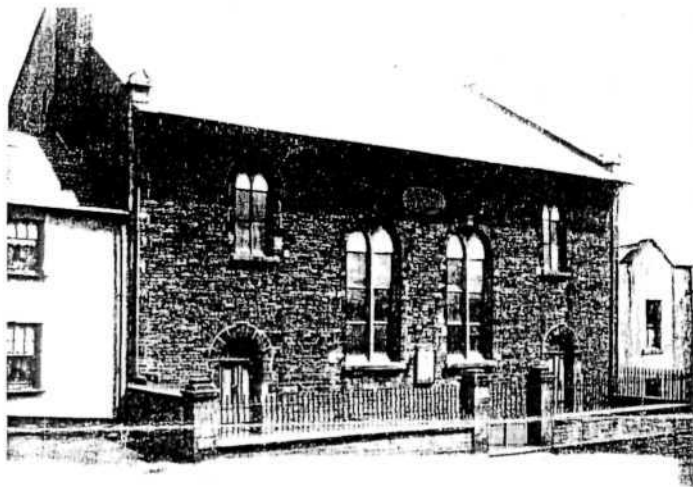
Cadw - Welsh Historic Monuments listed this chapel grade II\* for its historical importance and surviving elements of its 18th century interior.

**Pendref Welsh Wesleyan Chapel, Denbigh,** is a mere 200 years old but its bicentenary has been celebrated by the issue of a history of the chapel compiled by Medwyn Jones. Mr Jones recounts the efforts of Edward Jones, Evan Roberts and others to bring Wesleyan Methodism to Welsh-speaking Denbighshire at the end of the 18th century, crowned by the opening of the chapel on New Year's Day 1802, followed by a century of excitement and argument, growth and joy. To relate the story of the second century. Mr Jones



has not only used the denominational and local papers and journals and chapel archives but also has included some 18 essays of reminiscences by ministers, officers and members of the church during the period 1930-2000 and more than 20 pages of photographs of the chapel, its members and their activities. The book (price £4.95) can be obtained from Hywel Evans, Glyn Alun, 27 Trewen, Rhuthun LL16 3HF.

Another chapel celebrating its bicentenary this year is **Philadelphia**, the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist church at Morrision. A history of the church is



in preparation and there will be a number of meetings to celebrate the anniversary from 19-23 May. (Details from Mr John Davies, 323 Heol Claremont, Morrision, SA6 6BU.

01792 795566).

This 1905 photograph, shows the chapel (built 1829) as it was until it was given a face-lift in 1935.

## **Tin Tabernacles**

The Camrose Organisation, an independent documentary film company based in Wales, is seeking information about the corrugated metal mission chapels which proliferated during the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. They are looking particularly for examples which are still standing or (even better) still used regularly. Background information is sought, including locations, building dates, plans, photographs of lost chapels and denominational details but what is wanted most of all are the reasons and story behind the construction of these fascinating buildings and the people behind the story - the preachers, the builders, the congregations and communities. Examples from outside Wales and the UK will also be most welcome.

All reasonable expenses will be repaid. Information can be sent by e-mail to Ian Smith at [ijmsmith@aol.com](mailto:ijmsmith@aol.com) or can be added to the online database by visiting the website [www.tinchapels.co.uk](http://www.tinchapels.co.uk) or by writing to Ian Smith, Camrose Organisation, 106 Main Street, Pembroke SA71 4HN (Tel. 01646 680505).

## **Disabled Access :**

### **How will chapels cope with the Disability Discrimination Act which comes into force on 1 October 2004?**

The Disability Rights Commission's stated aim is 'to enable disabled people to participate fully in our society'

The Code of Practice makes little or no reference to historic building considerations and gives no hint that compromises may be necessary to find a reasonable balance between access requirements and the protection of the character of historic buildings.

Cadw have now completed their thematic survey of nonconformist chapels in Wales which identifies those chapels that are considered to be of architectural and/or historic interest. This has given rise to considerable concern amongst those responsible for caring and managing those chapels which are now included on the statutory lists. Even those chapels that are not listed but which nevertheless are significant and contribute visually to their immediate area or may be located in conservation areas can be problematical in terms of the provision of a satisfactory access for the disabled.

The Act imposes certain duties upon service providers. This can involve physical adjustments to buildings to allow reasonable access. To comply with the Act the service provider has to take reasonable steps to ensure acceptable accessibility, and if this is not possible then the last resort is to provide a reasonable alternative access.

The definition of reasonableness comes into question! The DDA Code of Practice gives the following guidance:

- the effectiveness of any steps taken to overcome difficulties of access.
- the extent to which it is practicable to take these steps
- the financial and other costs involved
- the extent of any disruption caused by making these alterations or adjustments
- the service provider's available financial resources
- the amount of resources already spent on making adjustments
- the availability of financial and other assistance

The importance of the historic fabric is also recognised as a relevant factor. It is important to remember that as with any listed building Listed Building Consent or its equivalent approval from the relevant ecclesiastical body will be required before works commence on site. Planning permission may also be required. It is always advisable to check the position with the local planning authority at an early stage in order to avoid complications later on. These requirements may prove to be the crunch of the matter in the future, as the proposals put forward may not be acceptable in either listed building or planning terms. The application may well then be refused and considerable time and money wasted. These will of course be extreme cases. Local authority conservation officers and planning officers, and every ecclesiastical listed building advisory committee are there to help and advise chapel carers to achieve an acceptable solution. The statutory amenity bodies will also help and advise as will CAPEL and the Welsh Religious Buildings Trust.

In those cases where the proposals are considered detrimental to the character and appearance of the listed chapel or to the chapel in the conservation area, and it is proved and accepted that there appears to be no satisfactory solution, it is important to remember that the service provider i.e. the chapel carers, have demonstrated that they have complied with the law. That is, they have taken the necessary steps to investigate providing an acceptable access. Whilst it is unlikely that no adjustments can be made at all, a record of the

negotiations with consultation bodies is a safeguard against challenges being brought against those looking after our historic chapels.

The starting point for all chapels is an access audit, identifying physical and communication barriers, and an examination of the access needs of users. It is advisable to consider the problems one at a time and not to panic! Contact the conservation officer and the access officer at your local authority, and your denominational listed building advisory committee. Together they should set you on the right road. They will probably advise you to appoint and obtain advice from a specialist conservation professional person. It can be false economy not to obtain the best possible advice as soon as the problem of disabled access arises.

It is advisable to keep a record of your discussions and negotiations with these various organisations referred to above, but above all seek expert advice from someone who is sensitive to both the character and identity of our national heritage of chapels and yet understands the problems of the disabled. Further information can be obtained from:

Disability Wales, Wernddu Court, Caerphilly Business Park,  
Van Road, Caerphilly CF83 3ED Telephone 029 2088 8702

### ***Gift Aid Declaration***

*If you have not already done so, please complete a Gift Aid Declaration and return it to the Treasurer (Mr G.Veysey, 2 Sandy Way, Wood Lane, Hawarden, Flintshire CH5 3JJ). This allows CAPEL to reclaim the tax from the Inland Revenue. Copies of the Declaration form can be obtained from the Treasurer, who also has Banker's Order forms which can be completed to simplify the payment of subscriptions.*

### **Datganiad Rhodd Gymorth**

Os nad ydych eisoes wedi gwneud, a wnewch chi os gwelwch yn dda lenwi ffurflen Rhodd Gymorth a'i dychwelyd i'r Trysorydd (Mr G.Veysey, 2 Sandy Way, Wood Lane, Penarlâg, Sir Fflint CH5 3JJ). Bydd hyn yn galluogi CAPEL i hawlio treth yn ôl oddi wrth y Cyllid Gwladol. Gellir cael furflenni ar gyfer y datganiad oddi wrth y Trysorydd. Mae ganddo hefyd gopiâu o ffurflenni archeb banc i'w llenwi er mwyn symleiddio gwaith talu tanysgrifiadau.