

Capel



CYMDEITHAS TREFTADAETH Y CAPELI
THE CHAPELS' HERITAGE SOCIETY

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Cyfarfod yr Hydref yng Nghasllwchwr *Autumn Meeting in Loughor*



Cynhaliwyd Cyfarfod yr hydref 2004 ar 16 Hydref yng Nghasllwchwr, man priodol iawn i ni gyfarfod ganrif yn union wedi dechreuad Diwygiad mawr 1904-5. Cyfarfuom yng nghapel Moriah, lle y codwyd Evan Roberts, achos a gychwynnwyd ym 1828 sydd â dau adeilad yn sefyll - y naill wedi'i godi ym 1842 a'r llall ym 1898 yn sgîl y twf mawr ym mhoblogaeth yr ardal. Ym 1903 trowyd y capel cyntaf yn ysgoldy.

Wedi'r croeso a'r coffi arferol a'r Cyfarfod Cyffredinol Blynnyddol (gweler cofnodion y

cyfarfod ar dudalennau 6-10) cafwyd darlith gan y Parch. Ddr.Noel Gibbard ar "Evan Roberts a dechreuad y Diwygiad ym Morgannwg" (gweler talfyriad o'r ddarlith ar dudalennau 10-12) Yna aethpwyd i fwyty yng Ngorseion, The Cockle Shell, am ginio ac wedyn fe'n cludwyd mewn bws i weld nifer o gapeli eraill yr ardal a fu â chysylltiad â'r Diwygiad.

Y cyntaf oedd Pisgah, a godwyd dan arolygaeth Evan Roberts ar gais perchennog pwll glo cyfagos. Bu Evan yn arolygwr yr Ysgol Sul yno a chynhaliwyd nifer o gyfarfodydd y Diwygiad yno hefyd. Ymlaen wedyn i gapel Annibynnol Brynteg, achos a ddechreuwyd yn y 1690au ac sydd yn awr â dau adeilad, a godwyd ym 1847 a 1897. Gorffennwyd y daith gyda the yn adeilad newydd capel Efengylaidd Penyrheol, achos a ddechreuwyd gan y bobl ifainc a gafodd droedigaeth yn ystod y Diwygiad.



The autumn meeting in 2004 was held on 16 October in Loughor, a most appropriate place for us meet on the centenary of the great Revival of 1904-5. We met in Moriah chapel, where Evan Roberts had been baptised and brought up. The chapel had been founded in 1828 and now has two buildings, one the chapel which was built in 1842 and the other, larger building erected in 1898 to cater for the increased population at the end of the 19th century. In 1903 the older building was converted into a schoolroom.

After our customary coffee and welcome the Annual General Meeting was held (see Minutes on pp.3-6) This was followed by a lecture by the Rev.Dr. Noel Gibbard on "Evan Roberts and the beginning of the Revival in Glamorgan" (see a shortened version of the talk on pp.10-12) We then proceeded to The Cockle Shell restaurant in Gorseinon for lunch, after which we were carried by bus to view a number of other chapels in the district which were affected by the Revival.

The first was Pisgah, built at the request of the owner of a local colliery who asked Evan Roberts to superintend its construction. Evan was also a superintendent of the Sunday School there and many meetings were held there during the Revival. The bus then took us on to Brynteg Congregational Chapel, whose beginnings go back to the 1690s and which now has two buildings, erected in 1847 and 1897. The afternoon's programme ended with tea in the new building of Penyrheol Free Evangelical Church, which had been founded by young people converted during the 1904 Revival.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, 16th October 2004

1. Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from: Roger Bishton, Margaret Davies, David Gillman, Dilys Glover, Robin Gwyndaf, Rev. H D Hughes, Margaret Hughes and Richard Thomas.

3. Minutes of Last Meeting

The Minutes of the Meeting held at Caerphilly on 18th October 2003 were accepted and confirmed.

4. Matters Arising

No matters were raised.

5. Secretary's Report

This year with the help of our Administrative Assistant we set up the arrangements for dealing with chapel Planning Applications - these involve the modification, demolition or conversion of chapels. Our Assistant, Rhian Gregory, is now on Maternity Leave so the Secretary is running the system. As you see from the lists in the Newsletter I occasionally ask Norman Chang to make a professional assessment of a proposal and we also normally support criticisms made by the Archaeological Trusts and National Park officers. So far I have not asked Jonathan Jones to do an on-site survey of a chapel because we have not been faced with an important threatened chapel where we could change the

outcome. I am thinking perhaps of the Howell Harris Memorial Chapel and the Glandwr Baptist Church in Abertillery. In general it is encouraging to have the support given by some Planning Officers if an important chapel is faced with demolition. One thing is very apparent - the fate of many chapels depends on the level of local support. As an example, two villages in the Snowdonia National Park which we visited recently on the same day, each have two redundant chapels requiring some refurbishment. The chapel secretary and the village postmaster in the first village could hardly wait to get one chapel demolished and have a house built. The people in the second village said that there was no way they would ever let their chapels go and they are using both of them for village activities. I have just heard from the Planning Officer that permission to demolish the chapel in the first village has now been agreed.

A Chapel Trail for Llandudno was promised at the last AGM but was delayed because of ongoing discussions about the future of the chapels - the outcome was the closure and sale of one Listed building and the joining together and renaming of some other chapels. We decided to try the simple format for the leaflet of which you have a copy, and will try placing free copies in the Tourist Office. I hope that some members may like to revise Local Information sheets for their area and try something similar.

Also at the last AGM we reported plans for Professor Anthony Jones's new book on Welsh chapels, but because of time-line problems with the publishers, Capel members have not yet been consulted. We await developments.

This summer there was a concert at Bangor-is-y Coed to mark the launch of Open Churches Cymru in the Wrexham area - with 12 open churches, information boards and an exhibition. We were given free publicity mugs. This inspired the design of a CAPEL mug intended for everyday use - to be given to Ministers and chapel secretaries during visits and sold to CAPEL members - the aim being to raise CAPEL's profile. For technical reasons the design which you saw as you came in today has been chosen. If you have any comments we would like to hear them. Our Committee member, Stuart Rivers, has agreed to become Publicity Officer and will be

looking at other ways of promoting CAPEL. The CAPEL Exhibition was used at the Llanfairfechan History Fair and at the Llandudno FHS Fair but it needs to be revised to have more impact at such events. There is also a need for two versions of the Exhibition appropriate for north and south Wales.

Two members of the Committee are working on an Education Pack, designed for GCSE project work, using a new expert advisor. This is a costly project and support from the National Heritage Lottery Fund is being sought. The Committee now has a regular exchange of information with the Welsh Religious Buildings Trust and members have all received an information leaflet with the recent Newsletter. The Trust's involvement with five chapels will soon be reported.

CAPEL meetings are proposed for Llanidloes on the 14th May 2005 and for Ruthin on the 15th October 2005. The meeting we planned for Trefecca was abandoned following the resignation of the warden. Many places remain unvisited by CAPEL, so the Committee will be pleased to receive offers from enthusiastic organisers for future meetings.

6. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer presented the Statement of Accounts for the year ending 31st August 2004. Total membership has increased to 329. The investment account stands at £12,362.21 and the current account at £3495.22. There was a small deficit in the current account this year and the Treasurer called for the recruitment of new members. He also announced that he would retire after serving for one more year. Thanks were recorded to Mr Kevin Matthias and Denbigh Record Office for helping to audit and print the accounts. Stuart Rivers asked if Tax Relief was claimed on CAPEL subscriptions. This has been done for two years and will continue.

7. Chairman's Report

The chairman began by paying tribute to two very distinguished members of CAPEL who died this year. These were Vernon Hughes and Graham Rosser. Since members would have read the obituaries of them by

Geoffrey Veysey and Huw Owen in the recent *Newsletter* he did not repeat what they had written, but simply wished to record gratitude for all they contributed to CAPEL over the years and to express very sincere sympathy to their families and close friends in their loss.

On a happier note, CAPEL held its second Eisteddfod lecture in Newport this year when an address was given by the Revd Shem Morgan on the topic 'Why Llanfaches?' Like last year, it was a successful occasion and CAPEL was grateful to the speaker and to Muriel Bowen Evans and Huw Owen, both members of the Executive Committee, for arranging it.

The Chairman once again thanked very sincerely his fellow Officers and all the members of the Executive Committee. He was extremely grateful to them all for their commitment and hard work, and for their support to him personally throughout another year. During the year the Executive Committee had lost the services of Susan Beckley when she took up a new post in Scotland. Susan had contributed enormously to CAPEL, not least during her seven years as Secretary in the 1990s. With Rosemary Davies she had organised the visit today. He thanked her very much for all her work for CAPEL.

8. Election of Officers and Committee Members

Following Susan Beckley's resignation Mrs Rosemary Davies (proposed by Susan Beckley, seconded by Lionel Madden) was elected to serve on the Committee.

It was agreed that all present members of the Executive Committee would continue in their roles for the coming year.

9. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

Cofnodion y Cyfarfod Cyffredinol Blynnyddol 16 Hydref 2004

1. Croeso'r Cadeirydd

Croesawyd yr aelodau i'r cyfarfod gan y Cadeirydd.

2. Ymddiheuriadau

Derbyniwyd ymddiheuriadau oddi wrth Roger Bishton, Margaret Davies, David Gillman, Robin Gwyndaf, Y Parch. H D Hughes, Margaret Hughes a Richard Thomas.

3. Cofnodion y Cyfarfod Diwethaf

Derbyniwyd a chadarnhawyd cofnodion y cyfarfod a gynhaliwyd yng Nghaerffil ar 18 Hydref 2003.

4. Materion yn codi

Ni chodwyd unrhyw fater.

5. Adroddiad yr Ysgrifennydd

Eleni, trwy gymorth ein Cynorthwydd Gweinyddol, sefydlwyd trefniadau i ddelio â cheisiadau cynllunio capeli - mae rhain yn golygu addasu, dymchwel neu drawsnewid capeli. Mae ein cynorthwydd, Rhian Gregory ar hyn o bryd ar wyliau mamolaeth ac felly yr Ysgrifennydd sy'n rhedeg y system. Fel y gwelwch o'r rhestri yn y *Cylchlythyr*, byddaf weithiau yn gofyn i Norman Chang i wneud asesiad proffesiynol o'r cynigion ac yr ydym fel arfer yn cefnogi'r beirniadaethau a geir gan yr ymddiriedolaethau archaeolegol a swyddogion y parciau cenedlaethol. Hyd yn hyn nid wyf wedi gofyn i Jonathan Jones wneud arolwg capel ar y safle, gan nad ydym wedi gorfod trafod bygythiad i gapel pwysig lle y gallasem newid y canlyniad. Yn fy meddwl, y mae'n debyg, y mae dau gapel - Capel Coffa Howell Harris ac Eglwys Fedyddiedig Glandŵr, Abertileri. Yn gyffredinol, mae'n gysur mawr cael cefnogaeth rhai swyddogion cynllunio pan fydd capel pwysig yn wynebu cael ei ddymchwel. Mae un peth yn amlwg iawn - mae tynged llawer o gapeli yn dibynnu ar lefel y gefnogaeth leol. Er enghraifft, mewn dau bentref ym Mharc Cenedlaethol Eryri y buom yn eu gweld yr un diwrnod yn ddiweddar mae dau gapel wedi'u cau y mae angen gwaith adnewyddu arnynt. Yn y pentref cyntaf, prin y gallai'r postfeistr ac ysgrifennydd y capel aros diwrnod i gael dymchwel un capel ac adeiladu tŷ. Ond dywedai trigolion yr ail bentref nad oedd modd y byddent yn gollwng eu capeli ac maent yn defnyddio'r ddau ar gyfer gweithgareddau pentrefol. 'Rwyf newydd glywed oddi wrth y Swyddog Cynllunio fod dymchweliad y capel yn y pentref cyntaf wedi'i gytuno.

Addawyd yng Nghyfarfod Blynyddol y llynedd y byddid yn paratoi Taith Capeli Llandudno ond gohiriwyd y cynllun yn sgîl trafodaethau ynglŷn â dyfodol capeli - y canlyniad fu cau a gwerthu un adeilad cofrestredig ac ailenwi rhai capeli eraill. Penderfynwyd arbrofi gyda diwyg syml y daflen a ddosbarthwyd i chi ac fe roddwn ychydig gopiâu am ddim yn y Swyddfa

Dwristiaeth. Gobeithio yr hoffai rhai o'n haelodau fynd ati i ddiwygio tafenni lleol eu hardal hwy a gwneud arbrawf tebyg.

Hefyd yn y Cyfarfod Blynyddol diwethaf, rhoddwyd adroddiad am gynlluniau llyfr newydd yr Athro Anthony Jones ar gapeli Cymru ond o achos problemau amser gyda'r cyhoeddwr ni bu ymgynghori gyda'n haelodau eto ac yr ydym yn disgwyl datblygiadau.

Yn yr haf eleni bu cyngerdd ym Mangor-is-y-coed i nodi lansiad Eglwysi Agored Cymru yn ardal Wrecsam - gyda 12 eglwys ar agor, byrddau arddangos gwybodaeth ac arddangosfa. Rhoddwyd inni fygiau cyhoeddusrwydd am ddim a fu'n ysbrydoliaeth i gynllunio mwg CAPEL ar gyfer defnydd pob dydd - mwg i'w gyflwyno i weinidogion ac ysgrifenyddion capeli yn ystod ymweliadau ac i'w gwerthu i aelodau CAPEL. Am resymau technegol, y cynllun a welsoch wrth ddod i mewn yw'r un a ddewiswyd. Os oes gennych sylwadau, fe hoffem eu clywed. Mae aelod o'r Pwyllgor, Stuart Rivers, wedi cytuno i fod yn Swyddog Cyhoeddusrwydd i CAPEL a bydd yn edrych am ddulliau eraill i hyrwyddo'n Cymdeithas.

Defnyddiwyd Arddangosfa CAPEL yn Ffair Hanes Llanfairfechan a Ffair y Gymdeithas Hanes Teuluol yn Llandudno ond mae angen ei diwygio er mwyn cael mwy o effaith mewn digwyddiadau o'r fath. Mae angen hefyd cael dwy fersiwn o'r Arddangosfa a fyddai'n addas i Ogledd ac i Dde Cymru.

Mae dau aelod o'r Pwyllgor yn gweithio ar gynhyrchu pecyn addysg wedi'i lunio ar gyfer gwaith prosiectau T.G.A.U. Maent yn cael cyngor gan arbenigwr yn y maes ond bydd hyn yn prosiect costus a bydd rhaid ceisio nawdd oddi wrth Gronfa'r Loteri Cenedlaethol. Mae'r Pwyllgor yn awr yn cyfnewid gwybodaeth yn rheolaidd gydag Ymddiriedolaeth Adeiladau Crefyddol Cymru ac mae'r aelodau i gyd wedi derbyn taflen wybodaeth gyda'n *Cylchlythyr* diwethaf. Cyn bo hir byddwn yn derbyn adroddiad am yr hyn y mae'r Ymddiriedolaeth am ei wneud ynglŷn â phum capel.

Trefnwyd cyfarfodydd CAPEL yn Llanidloes ar 14 Mai 2005 ac yn Rhuthun ar 15 Hydref 2005. Bu rhaid diddymu'r cyfarfod y bwriedid ei

gynnal yn Nhrefeca yn sgîl ymddeoliad y Warden. Mae nifer fawr o fannau nad yw CAPEL eto wedi cyfarfod ynddynt a bydd y Pwyllgor yn falch i dderbyn cynigion oddi wrth unigolion a hoffai drefnu cyfarfodydd yn y dyfodol.

6. Adroddiad y Trysorydd

Cyflwynodd y Trysorydd adroddiad am y cyfrifon am y flwyddyn yn diweddu ar 31 Awst 2004. Yr oedd rhif yr aelodau wedi esgyn i 329. Yr oedd y cyfrif cadw yn awr yn £12,362.21 a'r cyfrif cyfredol yn £3,495.22. Eleni yr oedd diffyg bychan yn y cyfrif cyfredol a galwodd y Trysorydd am ymdrech i chwyddo'r aelodaeth. Cyhoeddodd hefyd ei fwriad i ymddeol o'i swydd ymhen blwyddyn. Diolchodd i Mr Kevin Mathias ac Archifdy Sir Ddinbych am eu cymorth iddo wrth baratoi ac archwilio'r cyfrifon. Holodd Stuart Rivers a oeddem yn hawlio gostyngiad trethi ar danysgrifiadau aelodau CAPEL. Yr ydym wedi gwneud hyn ers dwy flynedd a byddwn yn parhau i wneud.

7. Adroddiad y Cadeirydd

Dechreuodd y Cadeirydd gyda theyrnged i ddau aelod nodedig o CAPEL a fu farw eleni - Vernon Hughes a Graham Rosser. Gan y byddai aelodau wedi darllen teyrngedau iddynt gan Geoffrey Veysey a Huw Owen yn rhifyn diwethaf y *Cylchlythyr*, nid oedd am ailadrodd yr hyn a sgrifennwyd ond mynegi'n syml ein diolch am y cyfan yr oeddynt wedi'i gyfrannu i CAPEL dros y blynyddoedd a'n cydymdeimlad diffuant â'u teuluoedd a'u cyfeillion agos yn eu colled.

Ar nodyn hapusach, yr oedd CAPEL wedi cynnal ei ail ddarlith eisteddfodol yng Nghasnewydd eleni, pan roddwyd anerchiad gan y Parch. Shem Morgan ar y testun 'Pam Llanfaches?' Fel y llynedd, bu'n achlysur llwyddiannus ac yr oedd CAPEL yn ddiolchgar i'r siaradwr ac i Muriel Bowen Evans a D Huw Owen, y ddau yn aelodau o'r pwyllgor, am wneud y trefniadau.

Diolchodd y Cadeirydd yn ddiwyll iawn unwaith eto i'w gyd-swyddogion a holl aelodau'r Pwyllgor Gwaith, am eu hymroddiad a'u gwaith caled ac am eu cefnogaeth iddo ef yn bersonol ar hyd blwyddyn arall. Yn ystod y

flwyddyn yr oedd y Pwyllgor Gwaith wedi colli gwasanaeth Susan Beckley pan gymerodd swydd newydd yn yr Alban. Yr oedd Susan wedi cyfrannu'n sylweddol iawn i CAPEL yn enwedig yn ystod ei saith mlynedd fel Ysgrifennydd yn y 90au. Gyda chymorth Rosemary Davies, hi oedd wedi trefnu ein hymweliad â Chasllwchwr heddiw. Diolchodd yn gynnes iddi am ei holl waith i CAPEL.

8. Ethol Swyddogiion ac Aelodau'r Pwyllgor

Yn sgîl ymddiswyddiad Susan Beckley, ar gynnig Susan a eiliwyd gan Lionel Madden, etholwyd Rosemary Davies i wasanaethu ar y Pwyllgor. Cytunwyd y byddai holl aelodau presennol y Pwyllgor Gwaith yn parhau yn eu swyddi am flwyddyn arall.

9. Unrhyw Fater Arall

Ni chodwyd unrhyw fater arall.

The 1904-5 Revival in Old Glamorgan

On 13 September 1904, a 26 year old collier from Loughor enrolled in John Phillips' grammar school in Newcastle Emlyn, with the intention of entering the Christian ministry. He had been brought up in a religious home and the Bible was the main influence on his life. When he arrived in Newcastle Emlyn, the fire of revival had already been lit in that part of Carmarthenshire and south Ceredigion under the leadership of Joseph Jenkins, New Quay, and Seth Joshua of the Forward Movement.

On 29 September Evan experienced conversion in a remarkable meeting in Blaenannerch and was convinced that he had to return to Loughor to carry out the will of God and on 31 October in Moriah, Loughor, he held his first prayer meeting, urging people to rise and confess Christ in public. There were few present in that first meeting but day by day numbers increased and by 10 November a newspaper could report that 'after a two hour sermon, the vast congregation remained praying and singing until half past two in the morning'.

On 13 November he responded positively to an invitation to preach at Bryn Seion, Trecynon, Aberdare, and took a group of ladies to sing for him in the services. The following night a very successful meeting was held in Ebenezer, the Welsh Congregational chapel. On the 16th, Evan's brother, Dan came to



see him and stayed for a while in Trecynon before moving on to the Rhondda where he exercised a very fruitful ministry. This, the first of Evan Roberts' journeys, lasted from November 1904 to February 1905, (with a break over Christmas). At the end of January, the Revival, and Evan Roberts in particular, had been bitterly attacked by the Rev. Peter Price, Congregational minister of Bethania, Dowlais. Before the end of February, Evan was physically exhausted and announced that he was cancelling all engagements and retiring for a while to Neath. He remained in South Wales until the end of March, when he left for Liverpool,

after addressing a meeting in Ceredigion.

Evan Roberts did not visit Cardiff, but other leaders of the Revival did. On 16 November 1904 a young girl from New Quay took part in prayer in Pembroke Terrace (CM) and all present knew that something unusual was taking place. The following Sunday H M Hughes, minister of Ebeneser Congregational chapel announced prayer meetings for the following week and that week led to a series of prayer meetings twice a day. At the beginning of December fifteen churches sent reports to a local paper and only two of them had not been influenced by the Revival, Tabernacle (Baptist) and Ebeneser

(Congregational) were the two main centres and visitors came to the meetings not only from the Valleys but from all over the world. In one meeting at Tabernacle Norway, Sweden, Japan, Arabia, South Africa and America were represented. A party from France was thrilled with an underground service at Penrhiw colliery.

Efforts were made to meet the various needs of the converts; many churches - in Aberdare, Dinas, Rhondda, Morryston, Treforest and Dowlais - built or set apart rooms to be used as libraries or classrooms for Bible study. Movements within the churches were strengthened, particularly conventions and the Christian Endeavour movement, which was especially popular in Swansea. There was also general agreement on the need for humanitarian activity. In Trecynon, Aberdare, the Christian workers were divided into ten groups, each having a leader and visiting the houses of the area regularly. The Christian workers would provide money to buy food and clothes for the needy. In Cardiff, the vestry at Tabernacle was a soup kitchen for the poor, especially the children. At the Baptist College, a room was set apart where the homeless could sleep for a few nights. In November 1905 a house for friendless and fallen women was opened in Cardiff. In the Loughor area, visits were paid to the gypsies and a collection made to meet their material needs.

The Revival created a different spirit in society. Old debts were paid; at Maerdy the colliers agreed to contribute a penny in the pound to build an institute; the temperance movement benefited greatly - non-fermented wine was introduced to many churches and societies were urged not to hold meetings in public houses and in Cardiff there was a decrease in drunkenness. But there were also critics of the Revival and tensions between the converts and traditional worshippers. At Moriah, Loughor, the minister, a supporter of the Revival, had to resign because he disagreed with the late meetings. The reaction to Peter Price's criticisms was mixed. His own church of Bethania Dowlais supported him but other Dowlais ministers were unhappy with his

comments, one describing his attack as 'a mixture of truth and untruth' and others condemning it as 'ill-advised' or 'a scurrilous attack'.

Some of the positive effects of the Revival should be underlined. Thousands of lives were transformed and this made a marked difference in the churches. A missionary spirit was created in individuals and in churches. Many went overseas under the auspices of the Pentecostal Missionary Union which brought together 'pentecostals' from different backgrounds though eventually separate denominational societies were formed.

Noel Gibbard

Chapels reported to CAPEL Building applications and Threatened Sites

List 1

Major changes or alterations have been proposed to the following chapels but detailed plans or further details were not available. A written submission to the relevant Planning Authority was therefore not possible. Both lists relate to the period from October 2004 to the end of January 2005.

Bethel Church site, Beaufort, Ebbw Vale: Residential development to replace demolished chapel.

Gwynfryn Independent Chapel, Ammanford: Replacement of front parapet stonework by traditional slated verge and roof.

Nazareth (English Baptist), Cae Garw, Mountain Ash: Alterations including disabled access.

St. David's (Presbyterian), Pontypridd: Removal of all pews.

Trinity Baptist Chapel, Trelewis, Merthyr Tydfil: Construction of kitchen and disabled toilet.

St John the Baptist Mission Church, Catbrook, Mon. : Conversion to residential dwellings.

Carmel Chapel, Bonvilston, Vale of Glamorgan: Conversion of chapel and vestry to residential use.

Salvation Army Chapel, Porth, Rhondda : Conversion to flats.

- Siloh Chapel** (United Welsh), **Llandudno** (Grade II listed): Alterations to entrance and to the internal layout and provision of disabled access ramp.
- Glynarthen Chapel**, nr. **Llandysul**: Disabled ramp access to vestry.
- Blaina URC**, **Blaenau Gwent**: Outline planning permission for residential development.
- Capel Tegid**, **Bala** (Grade II listed): Installation of central heating, disabled toilet and removal of seats to accommodate wheel chairs,
- Gwynfa Hall**, **Holyhead**: Demolition proposed of former Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, currently Salvation Army meeting hall.
- Cwm Chapel**, **Churchstoke**, **Montgomeryshire**: Alterations and extension, including garage to an already converted chapel.
- English Baptist Church**, **Carmarthen**: Provision of new rear access and stairwell, an internal lift and alterations to steps and stairs.
- Berea URC**, **Nantyglo**, **Blaenau Gwent** (Listed) Now Imaan Islamic Society: Removal of pews and timber floors affected by dry rot.
- Gospel Hall**, **Abertridwr**, **Caerphilly**: Possible demolition.
- Capel Salem**, **Abergele Road**, **Colwyn Bay** (listed): Disabled access and new side entrance for the Antioch Fellowship.
- Bethel Christian Centre**, **Old Colwyn**: Demolition and construction of 9 flats.
- Catholic Church**, **Curre Street**, **Cwm**, **Ebbw Vale**: Change of use to 4 bedroomed house and garage.
- Capel Peniel**, **Glan Conwy**: Conversion of chapel to dwelling.
- Old Chapel**, **Newbridge Street**, **Laugharne**: Amended conversion of chapel into dwelling.
- Soar Chapel**, **Mynyddygarreg**, **Kidwelly**: Alterations and change of use to a dwelling.
- Ebenezer Baptist Chapel**, **Crane Street**, **Cefn Mawr**: Recently sold.
- Salvation Army Citadel**, **Coed Poeth**, **Wrexham**: Closed and sold for conversion to dwelling.
- Salvation Army Citadel**, **Cefn Mawr**, **Wrexham** : Closed October 2004; for sale on the market.
- Black Park Methodist Chapel**, **Chirk**: Threatened with closure but actively seeking support (www.blackparkchapel.org.uk). This is a colliery chapel built by miners at their own expense.

List 2

Copies of plans and other information were available in the following cases so CAPEL was able to examine and comment on the proposals.

Gwern-y-Nant Presbyterian Chapel, Llansantffraid: Sympathetic conversion to dwelling involving lowering of ground floor and lengthening of three windows.

Former Wesleyan Chapel, Perrots Road Haverfordwest, (currently antiques store and showroom): Conversion proposed to 8 residential flats with demolition of link building. Retention of link building suggested for access and amenities.

Capel Moriah, Dolwyddelan (Grade II listed): Good conversion into 2 residential accommodation units.

Capel yr Annibynwyr, Abergynolwyn, Gwynedd: Sympathetic conversion into 2 dwellings with reservations about the treatment of the Rose Window and upvc fenestration.

Glanaber Chapel and Chapel House, Llanuwchllyn : Revised proposal for demolition and construction of 2 residential units. No local support for conversion of the chapel.

Capel Bach Llanbedr, Gwynedd : Satisfactory proposal for change of use to one bedroom dwelling.

Elim Pentecostal Church, Colwyn Bay: Sympathetic conversion to 12 apartments which preserves the integrity of the Church.

Capel Hermon, Llanerch Road East, Rhos on Sea: Demolition of existing chapel and construction of new chapel and 8 residential flats. Plans proposed by Chapel Trustees.

News of Chapels

William Williams Pantycelyn Memorial Chapel Llandoverly: The financial target for renovation set for December 2004 has been achieved and the work is now being planned.

Cefn Bychan Baptist Chapel, Newbridge, Wrexham (Listed): The gravestones illegally removed from the burial ground have been returned but the chapel and burial ground remain in a state of neglect.

Making Chapels Accessible

This article will very briefly discuss whether and why chapels in Wales might become more accessible to visitors; what the problems are, and how these might be addressed; and some ways in which chapels might participate in tourism. It will be clear that it is written by an 'outsider'. I am (wearing one hat) an Anglican churchwarden, who, though sympathetic to the chapel tradition, was not brought up in it. so mistakes of perception may well be made, for which I apologise in advance. Wearing another hat, I have been much concerned in recent years with 'church tourism', both as Church Tourism Consultant to the Diocese of Lincoln and as Secretary of the Lincolnshire Old Churches Trust during 1988-92, and latterly as the writer of tourism pamphlets including places of worship, particularly in North-East Wales.

One of these pamphlets, about the 'Sacred Places' of Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham (2002) included places of worship from prehistoric stone circles via mediaeval monasteries and pilgrim shrines to Victorian 'showpiece churches'. What it did *not* include were any of the region's many fine chapels, basically because none of those approached for inclusion were willing to commit to being open to visitors outside service times. I have encountered similar problems elsewhere in Wales and England. In Lincolnshire, for example, very few chapels were prepared to take up the grants available from the county trust to all Christian places of worship, seemingly because they could not fulfill the 'public access' condition which the trust rigidly enforced.

I have therefore formed the view that, on the whole, chapels have no tradition of opening to visitors outside service times. Indeed many cannot see why people should wish to visit if not for worship, or do not regard their buildings as interesting or attractive in themselves - even when, as so frequently, they are. For whatever reason, it is quite certain that proportionally far fewer chapels than churches are open to visitors, or take part in 'church tourism' schemes.

Should this situation be remedied? and if so, why? First, there is the sordid but necessary question of finance. Increasingly and understandably, the

bodies which provide much-needed grants are insisting that places of worship in receipt of public funds are accessible to visitors. Cadw, for example, currently requires that *Reasonable access to members of the public, outside normal church hours, must be permitted on request. Notice of such arrangements should be displayed in the porch or nearby.* This condition is comparatively mild compared with the more exacting access requirements for chapels willing to receive Heritage Lottery Fund grants, or across the border in England., where a new English Heritage Grant condition will soon insist on *free regular access to your place of worship for a minimum of six hours a day, outside service times, on at least 28 days per year, and at other times by appointment or through a key holder.*

Where chapels do not receive public funds, the degree of access is theoretically up to them. But congregations might well consider the following points: an almost permanently locked chapel is in public perception effectively 'dead', and may actually attract more vandalism than an accessible one. Nor is it the case that locking a chapel makes it 'safe'; the belief that it does is a dangerous myth, because thieves or vandals breaking into a locked chapel may cause more expensive damage than if the building were open. Locked chapels are also a very poor advertisement for Christian mission; and they may well be missing out not only on the financial benefits that visitors can bring, but also on the opportunity to increase their congregations. In this increasingly 'unchurched' and 'unchapelled' age it must be recognised that an appreciable number of people of good will are unused to (and sometimes actually frightened of) entering any Christian building for any reason at all. Entering as a tourist could be the first step towards entering for prayer of worship.

What are the problems involved in making chapels more accessible to visitors? First, the notion (or excuse?) that insurance companies discourage visitor access must be firmly dispelled. The Ecclesiastical Insurance Group, among others, actively encourages the daytime opening of places of worship, both for those who wish to pray and for tourists and other visitors, while suggesting a number of sensible ways whereby the risks involved can be minimised. These include the discouragement of opportunist thieves - far more common than determined professionals, against whom there is

regrettably little possible defence - by such means as photographing and indelibly marking movables, and displaying notices announcing that this is done; by fixing movables where feasible to a wall or floor by a chain; or by linking valuables to noise-making devices, like the cheap but effective 'Artguard' products. Perhaps the most effective defence against theft, however, is to secure valuables in a 'fortified' vestry or similar, preferably without easy access (for instance by a window) from outside. This can be done both when a chapel is open and unstaffed and when it is locked for the night. Whether or not a chapel is open, precautions also need to be taken against the far greater hazard of arson - such as by never leaving matches, candles or fuel visible or accessible, for example in an easily burgled shed. But the best defence of all against theft, arson or vandalism is of course *people*. Members of the congregation and non-congregational well-wishers (such as dog-walkers) should be encouraged to 'keep an eye' on the building, or, if the chapel is open, to call in when passing - though not of course at rigidly regular times, which negates the precaution.

People and partnerships are likewise the key to successful and safe chapel access. In an ideal world an open chapel would always be 'staffed' by 'welcomers', in pairs or trios for company as well as security. For many if not most chapels, however, this is an impossible dream, even if non-members of the congregation can be recruited to help - as happens in a number of churches known to me, including my own. Other alternatives include leaving the chapel open but unstaffed by day, with 'custodians' calling in when they can: or locking the building but displaying a notice stating where the key can be borrowed. Insurance firms understandably recommend that keys be kept in nearby shops, garages etc., rather than with private individuals, but in many parts of rural Wales there are no such premises anywhere nearby. Most minimalist of all is 'entry by advance appointment' - effectively limiting access to determined and literate cognoscenti with time on their hands. But even this is better than no access at all.

Another way of allowing access to chapels which lack people for staffing is to establish a 'partnership'. This might for instance be with the tourism department of the local authority - not perhaps an obvious ally. But tourism concerns are increasingly anxious to proclaim all their region's attractions,

and in some areas have already established 'networks' of supported places of worship, often linked by publicised 'trails'. Alternatively, keeping it in the family, area partnerships of chapels allow custodians to be pooled and each building to open in rotation. More ecumenical local partnerships between denominations can also work well; at Brant Broughton in Lincolnshire a mediaeval Anglican church, two chapels and a Friends' Meeting House even attracted coach tours, taking it in turns to provide teas. By universal agreement, the Methodist teas were much the best.

Charles Kightly

For more information on existing church and chapel tourism in Wales, contact Church Tourism Network Wales; Website www.ctnw.fsnet.co.uk or phone 029 2071 0014

Cefn Mawr

CAPEL has been consulted about the Conservation Area in Cefn Mawr, near Wrexham, designated in November 2004. The secretary has subsequently visited the Area which includes some chapels, although only two of these still function as religious centres today. In its heyday Cefn Mawr was a settlement for the workers in the local collieries, quarries, foundries and potteries and later in the tile and chemical industries. The town was built on several tiers around the central quarry. The narrow, curving streets, steep labyrinthine pathways and steps and sandstone walls create a unique landscape at the eastern gateway to the Vale of Llangollen, with the River Dee below and Ruabon Mountain behind. Remnants of its former industries are evident in the iron railings and balcony details and the terracotta ornamentation on the buildings.

Nonconformity had reached this area by 1646 after Morgan Llwyd had established a community in Wrexham. In 1653 he sent two members to visit George Fox at Swarthmore and one of these, John ap John, became supposedly the first Welsh Quaker. He gathered others around him and they founded what must have been one of the first Quaker gatherings in Wales near his home at Cefn. A former purpose-built Quaker Meeting House (ca.1703)* still stands nearby on the Newbridge Road, but is outside the Area. It is hoped, however, that the conservation plan which CAPEL has supported,

will afford protection to the remaining chapel buildings in the village which are all unlisted. It should encourage the residents in this picturesque site to preserve and enhance its remarkable character.

*This appears to be the earliest purpose-built Meeting House still extant in Wales. Do any of our members have additional information?

The following extract from an article by a member of the local history group gives a flavour of Cefn Mawr's special contribution to life in this area. It is also a story typical of the rise and decline of so many Welsh industrial settlements.

Cefn Mawr Industries and Chapels

At the time of the dissolution of the monasteries, when nearby Valle Crucis Abbey was plundered, Cefn Mawr was uninhabited and rough common land. What population there was dwelt along the banks of the River Dee, from Pontcysyllte to Nantbelan. With the discovery of stone, coal, iron and clay, Cefn grew rapidly to be one of the largest industrial villages in North Wales.

In Liverpool, the Free Library and Museum, the Walker Art Gallery and St. George's Hall are built of Cefn stone, as is Bangor University and, of course, the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and the viaduct.

J.C. Edwards terracotta mouldings and encaustic tiles decorate buildings throughout the country, even in London, and in 1854 George Borrow described the sight of the furnaces of the New British Ironworks at night as being like Ellis Wynn's Vision of Hell!

The chapels sprang up with the industrial development and were very influential in the villages. Before the advent of state schools, there were some inexpensive private schools, but the majority of children learned to read and write in Welsh in the Welsh Sunday Schools. Chapels also organised a great deal of musical activity from substantial orchestral performances to children's musicals. They encouraged musical talent and raised money to send singers to the Royal College of Music. They held eisteddfodau (Walford Davies, the composer, won a prize at the age of 12 for playing the violin in Seion Eisteddfod, actually held in Tabernacle). The chapels also supported Friendly

Societies which helped pay for funerals and other social needs and they often provided leaders in local politics. My great-grandfather, William Jones, a deacon in Tabernacle, once prepared a speech in his notebook on the problems of Bosnia-Herzegovina!

One by one the industries declined, including the Monsanto Chemical Works (now Flexys), founded by the German Robert Graesser, who came to Cefn in 1867. The only substantial factory remaining is Air Products, which is on the site of the New British Ironworks. Cefn shopping centre has also declined, both cinemas closed years ago and few of the many chapels remain. I was brought up and baptised in Tabernacle during World War II when it was flourishing, with large congregations and over 100 in the Sunday School.

In recent years, Tabernacle and Seion Baptist chapels have joined together and meet in a re-vamped Tabernacle Vestry, Bethania Welsh Baptist Chapel still exists in Acrefair, Hill Street Congregational Chapel in Cefn and the Methodist Chapel in Rhosymedre. These three villages are all part of the same parish. The Salvation Army in Cefn closed in October 2004.

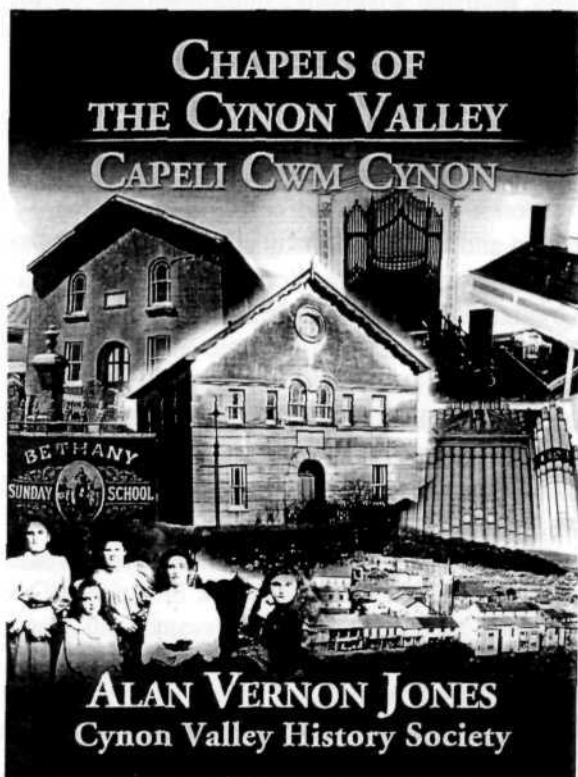
Mair Davies Jones

Book Review

Alan Vernon Jones, *Chapels of the Cynon Valley: Capeli Cwm Cynon*, (Cynon Valley History Society, 2004) xiv+425 pp.
ISBN 0 9531076 1 2 £20.00.

This is a remarkable book, probably a unique one; remarkable as an ambitious and successful undertaking, and unique in that I doubt if any community in Wales (and perhaps elsewhere) has such a comprehensive visual and written record of its nonconformist heritage. In a series of chapters the author relates the history of 'nonconformity and Dissent in the Cynon valley 1642 to 1920' and he follows this with chapters on the architecture of the chapels, their internal and external features, a description of the 'way of life' of their congregations, their recreations and entertainments, in times of growth, revival and decline, all illustrated by an extraordinary collection of historical photographs. The 'historical' chapter is, perhaps, the least

satisfactory of these as the story cannot be condensed into a single chapter without tighter editing but it gives the necessary context to the whole book.



The author is more comfortable in the other chapters. He succeeds in presenting a general account of the styles of chapel building at various periods throughout the 19th century and of the ornamentation and decoration of chapels and then relates these features to specific examples in the Cynon valley so that the reader is able to place the local in the appropriate wider context; similarly, the social roles of chapel life are seen to be local manifestations of general tendencies. In other words, the book is

a fine example of how local history, in spite of its primary appeal to a particular locality, nevertheless has general application and is of interest outside its own area.

But although these valuable discussions occupy chapters 2-9 (chapter 10 is a collection of 'tales, poems and facts'), they are, together, only some 20 pages longer than chapter 1, modestly entitled 'chapel histories, drawings and photographs'. This chapter, 180 pages, is the heart of the book, a labour of love, diligently, professionally and effectively carried out over a period of 20 years. It is a gazetteer listing 180 chapels in the valley from Ynysybwl to Penderyn. Each has a reference number and they are described in detail by

name, denomination, location, date, brief history (including some ministers and other personalities), architectural history (including, where possible, internal and external features, architect, builder, costs) and current use and condition. There are photographs of every chapel, line drawings of their frontage and accurate floor plans. These descriptions are supplemented by five sections of colour photographs of buildings, reproductions of early paintings of chapels, interiors, exteriors, artefacts, ranging from ceilings to clocks, organs to pews, pulpits to pillars, memorial stones, name plaques, iron work, banners and crockery - in all, an astonishing wealth of illustrative material to which the reader can turn, thanks to the effective cross-referencing and indexing which are a feature of the book. Underlying the work are some 2300 photographs in the author's collection and about 330 drawings and maps, many of which derive from drawings held by local authority planning departments while others are the result of surveys carried out in 1978-80 under a Mid-Glamorgan Job Creation scheme. The author, as a chartered surveyor, is ideally placed to evaluate the accuracy of the work and to make his own comments confidently. Much of the information in the descriptions is brought together in the appendices and in valuable lists of builders and architects.

Chapels of the Cynon Valley is in the best tradition of local history where accurate observation in the field is supported on the one hand by local knowledge and on the other by extensive written and published sources (as evidenced in the Bibliography). In many respects the book makes sombre reading as A.V.Jones notes the fate of all 180 chapels, those demolished, converted, vacant (but often vandalised) and those in use (generally by dwindling congregations). The work has been completed 'just in time'; for the future the task will be recording and conservation. Members of CAPEL need no reminding that the situation in the Cynon valley is being experienced throughout Wales and it is to be hoped that this splendid book will inspire similar ambitious projects elsewhere.

In a study of such scope a few factual errors and points of contention are inevitable, e.g. Bethania Aberdare and Bethania Mountain Ash are sometimes confused, Arwel Hughes is the composer of 'Tydi a roddaist', the nomenclature of the nonconformist denominations is not always clear; I would have preferred local chapel names to be distinguished from those with biblical names, and for the latter to have fuller biblical references so that their

significance for the congregations to be appreciated. In some cases the equivalence of Welsh-English names is not underlined, e.g. Bethania and Bethany, Libanus as the Welsh for Lebanon - all quibbles that in no way detract from the value of this important work. The Cynon Valley History Society is to be congratulated on this publication; and the author has been well served by his printers, Gwasg Gomer, Llandysul, for the superb quality of the printing, design and colour reproductions. Most of all, thanks are due to A.V.Jones for a book which is testimony to the devotion and commitment of a single individual, and which will be appreciated by all interested in our nonconformist heritage.

To end with a personal plea: the unusual lintel of Bethania Aberdare (p.95, p.236) MUST be preserved as one of the finest examples of chapel ornamentation and a striking development of the 'official' denominational badge.

Brynley F. Roberts
Aberystwyth

Cyfarfodydd i Ddod 2005/*Forthcoming Meetings 2005*

Fel y gwelwch yn y ffurflen gofrestru amgaeedig, cynhelir ein cyfarfod nesaf ar 14 Mai yn Llanidloes.

Fe gynhelir cyfarfod yr hydref a chyfarfod blynyddol 2005 ar ddydd Sadwrn, 15 Hydref, yn Rhuthun.

The next meeting, as you will see from the details on the enclosed enrolment form, will be held on 14 May at Llanidloes.

The Autumn visit and A.G.M. will be held in Ruthin on Saturday 15 October.

Traddodir Darlith CAPEL gan y Parch. Harri Parry yn yr Eisteddfod Genedlaethol yn y Felinheli ym Mhabell y Cymdeithasau am 3 o'r gloch dydd Mercher 3 Awst. Testun y ddarlith fydd 'Capel Newydd Nanhoron'.

The CAPEL lecture at this year's National Eisteddfod at Felinheli will be given by Rev Harri Parry on Wednesday, 3 August at 3 o'clock His subject will be 'Capel Newydd Nanhoron'. There will be simultaneous translation into English for those requiring it.