

# Capel



CYMRITHAS TREFTADAETH Y CAPELL  
THE CHAPELS HERITAGE SOCIETY

## The Chapels of Colwyn Bay

Cylchlythyr 51 Gwanwyn 2008

Newsletter 51 Spring 2008

We had an excellent turnout for our autumn meeting in Colwyn Bay with an attendance of well over 40. We met in the imposing building that is now St. John's Uniting Church. The church was opened in 1888 and is the last and most splendid in a series of English Wesleyan Methodist chapels that were built to serve the North Wales coastal resorts. It benefited from the Watering Places Fund to build Wesleyan seaside chapels which was created by the eminent Methodist minister, the Rev. Dr Morley Punshon. St. John's was also a product of the missionary zeal of the Rev. Frederick Payne, who was based in Rhyl from 1879. With its generous proportions and handsome spire it is easy to see why St. John's has been called 'the Cathedral of Methodism on the coast'. From without and within it is clearly a building on which money was lavished and which displays the wealth and confidence of Wesleyanism in the late nineteenth century.

In the morning we assembled in the schoolroom for coffee and then heard a very interesting and informative talk by Mr David Rigby, Principal Planning Officer and Conservation Architect to Conwy County Council. Based on his wide

experience of chapel conversions and grant applications he was able to give us a great deal of information about the planning process and the associated regulations which govern the activities of local authorities. The comments and questions which followed his talk showed members' lively interest in the topic.



*St. John's, Colwyn Bay*

We then moved into the church to hear an excellent short talk on St. John's by Mr Colin Williams. He outlined the enormous efforts of Frederick Payne and others in the 1880s to raise the large sums of money needed for the church. Indeed, during its building it was referred to by some local inhabitants as "Wesley's folly" because the plans seemed so ambitious. Even when the church itself was built the Trustees continued to plan for further expansion and in 1907-8 the schoolroom was extended to add another wing to provide a ladies' parlour and kitchen. Many great names have spoken in St. John's. The speaker recalled a notable occasion in the 1960s when Gladys Aylward preached here to 700 people, with the congregation overflowing from the church into the schoolroom. St. John's has always enjoyed close links with the two local Methodist schools which are now joined as Rydal Penrhos. In recent years the church has been joined by members of the former URC-Baptist Union Church and is now known as St. John's Uniting Church.

After lunch in the Hopeside Hotel we went on a walking tour of local chapels. Our first visit was to Horeb Welsh Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, where we were welcomed by the Rev. Ifor Jones. Horeb dates from 1900, though Welsh Wesleyan Methodism was established in the area at Bronynant as early as 1809, only nine years after the first Welsh-speaking Wesleyan missionaries were sent to Wales by the British Wesleyan Conference.

Our next stop was the chapel originally known as Capel Salem but now named Antioch. Built as a Welsh Independent chapel in 1885 and altered or rebuilt in 1903, it was sold in 2004 to an Independent Church Fellowship who have done much work on the fabric of the building. The interior of the chapel has

been radically rearranged to suit their more informal style of worship. The ground floor pews have been removed and the Sêr Fawr now stands at the back of the church (though it can still be moved if need arises). The organ has been taken out, with only the display pipes retained. The lay pastor, Mr Peter Levers, spoke enthusiastically about the congregation's vision for the building and answered a string of questions.

Tabernacl Welsh Baptist chapel was built in 1888. The architect was S. Colwyn Foulkes whose father T. Foulkes built St. John's. As well as hearing about the church from the Rev. R. Gwilym Hughes, we had an opportunity to hear the fine Rushworth and Draper organ which was installed in 1937. One unusual piece of history associated with the chapel is that the first minister, the Rev. William Hughes, had been a missionary in the Congo. During his time at Tabernacl he founded the Congo Training Institute which continued until 1912 and provided education for some 87 young people from Africa.

Our final visit was to the English Presbyterian Church. This striking red brick chapel with its octagonal spirelet was opened in 1891. We were welcomed to the building by the Rev. Glenys Gough Hughes who spoke about its history and, after we had looked round the building, a much appreciated chapel tea was served in the modernised schoolroom.

This was a day full of interest with plenty that was worth seeing and hearing about. We are extremely grateful to our Treasurer, Mr Richard Thomas, for organising the day so thoughtfully and efficiently. On a sad note, members who were present for the morning session will be very sorry to hear of the death of our speaker, David Rigby in February 2008.

# 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 information were not available to CAPEL. Written comments were not submitted to the relevant Planning Authority. Both lists cover the period from August 2007 to the end of February 2008. Grid references are included when possible.

- Ebenezer Church, Pont y Gof, Ebbw Vale (Listed): Conversion of vestry area into small residential dwelling.
- Zion Chapel, Llanwnog, Caersws, Powys: Conversion of chapel into a dwelling.
- Towyn Methodist Church, Towyn, Abergele (GR 97239 79393): Site will be used for temporary (12 months) storage of caravans/motor homes. The chapel itself will not be used and remains closed.

## *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. Norman Chang made detailed comments on the proposal for Zion Baptist Chapel, Kilgetty which was included in the previous list.

- Capel Cefn Berain, Llanefydd, Denbigh (GR 99927 69302): Extension to the chapel for Sunday School and community use, with kitchen and WC. A nice extension with materials matching the existing chapel. (Plans revised after inclusion on the previous list).
- Capel Siloh, Bryn Coed Ifor, Rhydymain, Dolgellau (Listed?): Very sympathetic conversion into a dwelling, the main changes/alterations are confined to the rear gable.
- Tŷ Capel Moriah and Associated Structures, Glan Conwy, Colwyn Bay (GR 82748 75051): Demolition of the existing chapel and accommodation and erection of a replacement dwelling. No alternative use has been proposed and this redevelopment is deemed inevitable.
- URC, Rhos on Sea, Colwyn Bay (Grade II Listed) (GR 84096 80816): Part demolition, alterations and extensions to the church. Contemporary style extension with reuse of materials and matching wall finishes. Includes new servery, toilets and chair lift.
- Capel Bethel, Melin-y-Coed, Llanrwst, Conwy (Grade II Listed) (GR 81491

60502): Demolition of existing extension and erection of new kitchen and WC with disabled access. Little impact on the main elevation and a real enhancement of the building and its facilities.

- CM Chapel, Aberffwd, Aberystwyth (GR 268602 278843): Conversion of chapel interior into studio workshop. Sympathetic proposal which has local support and is welcomed as a way of saving the chapel building.
- English Presbyterian Church, Llandudno, Conwy (GR 79309 77997): Erection of disabled ramp and steps to the front, a disabled ramp to the rear of the chapel and provision of a disabled WC. Much improved access to a well used building.
- Zion Baptist Chapel, Begelly, Kilgetty (Grade II Listed) (GR 211818 207597): Conversion into a dwelling – included in the previous List. Norman Chang has now made comments on the proposed floor slab and its relation to the window reveals. The change of window design is inappropriate and possibly impractical. A conservation “statement of significance” of the chapel was not provided and would have been expected.
- Capel Hermon, Dinas Mawddwy, Gwynedd (GR 284408 315974): Conversion and extension of a remote and dilapidated chapel into a dwelling. The retention of the chimney structure was suggested. A good outcome for this chapel.
- Bryn Seion Chapel, Pentre Broughton, Wrexham (Grade II Listed): Reinstatement of a fine 1860’s Neoclassical chapel and further conversion into 3 residential units. Welcomed as a way to save a prominently sited but burnt and vandalised chapel.
- Horeb Chapel, Dyffryn Ardudwy, Gwynedd (Grade II Listed) (GR 258806 323224): Creation of a disabled WC with a ramp, new front doors and other improvements to the fabric of the chapel. Chapel welcomes these improvements.
- Old Chapel, Chapel Square, Blaina, Ebbw Vale: Restoration of the chapel and conversion into a dwelling is proposed. A satisfactory alternative to the original proposal to demolish the chapel.
- Tan y Celyn Chapel, Maenan, Conwy (GR 78163 67500): Change of use of a small wayside chapel beside the A470, into holiday accommodation. Assuming that no external alterations are permitted this is welcomed as a way of retaining this building. This is a revised proposal.
- Brake Chapel, Moss, Wrexham (GR 330559 353522): The proposal is to demolish the existing chapel and erect 4 residential dwellings. This is an unusual and large chapel which has escaped Listing. Chapel has opposed demolition and suggested conversion via a Housing Association.

# News of chapels

- Former Alpha Chapel (URC), Greenfield, Holywell, Flintshire (GR 319469 377555): Capel has already opposed the demolition of this Gothic style chapel constructed with and featuring local materials (previous List 2). Norman Chang has now added his objections to the demolition. It would be replaced by a pair of semi-detached and one detached dwelling.
- English Methodist Church, Church Hall and Epworth Lodge, Bath Street, Rhyl (Grade II Listed): The church was built by C O Ellison in 1867-8, and has polygonal masonry with lancets and a "spiky" timber porch. The whole complex is for sale by informal tender in March 2008.
- Moreia (CM) Chapel and School Room, Llanfyllin, Powys and Rhos-y-Brithdir Chapel (4 miles from Llanfyllin) were for sale by auction in November 2007. Moreia was built in 1857 to the design of T G Williams, in brick with a dressed stone façade.
- Capel Bethania, Corris Uchaf, Machynlleth. This disused chapel, requiring repair and refurbishment, has been advertised for sale.
- Capel Bronant, Bronant, Nr Aberystwyth. This chapel was advertised for sale in October 2007 as being suitable for commercial, workshop or residential use.

## Cardiau Cyfarch Capel Capel Greetings Cards

Capel has ten very attractive designs of greeting card for sale. These include four of various Welsh chapels by Xia Lu and six of chapels in the Swansea area by Catherine Masterman. Each card is blank inside with a surface suitable for writing messages. Details of the chapel are given on the back of the card.



The cards cost 25p each. Capel members pay only a fixed charge of 40p for postage irrespective of the size of the order. Non-members are asked to pay the full cost of postage on receipt of the cards. Please send your order to:

Mrs Mary Madden, Hafren, Cae'r Gôg, Aberystwyth SY23 1ET

Tel 01970 617771 email: [madden.aber@btinternet.com](mailto:madden.aber@btinternet.com)

# How many chapels?

In April last year I represented Capel at a meeting of museum curators in Wales to look at the problem of what to do about chapel artefacts when chapels are closed. In preparation for the meeting I decided to try to make an estimate of how many chapels there are in Wales and at what rate they are closing. My findings are very provisional but I think they may be of interest to members of Capel. Indeed, I hope there are members of our society who are able to correct and amplify my findings in future issues of the Newsletter.

Anyone who looks at our towns and villages can see that chapels are declining rapidly in Wales. This is the inevitable result of the decline of Christianity in Wales as in many other European countries. The problem is particularly acute in Wales for two reasons. Firstly, too many chapels were built in the nineteenth century; in the second half of the century a mood of self-confident expansionism led each denomination to build or enlarge its chapels. Secondly, in many places - and especially in urban areas - each denomination erected separate chapels for Welsh- and English-speaking worshippers. It has been estimated that during the nineteenth century some 5,000-6,000 chapels were built in Wales.

## *How many chapels remain in current use?*

On the basis of the figures I have collected it appears that there are probably around 2,000-2,500 chapels currently functioning in Wales. I arrive at this figure from the statistics published or communicated to me by the major traditional denominations. The picture looks something like this:

Annibynwyr (Welsh Independents)	466
Baptists (Welsh and English)	400+
Methodists (Wesleyans)	
English-speaking	210*
Welsh-speaking	98
Presbyterians (Calvinistic Methodists)	
Welsh-speaking	562
English-speaking	183
United Reformed Church	123
Total	2042

\*English Methodists is an approximate figure. There are 233 congregations, but some do not meet in chapels.

To the above total would need to be added other groups who worship in chapels, including Unitarians, Independent Evangelicals and Pentecostals. The Unitarians have 22 chapels, but I do not have figures for the other groups.

In the light of all this a figure of 2,000-2,500 chapels in current use in Wales seems a reasonable assumption.

### *What is the rate of closure?*

For the last twenty years it has often been said that around one chapel per week is closing in Wales. This figure was regularly quoted by Capel in the 1980s and 1990s and is repeated by Anthony Jones in the 1996 edition of his book *Welsh Chapels*.

How reliable is the figure? So far as I can gather the average annual rate of closure for the years 2004-06 seems to be in the order of:

Annibynwyr	10
Baptists	9
Methodists (Wesleyans)	
English	5
Welsh	3
Presbyterians	
Welsh	15
English	5
United Reformed Church	?
Total	47+

This total of 47+ chapels per annum is very close to the often quoted figure of one per week. It is important to note, though, that not all the chapels that were closed ceased to operate as places of worship. Some were acquired by other Christian groups such as Independent Evangelical or Pentecostalist congregations. This would mean that the number of chapels ceasing to be used for Christian worship is actually less than the figure given above. On the other hand, it should be noted that the figure does not include chapels closed by Christian groups and congregations which are not part of the mainstream established denominations listed above.

One thing my research so far has shown quite clearly is that this kind of enquiry is fraught with problems and it is remarkably difficult to produce reliable figures. If anyone reading this can throw more light on the subject please write in to the Newsletter.

Lionel Madden

## **Autumn Newsletter / Cylchlythyr yr Hydref**

If you would like to publish an item in the next issue of the newsletter, it will need to reach the editor by Monday 17 August 2008.

Os hoffech gyhoeddi rhywbeth yn y rhifyn nesaf o'r cylchlythyr, bydd rhaid i'r eitem cyraedd y Golygydd erbyn Dydd Llun 17 Awst 2008.

# Uno Capeli Clydach

*Diolch i Hywel Davies, aelod Capel ac hefyd aelod o Gapel Annibynol Hebron, Clydach ger Abertawe, am y wybodaeth canlynol.*

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## Hebron, Clydach

Credir i achos Annibynol Hebron, Clydach, gael ei sefydlu ym 1809 dan adain Eglwys Mynyddbach - ond efallai daeth i fodolaeth mor gynnar a 1804. Yn y cyfnod cynharaf, cynhelid y cyrddau mewn tŷ o'r enw Pentremalwed ger Gamlas Abertawe ond ym 1821 codwyd capel at y pwrpas ar safle gyfagos. Oherwydd twf yr aelodaeth, aethpwyd ati ym 1848 i agor capel mwy o faint wrth ochr y brif ffordd i Abertawe, eto ond tafliad carreg o'r gamlas. Yn dilyn cynnydd pellach, codwyd capel newydd sbon ar yr un safle ym 1884 a dyna lle cynhaliwyd oedfaon a holl gyfarfodydd eraill Hebron hyd at y datgorffori ar Fawrth 12fed, 2008. Ym 1892, gadawodd grwp go sylweddol o aelodau i ddechrau achos newydd Carmel, Clydach - ac adeilad Carmel fydd lleoliad yr eglwys



*Capel Annibynol Hebron, Clydach*

unedig newydd - er o dan enw newydd.

Cafodd Capel Hebron ei ddatgorffori mewn oedfa am 7 o'r gloch ar nos Fercher, 12 Mawrth, gydag un o'n cynweinidogion - y Parch. Guto Prys ap Gwynfor - yn arwain yr oedfa.

## Yr Eglwys Unedig Newydd

Mae Capel Hebron yn dal yn weddol gryf, gyda dros 100 o aelodau, ond maent wedi arwain prosiect uno gyda dwy eglwys i greu eglwys newydd yng Nghapel Annibynol Carmel, sydd hefyd yng Nghlydach.

Y tair eglwys sy'n ffurfio'r eglwys unedig newydd yw Eglwys Bresbyteriaidd Salem, Faerdref; Capel Annibynol Hebron, a Capel Annibynol Carmel. Mae'r tair wedi cael eu datgorffori: datgorfforir Salem, Faerdref, ar Ddydd Mercher 5 Mawrth, a Charmel ar Ddydd Mercher 19 Mawrth. Cafwyd oedfa i greu'r eglwys newydd yn adeilad Capel Carmel am 10.30 ar fore Sul y Pasg, Mawrth 23, gyda'r Parch. Ddr Geraint Tudur, Ysgrifennydd Cyffredinol Undeb yr Annibynwyr Cymraeg, yn pregethu.

## Yr Organ yn Hebron

Rydym wedi cael asesiad o'r organ bib ardderchog Norman a Beard sydd gennym, a gafodd ei gosod yn y capel yn y 1960au yn dilyn tân (fe ddaeth o un o gapeli mawrion Caerdydd). Yn anffodus, mae'n rhy fawr i'w symud a'i gosod yng nghapel Carmel.

Caiff yr organ ei chwarae yn ystod



cyngerdd gan Gôr Tŷ Tawe yn Hebron ar nos Wener 18 Ebrill - sef, o bosib, yr achlysur olaf yn yr adeilad. Byddai dod o hyd i gartref iddi yn plesio pawb ohonom.

*This is an article on the creation of a new united church in Clydach, Swansea following the closure and unification of three chapels: Salem Presbyterian Church, Hebron Independent Chapel and Carmel Independent Chapel.*



*Yr oedfa Blygain olaf yn Hebron, Dydd Nadolig 2007*

## New Books / Llyfrau Newydd

Peter Brooks, *Eglwys y Bedyddwyr Salem Newydd Welsh Baptist Church (1877-1994) Glynrhedynog/Ferndale*. Cyhoeddwyd gan yr Awdur: Published by the Author, ISBN 978-0-9557858-0-1, 2008, 290 td./pp. £10 (Unrhyw elw i Gymorth Cristnogol: Any profits to Christian Aid)

Os bu llafur cariad ac arwydd o barch i fagwraeth erioed, dyna yw'r llyfr hwn gan Dr Peter Brooks, aelod o deulu sydd wedi bod yn gysylltiedig ag eglwys Salem Newydd Blaenllechau, cwm Rhondda Fach, tros bum cenhedlaeth. Ni ellir peidio ag ymglywed â chynhesrwydd teimladau diolchgar yr awdur a phawb a'i cynorthwyodd wrth inni ddarllen yr hanes hwn, ond er mai hanes achos yn dihoeni ac yn marw ydyw, mae'n cael ei adrodd yn onest ac yn fanwl heb rithyn o sentimentaleiddiwch. Y mae yma gryn ymchwil wrth i'r awdur gasglu defnyddiau hlaeth yn ddyfal – llyfrau cofnodion eithaf cyflawn o weithgareddau'r eglwys am gyfnodau maith, torion papurau newydd, rhaglenni a phosteri cyfarfodydd arbennig, llawer

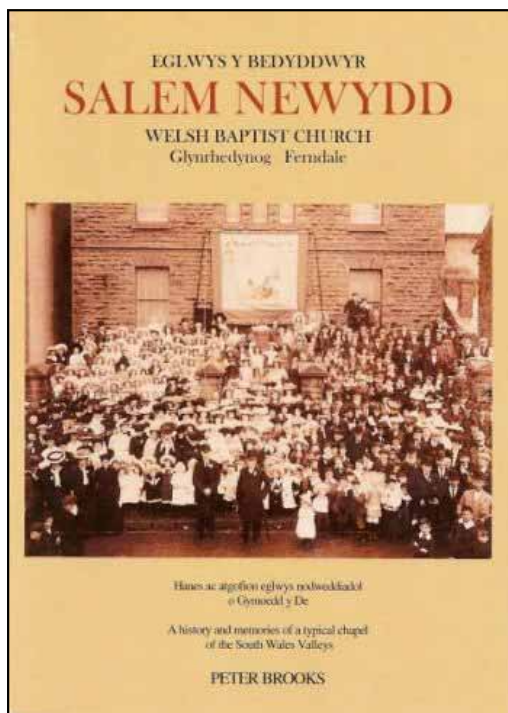
o ffotograffau a hefyd atgofion mwy nag un genhedlaeth o aelodau – a llwyddodd i osod trefn ar y cyfan yng nghyd-destun hanes cwm Rhondda a hanes ymneilltuaeth Gymraeg. Adroddir hanes dechreuadau cyntaf Salem Newydd (ac arwyddocâd yr enw) fel rhan o ddatblygu diwydiant ac ymsefydlu yn y Rhondda tua 1877, ac eir ymlaen i adrodd hanes y blynyddoedd o lwyddiant ac yna'r crebachu a'r newid iaith a fu nes i'r praidd bychan orfod ildio yn 1994. Mae yma ddisgrifiad o'r eglwys a'i bywyd ymhob cyfnod dan wahanol benawdau, megis yr adeilad ei hun, y dodrefn, y cofebau a'r addurniadau (agweddau a anghofir yn aml wrth ysgrifennu hanes capeli), yr ysgol Sul, y gweinidogion, trefn yr oedfaon, llywodraeth y capel a'r cyllid, caniadaeth (enwau cyfarwydd yw Dan Jones ac Arthur Duggan), y dathliadau, bywyd diwyllianol a chymdeithasol, gwaith dyngarol ac elusenol, a'r ystadegau aelodaeth a chasgliadau.

Adran ddadlennol a newydd (imi) yw honno sy'n sôn am gydweithio cydenwadol a'r amodau gofalus a oedd i

hynny. Nid yw Peter Brooks yn cymryd dim yn ganiataol o ran gwybodaeth ei ddarllenwyr ac nid oes dim yn rhy ddibwys iddo sôn amdano; dyna ran o gryfder y llyfr, oherwydd ni allwn dybied bellach fod hanes mewnlol capeli oes aur ymneilltuaeth Gymraeg (ac ar ôl hynny hyd y presennol yn wir) yn gyfarwydd i bawb heddiw.

The sub-title of this book is 'A history and memories of a typical chapel of the South Wales Valleys'. Peter Books has succeeded in describing in detail the life of a typical chapel in all its aspects, taking nothing for granted, however familiar it might be deemed to be, so that as well as being the story of a particular chapel it also serves as an exemplary history. This will be especially valuable for a generation which has seen only the decline and disappearance of Welsh nonconformity and which has not known its inner life. What is implicit in this account is the joys of the nonconformist society, the warmth of members to one another, the lively programme of cultural activities, and the democratic self-governance which created assured, eloquent leaders who took their lives seriously and were willing to acknowledge their own faults honestly, a picture which is a necessary antidote in an age when it is fashionable to denigrate the so-called 'narrow and hypocritical' characteristics of chapel life. The illustrations, some in colour, are particularly interesting and make their point more clearly than any words could. And as we look at the sheer numbers involved in these activities up to the mid-twentieth century, the speed of the decline in chapel life in Wales becomes even more remarkable.

The book is thoroughly bilingual and reads well in both English and Welsh. There is no reference to the designer of



the book or the printer but whoever they are, they deserve high praise for succeeding in the difficult task of presenting a balanced bilingual publication.

A few intriguing but irrelevant questions come to mind. How did the Sunday school banner get to be wrapped in the racing pages of the *Daily Express*? Is Glynrhedyngog really the Welsh name of Ferndale? Does IHS really mean In His Service? What sort of reception did Verdi's 'Requiem' and Elgar's 'Dream of Gerontius' have when they were first performed in nonconformist Wales?

Llyfr i fwynhau ei ddarllen yw hwn, fel, y mae'n amlwg, y mwynhaodd y awdur ei ysgrifennu.

Brynley F. Roberts

# Llwybrau Capeli / Chapel Trails

Bydd aelodau yn cofio bod Capel eisoes wedi cyhoeddi taflen gyda'r teitl *Darganfod Capeli yn Llandudno*. Erbyn hyn mae dwy daflen arall yn y wasg, sef *Darganfod Capeli yn Aberystwyth* a *Darganfod Capeli yn Llangollen*. Mae pob taflen yn disgrifio taith gerdded o gwmpas capeli'r dref ac yn cynnwys nodiadau a llun o bob capel. Paratowyd y taflenni gan aelodau o Capel.

Rydym yn awyddus iawn i gynhyrchu mwy o daflenni yn y gyfres. Os ydych yn fodlon i baratoi taflen ar gyfer eich tref a wnewch chi gysylltu â'r Ysgrifennydd neu'r Cadeirydd. Argreffir y taflenni mewn fersiynau Cymraeg a Saesneg. Os ysgrifennwch eich taflen mewn un iaith byddwn yn sicrhau cyfieithiad i'r iaith arall.

Bydd aelodau o Capel yn derbyn copïau o'r taflenni newydd.

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Members will remember that Capel has already published a leaflet entitled *Discovering Chapels in Llandudno*. Now, two further leaflets are in the press. These are *Discovering Chapels in Aberystwyth* and *Discovering Chapels in Llangollen*. Each of the leaflets describes a walk around chapels in the town and has notes and a picture of each chapel. The leaflets have been prepared by members of Capel.

We are very keen to produce further leaflets in this series. If you would be willing to prepare one for your town please contact the Secretary or Chairman. All leaflets are printed in English and Welsh versions. If you write your leaflet in one language we will ensure that it is translated into the other.

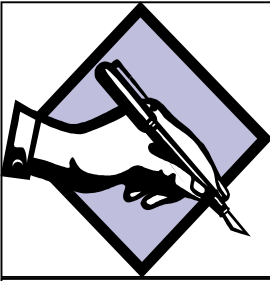
Members of Capel will receive copies of the new leaflets.

## Dyfodol Capeli The Future of Chapels

Am ryw reswm roedd y radio yng Nghymru yn dangos diddordeb sydyn mewn dyfodol capeli yn yr wythnosau cyn y Nadolig. Siaradodd y Cadeirydd ar Radio Cymru a Radio Wales am y nifer o gapeli sy'n cau ar hyn o bryd, y rhesymau am y sefyllfa ddifrifol, a beth sy'n digwydd i'r capeli ar ôl iddynt cael eu gwerthu.

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For some reason Welsh radio showed a sudden interest in the future of chapels in the weeks before Christmas. The Chairman spoke on Radio Cymru and Radio Wales about the number of chapels which are closing at present, the reasons for the serious situation, and what happens to the chapels after they are sold.



# Your Letters

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# Eich Ilythyron

If you have a question or comment for the Editor, the Capel officers or the membership in general, please write to Rhian Phillips, 11 Asgog Street, Cardiff CF24 2AR, e-mail [rhianphil@hotmail.com](mailto:rhianphil@hotmail.com)

Dear Editor,

Sheila Mason draws attention to a communion provision once common in Scotland and elsewhere [*Your Letters, Autumn Newsletter 2007*], particularly in Calvinistic churches where access to the table was closely guarded. I presume that it was generally administered by the minister and elders and regulated by the use of communion tokens.

A table such as that described is illustrated by Hay in his *Scottish Reformation Churches* (1957) from the former parish church in Newburn, Fife, converted to a house in 1970 and presumably the fittings destroyed. George Eyre Evans, *Midland Churches* (1899), referring to the former Presbyterian meeting-house in Alcester, Warwickshire, noted the communion pews 'with their quaint method of forming long narrow tables, by half folding over the backs of the seats' and I have illustrated, *Eastern England* (2002), a comparable example from a Strict Baptist chapel at Rishangles, Suffolk.

Alas all these have been lost by closure, conversion or a failure to value the variety which adds charm or

interest to so many of our churches and chapels.

Yours sincerely,  
Christopher Stell.

*Thank you for your interesting and informative response.*

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*A member of Capel, Marlise Cope, has been in contact regarding a recent exhibition of textiles by the artist Euryl Stevens. She writes,*

'[Ms Stevens] told me the inspiration for her *Salem* (pictured) was the work by Vosper in the Lady Lever Gallery... If you ever get a chance to see Euryl Stevens' work, it is great fun and well worth a detour'.



*'Salem' by Euryl Stevens*

# **Darlith yr Eisteddfod Genedlaethol**

## **National Eisteddfod Lecture**

Traddodir Darlith Capel fel arfer eleni yn yr Eisteddfod Genedlaethol yng Nghaerdydd. Rydym yn ffodus iawn fod yr hanesydd disglair, yr Athro John Gwynfor Jones wedi cytuno i roi'r ddarlith. Ei destun yw 'Gweinidogion y Ffydd ac Ymwybyddiaeth Ddinesig Gymreig yng Nghaerdydd c.1880-1939'.

Traddodir y ddarlith ym Mhabell y Cymdeithasau ar Ddydd Gwener 8 Awst 2008 am 12.00.

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The Capel lecture will be given as usual this year in the National Eisteddfod in Cardiff. We are very fortunate that the distinguished historian, Professor John Gwynfor Jones has agreed to give the lecture. His subject is 'Ministers of the Faith and Welsh Civic Consciousness in Cardiff c.1880-1939'.

The lecture will be delivered in the Societies Tent (Pabell y Cymdeithasau) on Friday 8 August 2008 at 12.00. As usual the lecture will be delivered in Welsh and a simultaneous translation service will be available.

# **Capel Events 2008**

## **Digwyddiadau Capel 2008**

The Spring Meeting of Capel will held on Saturday 10th May 2008 in Pembroke Dock. The meeting is being arranged by Mr Rob Scourfield.

Our Autumn Meeting in 2008, which will include the AGM, will be held in Newtown on Saturday 11th October. The meeting is being arranged by Mr Andrew Matthieson.

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Bydd Cyfarfod y Gwanwyn Capel yn cael i'w chynnal ar Ddydd Sadwrn 10fed Mai 2008 yn Doc Penfro. Mae'r cyfarfod yn cael i'w threfnu gan Mr Rob Scourfield.

Bydd Cyfarfod yr Hydref yn 2008, sydd am gynnwys y CCB, yn cael i'w chynnal yn y Drenewydd ar Ddydd Sadwrn 11eg Hydref. Mae'r cyfarfod yn cael i'w threfnu gan Mr Andrew Matthieson.

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## Capel Website Gwefan Capel

Don't forget to log on to the Capel website, [www.capeli.org.uk](http://www.capeli.org.uk), for all the latest information on the Society. The website features up-to-date news, details of forthcoming events, and Capel publications, including past issues of the Capel newsletter dating back to issue no.1 which appeared in March 1987.

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Peidiwch ag anghofio chwilio gwefan Capel, [www.capeli.org.uk](http://www.capeli.org.uk), ar gyfer yr holl wybodaeth diweddaraf ar y Gymdeithas. Mae'r gwefan yn cynnwys newyddion cyfoes, manylion digwyddiadau sydd i'w ddod, a cyhoeddiadau Capel, gan gynnwys cyn-rhifynnau o gylchlythyr Capel yn dyddio yn ol at rhifyn 1 a ymddangosodd ym Mawrth 1987.

# Gellionnen Chapel

**Most members of Capel will have heard and seen the distressing news reports of the attack upon Gellionnen Chapel in the Swansea Valley in March. Vandals threw paint on the walls and destroyed pews and a 12 feet tall window. They also demolished the old pulpit and caused havoc throughout the building.**

A chapel has stood on the site since 1692. The present building dates from 1802 but incorporates parts of the original building. The chapel has a fascinating history of worship in the dissenting tradition. It was originally established in 1692 to serve a group of 'Protestant Dissenters' but by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century had become Unitarian. Today it is an independent Free Church congregation.

The attack on Gellionnen is particularly upsetting as it appears to represent an act of sustained and unprovoked vandalism on a chapel which is of historical significance and is also still in use.

The chapel has set up a temporary website at <http://gellionnen.8m.com> to give up to date reports on the situation. Any communications to the chapel can be sent to [gellionnen@hotmail.com](mailto:gellionnen@hotmail.com)