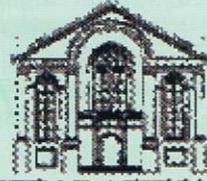


Capel



CYMBITHAS TREFTADAETH Y CAPEL
THE CHAPELS HERITAGE SOCIETY

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The Chapels of Fishguard



Our day in Fishguard began with coffee at Hermon Baptist Chapel. We were welcomed by the Revd. Councillor Margaret Stringer, and a group photograph was taken to mark the occasion. Revd. D. Carl Williams, minister of Hermon Baptist Chapel, then spoke on 'The Welsh Baptist Heritage in West Pembrokeshire'. He noted that South Pembrokeshire was a Puritan stronghold during the 17th century, but that the Restoration saw a harsh backlash with fierce persecution of nonconformists. In 1660, 11 Puritan ministers were expelled from the church in Pembrokeshire. One of these was William Jones of Cilmaenllwyd, Carmarthenshire. A pioneer of nonconformity in west Wales, he established Rhydwlwym Church, known as 'the mother church of west Wales'.

Revd. Williams noted that amongst the ministers who served at Rhydwlwym was John Jenkins, and under his guidance several branches of the church were formed, including one at Llangloffan, which became the mother church of the Baptist cause in south west Pembrokeshire. The fourth and strongest daughter church of Rhydwlwym,

services at Llangloffan began as early as 1690. The congregation began to meet in houses and then, as numbers grew, in the open air. Such services were often disrupted by the press gang, who forced many of the men attending to join the armed forces. In 1706 a chapel was built, which meant that Baptists in the locality would no longer have to make the journey to Rhydwylym to worship - a chapel which initially served some 20 parishes!

Revd. Williams stated that records of all baptisms and marriages which took place at Llangloffan, and all those members who joined the cause, still survive for the early period of 1748-1785. In 1748 and in 1791 the chapel was extended, and by the end of the 18th century it had over 700 members and was one of the most influential nonconformist churches in Wales. In 1784, the Baptist cause in Wales had 7058 members, 4348 of whom lived in the south west - this certainly made the area the largest Baptist stronghold in Britain, and Llangloffan the largest chapel of all.

Revd. Williams then spoke of Revd. Henry Davies, minister at Llangloffan during the late-18th century. He began preaching in 1775, and his ministry at Llangloffan was very powerful. Under him, 7 daughter churches were incorporated. The first 30 years of the 19th century were a golden era in the history of Baptists in the Fishguard area, and in Wales in general. Between 1800-1809, 7438 people were baptised; 1810-1819 saw 8839 baptised, and 1820-1831 saw a staggering 16,222 baptised. It was stated in the Methodist Recorder at the time that no other denomination in the UK thrived more vigorously than the Baptists. Revd. Williams conjectured that this was down to a strong denominational conviction and a deep spiritual conviction.

Revd. Williams then spoke on the history of Hermon Baptist Chapel. Built in 1778, it was initially known as Capel Pen Ucha'r Dref. In 1807 it was incorporated and took the name Hermon. Prior to the establishment of Hermon, Baptists from Fishguard worshipped at Rhydwylym, some 30 miles away, and later at Llangloffan. In c.1740, Enoch Francis of Newcastle Emlyn visited the town and preached in the open air, and later in the 18th century services were held at the homes of local residents Marged John David and Dafydd Bowen - the latter lived at Pen Ucha'r Dref, near the site where the chapel was later built. Revd. Williams went on to discuss the ministers who have served Hermon over the years, including William Jones and Dan Davies, and special events in the chapel's history. During the early-20th century the area was a Liberal stronghold, and the wedding of William George, brother of David Lloyd George, was held at Hermon. The Revival of 1904/05 led to an event known as 'Y Bedydd Mawr' - the great baptism. One morning in January 1905, 92 people were baptised in the River Gwaun in Lower Town in the presence of some 4500 worshippers from across Pembrokeshire. Hermon now has some 145 members and holds two services each Sunday.

Revd. Williams' fascinating talk was followed by a brief presentation by organist Mr John Hughes. He explained how organs had been ripped out of churches under the Puritans but that they began to make a comeback from the 1880s onwards. Most

Welsh chapel organs were bought second-hand from English churches and are therefore early to mid-19th century examples, with the organ at Hermon dating from c.1840. The rear section of the gallery and the organ were added in 1907 when the chapel was extended and a vestry built behind. Mr Hughes then played several pieces for us on the organ, and we were given the chance to view a selection of photographs from the chapel's collection.



Tabernacle Welsh Independent Chapel

Following a delicious lunch in the vestry at Hermon we proceeded on our tour of the town's chapels. Our first port of call was Tabernacle Welsh Independent Chapel. Tabernacle's wooden interior with carving along the gallery is quite striking, but we were informed by chapel officer Ken Owen that this wasn't in fact carved timber work, but plaster of paris. The interior was remodelled in 1924 when the organ chamber and rooms at the rear were added. Tabernacle opened on 7 May 1845, making it 165 years and a day old on our visit! Mr Owen then led us through the graveyard to view the gravestone of noted minister Revd. H. T. Jacob.

We then visited Pentowr Calvinistic Methodist Chapel, where Rob Scourfield spoke to us about the chapel. Pentowr was built in 1824 and renovated in 1889, when a porch and veranda were added. The architect was D. E. Thomas of Haverfordwest and the builder was W. Davies of Tenby, Rob's great great grandfather! The front of the chapel is unusual due to the original central roundel. Most chapels renovated at this time had the entrance moved to the gable end, but there was no room to do this at Pentowr. The chapel's origins date back to the days of Howell Harris, who visited Fishguard in 1739. He returned again in 1740 and during that year a congregation of some 40 people began meeting at Llan Farm in the Gwaun Valley. In 1759, the local congregation built their first chapel. By 1802 there were 80 members and the chapel was given permission to baptise and hold communion. The congregation had grown to 200 by 1810, and a daughter chapel was established in Goodwick in 1830. In 1901 a cemetery was purchased on the outskirts of the town and in 1905 a manse was built at Plas y Gron. During the period 1917-1938 J. T. Job, the winner of 3 chairs and the crown at the National Eisteddfod, served as minister. From 1955 onwards the chapel has shared a minister, and the manse was sold in 1990. The Sunday School closed in 1996, and Pentowr now has a small but faithful congregation.

We then proceeded to St. Mary's Church, an Anglican Church built along chapel lines with some significant stained glass, including two windows designed by John Petts

and installed during the 1980s. Richard Davies spoke about the Church. The vicar at the time of the building of the Church, Revd. William Rowlands, came from a dynasty of clerics, vicars and nonconformist ministers, and counted Daniel Rowlands amongst his ancestors. He placed great emphasis on the preaching of the word. The previous church at Fishguard had been a 'very mean structure', seating only 90. As the town grew and competition from the nonconformists increased, a larger church was needed. The original grand plans weren't quite within the means of the parish, therefore a smaller scale option was chosen. William Rowlands' low church tendencies were certainly reflected in the building, which has two side aisles as opposed to a central aisle, a baptistery at the front and a prominent pulpit. Such was its simplicity that William Rowlands' successor, Revd. R. Lloyd Lloyd, noted that on his arrival there were no ornaments in the church and his wife had to give up her wedding dress to make a frontal for the altar! Later vicars have each made efforts to make St. Mary's more 'church-like'.

Our final visit of the day was to Bethel English Baptist Church. Amanda Lawrence, the organist, spoke to us about the chapel, which has its origins in the causes at Rhydwlwym and Llangloffen. The increase in population in Fishguard during the early-20th century created demand for an English Baptist Church. In June 1905, 42 people, led by John H. John, began worshipping at the Temperance Hall, which is now the cinema near Bethel. On 6 August 1906 they held their first baptism in the River Gwaun, and that year D. P. Davies of Maerdy became the first minister. The congregation had identified a site for a chapel in 1905, and builder Daniel Thomas was employed to undertake the work at a cost of £1750. The vestry opened on 22 April 1908, and the opening services were held on the 28th and 29th of that same month.



Bethel English Baptist Church

Bethel is renowned for its strong Sunday School. In 1958, 120 children took part in the golden jubilee celebrations. In 1980, they joined with Bethesda, Goodwick, which later closed in 2000. After 10 years without a minister, in 2009 the chapel called Terry Broadhurst, who is shared with the chapel at nearby Thornton. Bethel has c.45 members and a small Sunday congregation, but this is swelled by visitors over the summer. The chapel has two vestries, one at the rear and another upstairs.

Our day at Fishguard then came to an end with a welcome chapel tea at Hermon Baptist Chapel. Our thanks must go to the members of Hermon who looked after us so well throughout the day, and also to Richard Davies for organising such an interesting visit - diolch yn fawr.

Chapels Reported to Capel

Building applications

- Former U.R.C, Colwyn Bay (Dance and Arts Centre): shopfront, ramp and external alterations. Sensitive scheme supported.
- Moriah Congregational, King St, Cerrigdrudion, Conwy: conversion to dental surgery. Support appropriate use subject to retention of a little interior detail and submission of photographic survey to RCAHMW.
- Rehoboth, Dyffryn Ardudwy, Snowdonia: conversion to two dwellings, external unaffected. Supported.
- Capel Talybont, Rhyd-uchaf, Snowdonia: internal alterations for community room, kitchen etc. Support subject to careful detailing of upper partition and internal window.
- Mission Hall, Caerleon, Newport (listed): conversion to dwelling (resubmission). Comments (support) as previously made.
- Caersalem, Llanddulas, Conwy: conversion to dwelling. Support subject to more sensitive detail to front windows - the proposed blank glazing and stained finish look inappropriate.
- Bethel, Llysfaen, Colwyn, Conwy: conversion to two residential units. Concern expressed re. detail of porches and prominence of rooflights. A single unit would seem more appropriate. Some internal detail should be incorporated and the interior recorded and photographs sent to the RCAHMW.
- Bwlch-y-ffridd Chapel, Newtown, Powys: conversion to dwelling. Support. Sensitive scheme. Would advocate retaining a little internal detail, and submission of internal photographic survey to RCAHMW.
- Capel Pen-y-menai, Llanfihangel-y-Pennant, Snowdonia: conversion to holiday unit. Very simple little chapel. While its retention is welcomed, the proposed extra windows (shown on elevation but not plan) are intrusive.

Closures / sales

- Llechryd Independent, Ceredigion. Closed March 2010.

- Gilgal Baptist, Pennar, Pembrokeshire. For sale June 2010
- Welsh Independent, Milford Road, Newtown, Powys. Closed September 2009 and to be offered for sale.

Welsh Chapel Names

One of the things I enjoy when travelling round Wales is looking at the names that have been given to chapels and wondering about why they were chosen. I thought it might be interesting to Capel members to list some of them. So far as I am aware there is no English-language guide to this subject, though Welsh readers will probably be familiar with the very useful and interesting book by J. Derfel Rees, *Ar Eu Talcennau: Enwau Capeli yng Nghymru* (Abertawe: Tŷ John Penry, 1981).

The great majority of Welsh chapel names are taken from the Bible and it is these I shall concentrate on here. They were usually chosen either because of the meaning of the name in the original language or because of some event in the Bible that is associated with the name. Many more names are taken from the Old Testament than the New Testament. This is mainly because the Old Testament is very much longer than the New Testament, but it also reminds us that the events of the Old Testament once played a very prominent part in the faith of chapel-goers who were steeped in its language and stories to an extent that few are today. For those who could read well the Bible provided a wide range of literature within a single volume. Those whose reading ability was limited were fed by the Bible stories that were told, often vividly and dramatically from the pulpit and in Sunday School.

Only the Unitarians did not choose biblical names for their chapels. All the other denominations regularly turned to the Bible when naming their chapels. I have tried to indicate the most likely reason why each name was chosen and have given references to the biblical passages which I think would have been in the minds of those who made the choice.

Some common names

Some names occur very frequently. Here are some obvious examples:

Bethel. This name was no doubt chosen because of its meaning. In Hebrew it means 'House of God'. So it is a natural name for a chapel. The most important reference to Bethel in the Old Testament is in Genesis 28 where Jacob dreams of a ladder set up from earth to heaven and hears God's promise to him. On waking Jacob calls the place Bethel and vows that he will serve God if he protects him on his journey.

Ebeneser, Ebenezer. This is another name chosen for its meaning. In Hebrew it means 'Stone of help'. 1 Samuel 7 tells how the Israelites defeated the Philistines. To mark the victory Samuel erected a stone which he named Ebenezer, saying 'Hitherto hath the Lord helped us'.

Jeriwsalem, Jerwsalem, Jerusalem. Other versions of the name which appear frequently on chapels are **Salem** and **Caersalem**. It was the capital city and the place where the Temple was situated. It was therefore seen as the place where God is especially present. The name Salem means 'peace' while Jerusalem is 'abode of peace'.

Penuel, Peniel. The name in Hebrew means 'face of God'. It was the place where Jacob wrestled with the angel. When the angel had blessed him 'Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved' (Genesis 32: 30).

Seilo, Siloh, Shiloh. A holy place, especially in the period following the occupation of the promised land by the Israelites when the tabernacle was pitched here. In 1 Samuel 1 Eli was priest here when Hannah made her vow that if her prayers for a son were answered she would dedicate him to God. Here, too, in 1 Samuel 3 the young Samuel heard God calling him.

Seion, Zion. Mount Zion was a hill by Jerusalem but it is often used poetically in the Bible to refer to the city itself. For example, 1 Kings 8: 1 speaks of 'the city of David, which is Zion'. Psalm 76: 2 says: 'In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place is Zion'.

Soar, Zoar. In Genesis 19 this was the small city in which God granted protection to Lot when he destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. No doubt Lot's plea would have seemed particularly appropriate to those naming a chapel: 'Oh let me escape thither and my soul there live'.

Tabernacl, Tabernacle. The Tabernacle erected by Moses in the wilderness is described in Exodus 25-27. At its heart was the Holy of Holies which was reserved as the dwelling place of God. Nobody could enter the Holy of Holies except the High Priest on the annual Day of Atonement. Here the Ark of the Covenant was kept. As the name for a chapel it indicates that this is the special place where God dwells. This is the idea in Ezekiel 37: 27 where God says of his chosen people: 'My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.'

Names of mountains

Chapels were often named after mountains in the Old Testament. I have already mentioned Zion. Here are some other examples:

Carmel. The mountain where, according to the story in 1 Kings 18, Elijah defeated the priests of Baal. A chapel so named was proclaiming that it worshipped the true God.

Gerizim. In Deuteronomy 11: 29 God commanded the Israelites to put a blessing on Mount Gerizim when they settled in the promised land. Presumably it was chosen as a chapel name because it indicated a place where blessing would be received.

Hermon. The name was probably chosen because of Psalm 133: 3 which refers to Hermon and the mountains of Zion where 'the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore'. Although the Bible does not state the name of the mountain it has often been suggested that the Transfiguration of Jesus took place on Mount Hermon.

Horeb. A holy mountain where people came face to face with God. Exodus 3: 1-6 narrates how Moses encountered God in a burning bush. According to Deuteronomy 4: 10-13 and Malachi 4: 4 it was on Horeb that God declared his covenant and proclaimed his law to Moses and the people. It was on Horeb that Elijah heard God in the 'still small voice' (1 Kings 19: 12).

Moreia, Moriah. The mountain where, in Genesis 22 God tested Abraham's faith by asking him to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice. Moriah was one of the hills on which Jerusalem stood and it was here that the temple was built (2 Chronicles 3: 1).

Nebo. In Deuteronomy 34: 1-5 Moses, in obedience to God's command, climbs Mount Nebo and sees the promised land immediately before he dies. For a chapel the name would indicate a place where the worshippers might gain a glimpse of heaven, the Christian's promised land.

Pisgah. This has the same significance as Nebo to which it was closely related. In Deuteronomy 3: 27-28 Moses tells the people how God allowed him to see the promised land from the top of Pisgah but told him that not he but Joshua would lead the Israelites into the land. Deuteronomy 34: 1 says that at the end of his life Moses went 'unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah'.

Tabor. Psalm 89: 12 says to God: 'Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name'. This is probably the inspiration for its use as a chapel name. In Judges 4: 6-14 Barak is told by God to go to Tabor and he will deliver Sisera into his hand, so there could also have been the suggestion that the chapel would be charged by God to defeat his enemies.

Dr Lionel Madden

Editor - this article will be concluded in the Spring 2011 edition of the Chapel Newsletter

Chapel Archives

When a chapel is threatened with closure, one simple action, costing next to nothing, can do much to preserve a record of the work of the chapel and what it stood for: to contact your local Archive Service (also known as county record office) and ensure that the records of the chapel pass into proper custody. Indeed, all chapels, even the most flourishing, are urged to take this action to preserve their older records.

The records of a chapel are likely to consist of some of the following:

- registers of baptisms (or births), marriages and burials
- registers or lists of members
- printed annual reports
- accounts
- trust deeds and trustees' minutes
- Sunday School records
- correspondence
- records of associated societies (e.g. literary societies, Band of Hope etc)
- programmes and brochures relating to chapel functions and activities
- pictures and photographs
- manuscript and / or printed histories of chapels

Many chapels have deposited records with their local Archive Service. Archive Services are always willing to receive chapel records, to call to collect them if need be, or to offer advice on suitable storage arrangements for such collections.

In general, local Archive Services are considered the most suitable place of deposit for chapel records, allowing them to be preserved near to the buildings which formerly housed them. With regard, however, to the Presbyterian Church of Wales (the Calvinistic Methodists), it should be noted that the policy since 1934 has been to centralise the archives of the denomination at the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth.

Once records are deposited, either with the local Archive Service or the National Library of Wales, they will be listed and made available for research. Any necessary conservation work to repair damaged volumes or paper documents could be undertaken, and archive staff will deal with any enquiries regarding chapel records deposited in their custody. Contact details for each Archive Service in Wales can be found on the Archives Wales website at www.archiveswales.org.uk/plan-your-visit/

Adapted from Capel Information Sheet No.2:
Chapel Records

Grant Funding for Two Welsh Chapels

The Welsh Assembly Government announced at the end of July that a total of £999,124 would be made available in grant funding to aid the restoration of historic buildings across Wales.

24 historic buildings will receive funds towards building work. Amongst the 24 are two chapels: Tabernacle Chapel, Morryston and Capel Peniel, Trefriw. The trustees of Tabernacle are planning to use the £100,000 which they have been allocated to repair the spire and the chapel's rear elevation. Capel Peniel has received a grant of £43,099 which will be used towards the repair of water damage.

Cardiau Nadolig Capel Christmas Cards



Capel has ten very attractive designs of Christmas card for sale, which are also available as greetings cards. These include four of various Welsh chapels by Xia Lu and six of chapels in the Swansea area by Catherine Masterman. 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.

Mae gan Capel deg cynllun deiniadol iawn o gardiau Nadolig ar werth, sydd hefyd ar gael fel cardiau cyfarch. Mae'r rhain yn cynnwys pedwar o amryw gapeli Cymreig gan Xia Lu a chwech o gapeli yn ardal Abertawe gan Catherine Masterman. Ceir manylion o'r capel ar gefn y cerdyn.

Cost y cardiau yw 25c yr un. Mae aelodau Capel yn talu pris gosodedig yn unig o 40c am gludiant. Gofynnir i'r rheini nad ydynt yn aelodau u dalu'r cost-cludiant yn llawn ar dderbyn y cardiau.



Please send your order to: / A fyddwch gystal a ddanfon eich archeb i: Rev / Y Parch. Peter Jennings, 5 Cuffnell Close, Lidell Park, Llandudno, LL30 1UX. Ffon: 01492 860449. E-mail: obadiah1@btinternet.com.

Darlith yr Eisteddfod Eisteddfod Lecture

Traddodwyd Darlith CAPEL yn yr Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Blaenau Gwent a Blaenau'r Cymoedd ar Ddydd Gwener 6 Awst gan Alwyn Harding Jones, y pensaer sydd wedi bod yn ymwneud â chadwraeth adeiladau yn broffesiynol ers dros 25 mlynedd.

Testun y ddarlith oedd ' Mwy na brics a morter: Gwarchod ac addasu ein capeli', a chadeirwyd y cyfarfod gan Meyrick Lloyd Davies, Cadeirydd y Gymdeithas. Dosberthir yn fuan fersiwn ddwy-ieithog o'r ddarlith i aelodau'r Gymdeithas.

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The CAPEL Lecture at the National Eisteddfod held at Ebbw Vale was delivered on Friday, 6 August by Alwyn Harding Jones, the architect who has been involved with building conservation in a professional capacity for over 25 years.

The subject of the lecture was ' More than bricks and mortar: conserving and adapting our chapels', and the meeting was chaired by Meyrick Lloyd Davies, Chairman of the Society. An English-language translation was available at the meeting, and a bilingual version of the lecture will be distributed shortly to members.

Dates for your Diary Dyddiadau i'w Nodi

Capel's Autumn Meeting for 2010 will take place in Wrexham on Saturday 9th October. Details of the programme for the day along with a booking form accompany this newsletter.

The Spring Meeting for 2011 will be held in Ammanford on Saturday 14th May.

Bydd Cyfarfod Hydref Capel ar gyfer 2010 yn cael i'w chynnal yn Wrecsam ar Ddydd Sadwrn 9fed Hydref. Ceir manylion rhaglen y dydd ynghyd a ffurflen bwcio gyda'r cylchlythyr yma.

Bydd Cyfarfod y Gwanwyn 2011 yn cael i'w chynnal yn Rhydaman ar Ddydd Sadwrn 14eg Mai.

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