

Addoldai Cymru

Welsh Religious Buildings Trust

Spring
Newsletter
2014

Historic religious buildings in crisis

Chapel closure and redundancy is nothing new, but all indications are that it will be rapidly increasing during the next 10 years or so. This will include the closure and disposal of some of our most cherished high quality and highly listed buildings, as the demographic profile of those communities that are currently supporting these buildings is ageing. It is not a problem that is going to go away quietly and resolve itself. It needs strategic intervention.

The Trust believes that a comprehensive review of the future of our historic religious buildings should be undertaken by Cadw, working towards a national strategy for Wales.

This strategy would include identifying buildings at risk, guidance for the alteration and conversion of buildings, and what measures need to be taken and resources provided to ensure not only the survival of our religious built heritage, but that it has a sustainable and successful future.

Thank you for your support - it is appreciated! We welcome local friends and supporters at all our various projects.



Yr Hen Gapel, Llwynrhydowen

Yr Hen Gapel, Llwynrhydowen: significant project progress

Yr Hen Gapel, Llwynrhydowen, the mother chapel of Welsh Unitarianism, and in the ownership of the Trust, is a significant grade II* listed building with a colourful history as the epicentre of a vibrant rural Unitarian community.

The Trust is very pleased to be able to report that it has been successful in its bid for funding from two of the main funding sources for our forthcoming project at Yr Hen Gapel. Grant offers have been made by the Heritage Lottery Fund for an Our Heritage Grant and from Visit Wales for a Digital Tourism Grant. Llandysul Community council have made a generous grant towards the project, and funding is also expected from Ceredigion County Council and Cadw.

This project will see an historically important and architecturally interesting building restored, along with the creation of a Unitarian Faith Trail linking it to its local daughter chapels and to other Unitarian chapels and their communities across Wales, including Capel Pen-rhiw (now re-erected in the St Fagans National History Museum in Cardiff) and Hen Dŷ Cwrdd (Trecynon), another chapel in the care of this Trust. As part of the project, the Trust will also work in partnership with the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales to develop an interactive and accessible web-based resource - a "Virtual Museum", telling the story of Nonconformity more generally, with the aim of widening participation and engagement with communities.



Huw Edwards addressing the Learned Society of Wales on Championing the Chapels. Photo: Celf Calon.

Huw Edwards ... a new patron

The Trustees are very pleased that Huw Edwards, chapel enthusiast, journalist and broadcaster, has agreed to become a patron of the Trust.

Huw Edwards has been a television journalist for 30 years. He presents BBC News at Ten, Britain's most-watched news programme, and combines his studio duties with global reporting assignments. His recent series *The Story of Wales* was the first television history of Wales for 25 years and has won several awards. He is a Vice-President of the National Churches Trust.

He is the author of *Capeli Llanelli Our Rich Heritage*, a very readable, thoughtful and meticulously researched book on the rise and fall of Llanelli's chapels. He is currently writing a book on the Welsh churches and chapels of London.

Huw Edwards believes that the importance of chapels in our national story needs to be properly recognised, and promoted as a positive story, "The chapels of Wales, those distinctive emblems of Welshness, need many more friends. . . They are all part of the story of Wales."

Major repairs at Libanus

The condition of Libanus chapel, the Trust's II* chapel, built in 1841, at Waunclyndaf near Llansadwrn Carmarthenshire has been a continuing cause for concern. The Trust has taken a major step forward by undertaking significant and important repairs, concentrating on the roof. The total cost of work was £103,490.

The work was undertaken by David A Siggery Ltd, under the supervision of Jonathan Harwood of Alwyn Jones Penseiri Architects. The main priority has been to repair the roof, and this first phase of work included re-slating the pitched roofs, renewing defective fascias, barges and soffits, and renewing the rainwater disposal system, together with localised consolidation of existing stone walls. The opportunity was also taken to undertake strengthening works to secure the ceiling structure while it was accessible. In addition, it was also possible to undertake drainage works for the disposal of rainwater.



Funding has come from Cadw, the Pilgrim Trust, Carmarthenshire County Council (Welsh Church Fund), The Vronhaul Llandinam Charity, the Manifold Trust, the E & G Morgan Trust, the Allchurches Trust and the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme. The Trust is very grateful to all funders. This first phase is being followed by window repairs and refurbishment during spring 2014. In due course further phases of work to the exterior and interior of the building will follow the roof and window repairs, including any suitable alterations, as funds allow.



Libanus builders

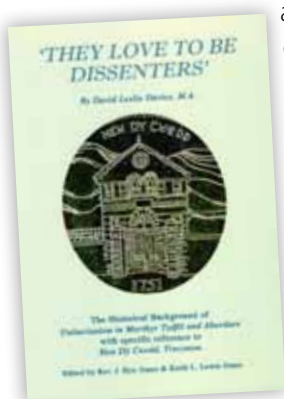
Who Built Libanus?

Whilst working on the roof and ceiling at Libanus, the names of those who originally built or repaired the chapel came to light, carved and written on the central roof truss king post. Carved in to the kingpost are the letters J R and the date (as on the front of the chapel) of 1841. The other name, in pencil, is harder to decipher – and seems to be M Moses (or possibly Thos) possibly of Llangadog. Any help appreciated!

Hen Dŷ Cwrdd HISTORY PUBLISHED

"They Love To Be Dissenters" - The Origins and History of Hen Dŷ Cwrdd, Aberdare, 1650-1862. – a book

about the history of the cause at Hen Dŷ Cwrdd by local historian David Leslie Davies M.A., was launched at Hen Dŷ Cwrdd during an Open Doors Day, September 2012.



Hen Dŷ Cwrdd (The Old Meeting House) is the oldest Nonconformist place of worship in the Aberdare district, established at Trecynon in 1751.

In this book – the first written about the chapel in English - David Leslie Davies traces the origins of the congregation to the mid-17th century and concentrates on its history thereafter until 1862, when the cottage-like meeting-house of 1751 was demolished and replaced by the present structure.

A Story of Dissent, Bethania "A Palace of the Oral Arts"

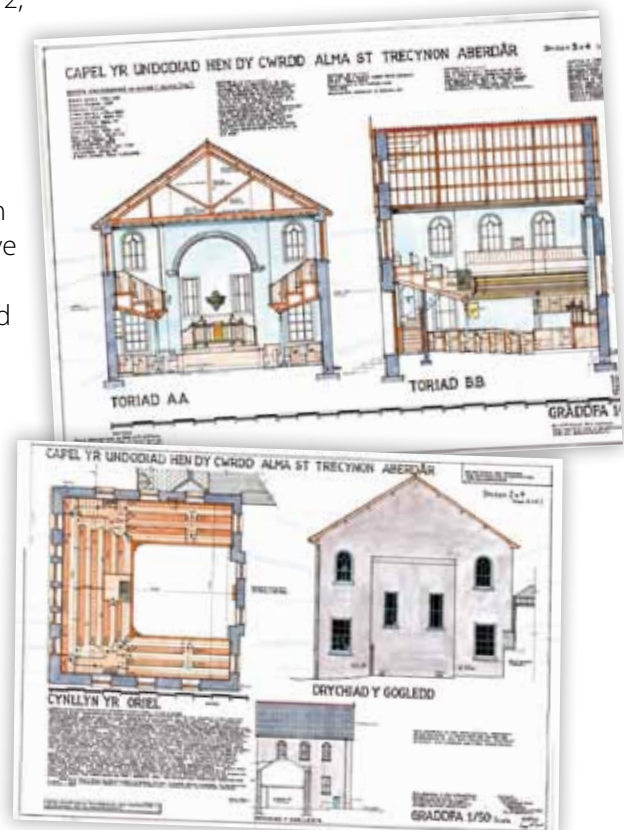
Our initial application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a Heritage Grant for Capel Bethania, Maesteg (Welsh Baptist, listed at grade II*), entitled A Story of Dissent, Bethania "A Palace of the Oral Arts", was submitted in June 2012. Unfortunately it was not successful. The application was augmented, revised and resubmitted in December 2012, with substantial assistance from the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales as project partners for the revised bid. This re-application was also unsuccessful. We have now further revised the bid, and have submitted a reduced application, splitting the project in to multiple phases.

Preparing these applications has entailed devoting a considerable amount of time and Trust resources to this project – especially by Christine Moore, our Development Officer. The Trust is very grateful to our architect Alwyn Jones Penseiri Architects and other professional advisers

for the time and effort that they have devoted to developing the application. Despite these setbacks, the Trustees are determined to proceed with this flagship project. If the bid is successful, development work will be undertaken during 2014-15 with capital works projected for 2015-16 and project completion in 2019.

Back to the DRAWING BOARD!

A volunteer has been busy at Hen Dŷ Cwrdd, undertaking a full measured survey of the building – and producing all the resulting drawings by hand and in ink. It took Chris King 27 visits and 134 hours of work to measure and record Hen Dŷ Cwrdd - and this is a small one as Welsh chapels go! Mr King does not use, or like, CAD or digital means. All his drawings are done with Rotring pens and old fashioned spring bows on heavy weight tracing paper. A laser hand held measure and laser level are his only concessions to the digital age.



How You Can Help Our Work

Addoldai Cymru / Welsh Religious Buildings Trust was established by Cadw in 1999 to take into its care some of the best examples of redundant non-Church in Wales religious buildings in Wales, for the benefit of local communities and future generations. It has a national role in promoting the understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the religious built-heritage of Wales.

From its beginnings, the Trust has benefitted greatly from an annual grant from Cadw towards its running costs, including insurance and basic maintenance of our portfolio of buildings. Unfortunately, this grant is not enough for the amount of work that is facing the Trust. The generosity of our supporters has never been more important to our work, and without such help our work will need to be curtailed. Support can take several forms:

Become a Friend today!

If you have not already done so, please join the Friends of Addoldai Cymru today. Your subscription will provide the Trust with a modest but very useful donation and you will receive an occasional newsletter about our work. Your membership will also help us to demonstrate that we have supporters across Wales and beyond. Membership is open to all and costs £10 a year:

a membership form and bank standing order form are enclosed with this newsletter. Alternatively, contact the Trust's office. To those of you who are already Friends – why not pass on the membership form to someone you think might be interested?

Make a Donation!

A donation, small or large, can be applied according to your wishes either to our work at a specific building, or to the general work of the Trust.

It can be made by sending a cheque, a standing order, or directly to our bank account **HSBC 40-16-02 31518097** (please provide a reference so that we identify your donation)

Add Gift Aid to your Donation!

If you pay UK income tax we can claim back an additional 25% of the value of your gift from HMRC, at no cost to you. Ask us for a form.

Charity-giving websites

The simplest way to donate is via one of the following charity-giving websites (they collect the Gift Aid on our behalf, which helps!): The best for us is BT's MyDonate at https://mydonate.bt.com/charities/addoldaicymru_welsh_religiousbuildingstrust which is BT's free online fundraising service that doesn't take any commission. We are also to be found on www.everyclick.com/addoldaicymru-wrbt-1084030 and www.thebiggive.org.uk.

Even simpler is GIVE AS YOU LIVE!



Another painless means of giving (i.e. at no cost to you) is to sign up to Give as You Live. If you shop online via the Give As You Live website (or via the browser plug-in) you will have access to over 3,000 retailers who participate in the scheme, many of which will be already familiar to you ... the range is huge. Under the scheme whenever you make an on-line purchase the retailer makes a donation - perhaps up to 6% - to your nominated charity, a sum which otherwise would be paid as a fee to a website or marketing company. This happens automatically at no cost to you, and Gift Aid can be added automatically too. Brilliant! You can sign up at www.giveasyoulive.com/join/addoldaicymru-wrbt-1084030

Consider Wales' religious built heritage when making your will

Only a very small percentage of those who support charities leave a gift in their will. If you are shortly writing or revising your will, after you have looked after your family and friends would you please consider leaving us a legacy to help us care for our collection of Wales' historic religious buildings? You can discuss this with your solicitor or confidentially with our Trust Manager.

All the above information is of course available on our website www.addoldaicymru.org where you can simply click through to the various options mentioned.

The Trust receives grant aid from Cadw, the Welsh Government's historic environment division, to support a significant part of its day-to-day running costs. For more information about the Trust please contact us. We would be very pleased to hear from you!

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