

Addoldai Cymru

Welsh Religious Buildings Trust

Summer
Newsletter
2015

Here today...

At Yr Hen Gapel there is a foundation stone built into the wall that came from a previous building dating from 1733; the present building dates from 1834. These are long timescales, and it would benefit us all to think not in terms of annual or five year cycles, but rather in terms of generations, what we have inherited, what we value, and what we would like to pass on. The new *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015* acknowledges the need to think across the generations, improving social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being without compromising future generations, and it specifically seeks to promote culture and heritage. The *Historic Environment (Wales) Bill* currently under consideration is aimed at improving the protection and management of the historic environment – also working towards ways of being able to pass on our inheritance in good shape. How effective will all this legislative endeavour be? The acid test will be how many of our historic places of worship will make it through this generation. And how many are irrevocably lost.

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



David Lloyd with Huw Edwards and Wyn Thomas during the reopening ceremony

Celebrating the 'new' old chapel

One of the "most important chapels in the Nonconformist history of Wales" has been saved, said Huw Edwards, broadcaster and patron of Addoldai Cymru, during the reopening ceremony for Hen Gapel, Llwyrhydowen near Llandysul in Ceredigion. He repeated an historic event of 1879, by returning the keys to the refurbished chapel to the local Unitarian minister, Wyn Thomas.

"You've achieved something very, very special," he said during the formal reopening on Friday 10 July.

The ceremony, organised by Addoldai Cymru was the culmination of years of work by the Trust and Cyfeillion Yr Hen Gapel (Friends of the Old Chapel) that involved major repairs whilst maintaining the Grade II* listed chapel in its original condition. Representatives from the 13 Unitarian chapels in the

denomination's Welsh stronghold were in the congregation for the ceremony which included speeches, under the leadership of David Lloyd, Chair of Addoldai Cymru, and a special ceremony led by Rev Wyn Thomas.

The chapel is also important in Welsh political history because of the events of 1876-9 when the congregation were locked out of the chapel and burial ground by the Tory landlord, because of the radicalism of the preacher, Gwilym Marles.

Dylan Iorwerth

In order to save on costs we hope to distribute more copies of our newsletter by email. Please let us know if you would like to receive the newsletter by email instead of as a paper copy by post.



Repairs at Yr Hen Gapel Llwynrhydowen

The re-opening at Yr Hen Gapel (page 1) followed substantial repairs undertaken to the building that has cost £176,000.

The roof was repaired, and rainwater goods renewed, areas of external wall were repointed and the memorials attached to the front wall repaired. Substantial repairs were undertaken to windows, doors and interior joinery, including the pulpit and sêl fawr. The chapel's clock was also repaired. Interior plasterwork was repaired, including completely renewing the ceiling, the electrical installation was renewed, and the interior was redecorated. The concrete path and apron in front of the chapel was replaced with new paving, and the gates repaired. A very thorough overhaul! The work means that the basic structure of the building has received a comprehensive programme of repairs and is now in good condition for future uses and activities.

The work was undertaken by Towy Projects Ltd, under the supervision of architect Roger Clive-Powell, working with Carl Morgan, building surveyor.

Funding has come from Cadw, the Heritage Lottery Fund, Ceredigion County Council, Llandysul Community Council, the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme and not least the 'Slate in Time' appeal of Cyfeillion Yr Hen Gapel (Friends of Yr Hen Gapel). The Trust is very grateful to all those that funded the work.

The repairs to Yr Hen Gapel are part of a larger project, which includes the digital outputs in co-operation with the RCAHMW (see opposite page). Digital material relating to Yr Hen Gapel is viewable on smartphones and tablets at the chapel via local wifi installed on site.

Future phases of work will include repairs to monuments in the burial ground and to boundary walls, and works to make the building more accessible and usable for the local community.

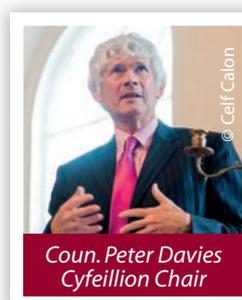
Anthony Jones a new patron



The Trustees are very pleased that Professor Anthony Jones CBE has agreed to become a patron of the Trust. Professor Jones is an internationally known arts administrator, broadcaster, author, and historian. Born in Mountain Ash of an Anglesey family, he has held positions as Director of the Glasgow School of Art, Rector of the Royal College of Art, London, and President, and later Chancellor, of the Art Institute of Chicago. He is an Honorary Professor of the University of Wales, and has been conferred six honorary Doctorates. He is a recognized authority on the development of art, design and architecture of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As a schoolboy he wrote *Chapel Architecture in the Merthyr Valley*, and in 1984 published the seminal study *Welsh Chapels* (National Museum of Wales, Cardiff), later re-published in expanded form in 1996 (Alan Sutton, Stroud), and created the *Welsh Chapels* exhibition at the National Museum, Cardiff. In 1995, he presented two television programmes for ITV, *On the Chapel Trail*. He retired in 2012, but is currently serving as the Interim President of the Kansas City Art Institute.

Cyfeillion Yr Hen Gapel

Cyfeillion Yr Hen Gapel (The Friends of Yr Hen Gapel) have been busy raising funds for the work at Yr Hen Gapel. Their 'Slate in Time' appeal has raised over £3,500 towards the repairs, mostly at £10 per slate. This has meant that we have been able to do more work at Yr Hen Gapel during this phase. We are so grateful to the Friends for being such active and supportive partners.





NEW Website

www.welshchapels.org

Our new website has been launched jointly with the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW), and provides a virtual museum telling the story of Welsh chapels in terms of religion, architecture, culture and society.

The website provides a range of practical information and advice for congregations and chapel owners on conservation, planning, grants and funding, and includes useful contacts and links, as well as information about supporting the Trust through volunteering and our Friends scheme.

You can learn about our six chapels; for each building there are details of their history, architecture, progress on their repair and photographs. There is also a user forum which allows people to add their own images, comments and information, and with which we hope to build up an archive of photographs, memories and discussions about each chapel.

Digital Dissent

You can take a virtual tour of our chapels online, from anywhere in the world, thanks to a series of digital resources produced by the RCAHMW. Bethania, Hen Dŷ Cwrdd, Yr Hen Gapel and Peniel were all laser scanned in conjunction with Aberystwyth University, allowing complete, detailed, 3D records to be made for conservation purposes,

but also allowing 'fly-throughs' of each chapel to be put online. Photographic tours of these chapels using gigapixel imagery allow viewers to explore the interiors and exteriors in high resolution detail, as well as offering archive images of some elements.

The stories of Bethania and Peniel are told in two 10 minute films which include archive material, community material and computer reconstructions. Also available is an interactive model of Hen Dŷ Cwrdd, allowing users to navigate around the chapel in real time, selecting iconic objects around the chapel interior and burial ground, to read text, view images and hear audio relating to the history of the building and its community.

An interactive animation of Yr Hen Gapel is in preparation and will be available soon.

Searching the Chapels Database

An important aspect of the website is the ability, for the first time, to search the RCAHMW's Chapels Database in its entirety. Individual records containing information on history, architecture, dates, people, cost and the chapels' current status can then be viewed alongside any digital images available.

Searches can be done very flexibly in two ways, either by a 'key word

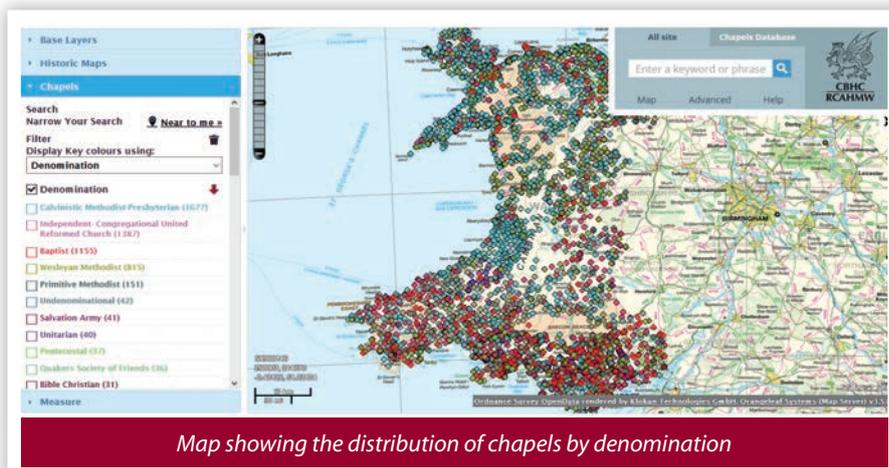
or phrase' search or by searching on a map, and filters can be applied to both modes of searching to further refine the search.

In addition to searching the database, there is also the ability for users to upload information, including extra details, corrections and photographs, in the form of Community comments. These will then be used to update and expand the RCAHMW database, and subsequently the information on the website.

Learn about Welsh chapels and Nonconformity

The website includes articles on the typology of chapel buildings, prominent architects, the social and cultural uses of chapels and a short guide to, and history of, the main denominations. These articles will be added to over time, and anyone who would like to contribute an article, be it on an individual chapel or a wide area of research is encouraged to do so.

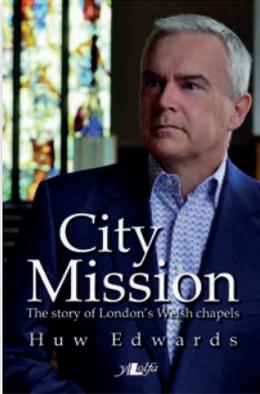
The website will continue to grow and develop, and it is hoped that in doing so it will become a place where everyone can learn about, and engage with, these iconic buildings and their histories. Just as importantly, it can be a portal for capturing their present and future stories.



Map showing the distribution of chapels by denomination

City Mission: The Story of London's Welsh Chapels

This is a new publication by Huw Edwards, who is a patron of Addoldai Cymru. In it he traces the history of London's Welsh



churches. He examines the origins of the London Welsh, the pattern of Welsh migration to London past and present, the influence of Howell Harris and the early Methodists, and the tradition of Welsh preaching, and he describes in detail the Welsh religious causes in London.

Yr Hen Dŷ Cwrdd, Trecynon

For the first time in twenty years, the doors of Yr Hen Dŷ Cwrdd (The Old Meeting House), Trecynon, Aberdare were opened for a Sunday service on 19 July 2015. Members of Highland Place Unitarian church, together with some friends, made up the congregation and the service included contributions from the former minister, Rev Eric Jones, D L Davies, the author of the book on the early history of Hen Dŷ Cwrdd, Philip Griffiths, who spoke about the architecture of the building, and Melda Grantham, the General Secretary of Unitarians in Wales. Hymns sung included words by former Ministers of the chapel with Jacob Jones accompanying on a keyboard.

References were made to the influence of Rev Thomas Evans

(Tomos Glyn Cothi), the Llewelyn Family of Bwllfa, Thomas Dafydd, harpist, R J Jones and W W Price, historians, E R Dennis, drama producer, John Jones and the Chartist Movement, and to the many cultural and literary projects which evolved from the congregation since its formation in 1751.

Eric Jones



Congregation at Hen Dŷ Cwrdd

Please Make a Donation

The generosity of our supporters is very important to our work. A donation can be applied either to our work at a specific building, or to the general work of the Trust. There are many ways to donate.

Via the MyDonate website: Go to www.btplc.com/mydonate and use the 'Dontate to charity' search box to type in our name or charity number **1084030**.

Via your bank: Send us a cheque, set up a standing order, or donate directly to our bank account (**HSBC 40-16-02 31518097**) (please provide a reference so that we can identify your donation)

Gift Aid

Remember 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.

Become a Friend of the Trust

Please join the Friends of Addoldai Cymru. Your subscription will provide the Trust with a modest but very useful donation. Membership is open to all and costs **£10 a year**. Membership form and bank standing order form are available on the Trust's website, or contact the Trust's office.

Further details and forms are on our website www.welshchapels.org and look for the Donate button

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!

Email: post@addoldaicymru.org | **Tel:** 01766 515590 | www.addoldaicymru.org | www.welshchapels.org
Addoldai Cymru/ Welsh Religious Buildings Trust, Capel Peniel, Tremadog, Porthmadog, LL49 9PS

Registered Charity 1084030 / Company Limited by Guarantee 3870343