

Bontgoch

Ddechrau'r Ganrif

Roedd llawer o bethau yn cael eu cynnal yn y pentref yn 1905, sef Ysgol Ganu, Dosbarth Beiblaidd, 'Penny reading' ac ar Mawrth 18 cynhaliwyd eisteddfod yn y Capel. Rhaid cofio mai adeg y Diwygiad Crefyddol oedd hi ac roedd cyfarfodydd gweddi yn cael eu cynnal bron bob nos yn rhywle yn y pentref – mae sôn am rai yn y Gerddi, Pengraig a Carregcadifor.

Cerdded i bobman a wnâi pawb yr adeg honno a chymdeithasu â'i gilydd wrth fynd i'r eisteddfodau bach a'r cyfarfodydd cystadleuol yn y pentref a hefyd yn y pentrefi cyfagos. Cynhaliwyd y cyfarfodydd yma pan oedd y lleuad yn llawn fel bod y rhai a gerddai o bell yn gallu manteisio ar olau'r lleuad i oleuo'u ffordd wrth iddynt ddychwelyd adref.

Cynhaliwyd y cyfarfodydd cystadleuol bob mis yn ystod y gaeaf a hynny un ai yn yr Ysgoldy, Capel Ebeneser neu yng Nghapel Bethesda, Tynant. Mae sôn am un hefyd yng Nghapel Seion, Ceulan. Roedd y cyfarfodydd hyn yn fodd i godi arian at ryw achos arbennig, er enghraifft, ym mis Rhagfyr, 1922 cynhaliwyd Cyfarfod Cystadleuol yn yr ysgol i godi arian i gael cysylltiad ffôn rhwng Bontgoch a Thal-y-bont. Yna yn Nhachwedd 1932 cynhaliwyd 'Ymgomwest er budd Cymdeithas y Nyrs yn Elerch a Threfeurig'.

Er bod y cyfarfodydd hyn yn cael eu cynnal mor aml yn ystod y gaeaf, mae'n ddiddorol sylwi fod tyrfa yn eu mynychu. Ym mis Ionawr, 1924 dywedwyd fel hyn mewn adroddiad yn y papur newydd, 'Priodol iawn y dywedodd yr Arweinydd fod gwir angen am neuadd yn Bontgoch gan fod yr ysgoldy yn llawer rhy fach i gynnwys y dyrfa oedd yno'. Gwnai pawb ymdrech arbennig i fynychu'r cyfarfodydd a cherdded yno ym mhob tywydd. Dyma a ddywedir am Eisteddfod Bethesda, Tynant, ym mis Chwefror 1929, 'Er nad oedd y lluwchfeydd eira wedi clirio daeth tyrfa i'r eisteddfod – fwy na llond yr adeilad fel y gorfu i lawer aros y tu allan'.

Dyma'r adroddiad yn y papur lleol am eisteddfod a gynhaliwyd yng ngwaith mwyn Esgair-hir yn 1902:

Bontgoch

At the Beginning of the Century

Many events were held in the village in 1905, namely, a Singing School, Bible Class, 'Penny reading' and on March 18 the Chapel Eisteddfod. One must remember that this was the time of the Religious Revival and prayer meetings were held somewhere in the village almost on a nightly basis – there is mention of some in the Gerddi, Pengraig and Carregcadifor.

People walked everywhere in those days and socialised on their way to the small eisteddfodau and competitive meetings in the village and also in nearby villages. These meetings were held when there was a full moon so that those who came from afar could take advantage of the moonlight on their return journey.

Competitive meetings were held every month during the winter either in the Schoolhouse, Ebeneser Chapel or Bethesda Chapel, Tynant. There is also mention of one being held at Seion Chapel, Ceulan. These meetings were a means of fund-raising for a special cause, for example, in December 1922 a Competitive Meeting was held in the school to raise money for a telephone connection between Bontgoch and Tal-y-bont. In November 1932 a 'Social in aid of the Elerch and Trefeurig Nurses' Association' was held.

Although these meetings were held in winter, it is interesting to note that large crowds attended. In January 1924, a newspaper report stated, 'Most appropriately the compere said that there was a real need for a hall at Bontgoch as the schoolroom was far too small for the crowd that was present'. Everyone made a great effort to be present at these meetings and walked there in all weathers. The following quotation refers to the Bethesda, Tynant Eisteddfod, held in February 1929, 'Although the snowdrifts had not cleared a crowd attended the eisteddfod – more than could be accommodated in the building and many had to stay outside'.

The following report from the local paper refers to an eisteddfod held at the Esgair-hir lead-mines in 1902:

An Eisteddfod was held by the workers of Esgairhir Leadmine, Tal-y-bont at the Barracks on Tuesday, February 25 presided over by Mr W.E. Northy, surveyor. The Eisteddfod Song, 'Gwlad y Delyn' was sung by Mr William Jones, Taliesin. Then followed competitions. The best singer of 'Hen Ffon fy Nain' was Mr J. Jenkins, Tal-y-bont and the best reciter of a hymn was Mr E. Davies, Tal-y-bont. The prize for the best ash stick went to Mr D. Evans, Nantyperfedd as also the prize for best hammer handle. Mr Evans was also considered the best wit. Mr J. Ellis, Bontgoch won a prize for an axe handle and a pipe rack and also for handwriting. Mr Tudor Jenkins, Pantycarw made the best picture frame.

Gwaith Dŵr Craig-y-pistyll

Roedd dŵr o Lyn Llygad Rheidol wedi ei bibellu dros 16 milltir i Gefn-llan, Aberystwyth ers 1883. Yn 1939 crewyd Cronfa Craig-y-pistyll, o'r llyn a ffurfiwyd ar gyfer y gweithiau mwyn yn 1880, i gael cyflenwad ar gyfer yr ardaloedd gwledig i'r gogledd o Aberystwyth ac fe adeiladwyd Gwaith Puro Dŵr ym Montgoch. Roedd digon o ddwr yn sbâr o'r gwaith yma i allu gwerthu peth i Aberystwyth yn yr haf pan oedd eu cyflenwad hwy yn brin. Erbyn 1962 gwelwyd bod angen gwella'r cyflenwad i Aberystwyth ac fe benderfynwyd uno'r ddwy gronfa gan ddod â dŵr Llyn Llygad Rheidol i Lyn Craig-y-pistyll a chodi Gwaith Puro Dwr newydd ym Montgoch gyda 14 rhidyllwr at y 9 oedd yn yr hen waith. Gosodwyd pibell newydd o gronfa Hengaer (ger Brysgaga) i gronfa Cefn-llan yn Aberystwyth a phibellau llai i gario'r dŵr i bobman o fewn triongl Glandyfi hyd at Lanrhystud ac i Bonterwyd.

Mae rhyw 65 miliwn galwyn o ddŵr yn Llyn Llygad Rheidol a rhwy 77 miliwn yn Llyn Craig-y-pistyll. Bydd rhyw 1.5 miliwn galwyn y dydd yn mynd trwy'r gwaith puro, yn codi i dros 2 filiwn y dydd yn yr haf. Yn 1988 pibellwyd dŵr Llyn Llygad Rheidol yn syth i'r bibell sy'n dod allan o gronfa Craig-y-pistyll yn hytrach na'i arllwys yn syth i'r llyn fel cynt oherwydd bod dŵr Llyn Llygad Rheidol yn llawer glanach a phurach na dŵr mawnog Craig-y-pistyll.

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Craig-y-pistyll Waterworks

Water from the Llygad Rheidol lake had been piped for more than 16 miles to Cefn-llan, Aberystwyth since 1883. In 1939 the Craig-y-pistyll reservoir was formed, from the lake made for the lead-mines in 1880, to supply the rural areas north of Aberystwyth and Water Purifying Works were constructed at Bontgoch. There was enough water left over to be able to sell to Aberystwyth during the summer when their supply was low. By 1962 there was a need to improve the supply for Aberystwyth and it was decided to join the two reservoirs, bringing the water from Llygad Rheidol lake to Craig-y-Pistyll and new Water Purifying Works were constructed at Bontgoch with 14 filters added to the 9 at the old works. New pipes were laid from Hengaer (near Brysgaga) to Cefn-llan reservoir in Aberystwyth and smaller pipes to carry water everywhere within the Glandyfi, Lanrhystud and Ponterwyd triangle.

There are about 65 million gallons of water in the Llygad Rheidol lake and about 77 million at Craig-y-Pistyll lake. Approximately 1.5 million gallons a day go through the purifying works, increasing to around 2 million a day during the summer. In 1988 water from Llygad Rheidol lake was piped straight into the pipe coming out of the Craig-y-pistyll reservoir rather than being poured straight into the lake as previously because the Llygad Rheidol lake is much cleaner and purer than the peaty water of Craig-y-pistyll.

Ysgol Bontgoch

Yn adran yr Archifau yn Swyddfa'r Sir, Aberystwyth mae pedwar Llyfr Cofnodion Ysgol Elerch o'r flwyddyn 1864 hyd nes y'i caewyd hi yn 1958: 1. 28 Gorffennaf 1864 – 10 Gorffennaf 1885; 2. 14 Gorffennaf 1885 – 30 Tachwedd 1900; 3. 4 Rhagfyr 1900 – 25 Mehefin 1917; 4. 28 Mehefin 1917 – 19 Rhagfyr 1958.

Cefais olwg frysiog ar y llyfrau gan godi rhai pytiau diddorol ohonynt. Agorwyd yr ysgol ar ddechrau'r flwyddyn 1864, a dyma a ddywedir yn Adroddiad Arolygwr ei Mawrhydi ar 28 Gorffennaf y flwyddyn honno:

A Certificated Master has been in charge since the commencement of the year and the school is well attended considering its remote situation and the distance which many of the scholars have to walk. The discipline and instruction are fair; scripture knowledge is rather backward but there is every prospect of an improvement in course of time.

I am directed to state that unless instruction in sewing be immediately commenced the school will not be entitled to any more annual grants.

Gellir gweld fod nifer y disgyblion yn yr ysgol yn amrywio o ddydd i ddydd a'r rhesymau pennaf am hyn oedd y tywydd a gwaith tymhorol yr amaethwyr. Roedd yna nifer o resymau eraill hefyd am beidio mynychu'r ysgol – diwrnod y ffair yn Nhal-y-bont neu yn Aberystwyth, diwrnod Sioe Tal-y-bont, angladd yn y pentref neu wasanaethau crefyddol yn yr ardal ymhlith nifer o resymau eraill.

Ymhen blwyddyn, ar ôl Adroddiad cyntaf Arolygwr ei Mawrhydi, dyma ei sylwadau ar 25 Gorffennaf 1865:

The school is in fair order and well attended. Owing, however, to the prevalence of Welsh the instruction has not advanced much as yet and the elder scholars are backward in reading

Bontgoch School

In the County Council's Archives Department at Aberystwyth there are four Record Books for Elerch School written between the year 1864 and its closure in 1958: 1. 28th July 1864 – 10th July 1885; 2. 14th July 1885 – 30th November 1900; 3. 4th December 1900 – 25th June 1917; 4. 28th June 1917 – 19th December 1958.

I had a brief look at the books and have chosen some interesting extracts. The school was opened at the beginning of the year 1864, and this is what Her Majesty's Inspectors have to say on 28 July of that year:



Ysgol Bontgoch, 2000

A Certificated Master has been in charge since the commencement of the year and the school is well attended considering its remote situation and the distance which many of the scholars have to walk. The discipline and instruction are fair; scripture knowledge is rather backward but there is every prospect of an improvement in course of time.

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One sees that pupil numbers fluctuated daily and the main reasons for this were the weather and the seasonal nature of farming. There were also many other reasons for not attending school – fair-day at Tal-y-bont or Aberystwyth, the Tal-y-bont Show, a funeral in the village or religious services in the area were just a few.

Here are the comments of Her Majesty's Inspector on 25th July 1865, a year after the first Report:

The school is in fair order and well attended. Owing, however, to the prevalence of Welsh the instruction has not advanced much as yet and the elder scholars are backward in reading

and spelling. Scripture knowledge is only moderate and the catechism is repeated solely in Welsh. Needlework is fair and the younger scholars are making on the whole satisfactory progress.

Nid oedd yr athrawon yn aros yn hir iawn yn yr ysgol ar y dechrau. Henry Jones oedd prifathro cyntaf yr ysgol ond ymddiswyddodd ef ar 20 Rhagfyr, 1865. Penodwyd Owen Evans yn ei le ar 9 Ionawr, 1866 ond ar ddiwedd y flwyddyn honno ymddiswyddodd yntau hefyd ar 25 Rhagfyr, 1866. Ar 8 Ionawr, 1867 penodwyd Watkin Morgan Jones yn brifathro – ac felly y bu am rai blynyddoedd ar y dechrau. Felly nid oedd Adroddiadau blynyddol Arolygwr ei Mawrhydi yn rhai calonogol iawn.

Cafwyd Adroddiad gwael arall yn 1893 a dilewyd y grant blynyddol a oedd yn daladwy i'r ysgol am nad oedd yr Arolygwr yn gallu adrodd bod staff yr ysgol yn gwneud eu gwaith yn effeithiol. Erbyn 1899 roedd pethau'n dechrau gwella a dywed yr Adroddiad am y flwyddyn honno:

The school is taught with industry and care and is making very satisfactory progress. The

and spelling. Scripture knowledge is only moderate and the catechism is repeated solely in Welsh. Needlework is fair and the younger scholars are making on the whole satisfactory progress.

Teachers did not stay long at the school at the beginning. Henry Jones was the school's first headmaster but he resigned on 20th December 1865. Owen Evans was appointed in his place on 9th January 1866 but he resigned at the end of the year on 25th December 1866. On 8th January 1867 Watkin Morgan Jones was appointed headmaster – and that is how things were for some years. Therefore the reports of Her Majesty's Inspectors were not very encouraging.

In 1893 there was another bad Report and the annual grant which was due to the school was withheld as the Inspector was unable to report that the school staff was carrying out its work efficiently. By 1899 things were beginning to improve and the Report for that year states:

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Plant yr ysgol a'u hathrawes, Valma Jones

The school children with their teacher, Valma Jones

copy and exercise books were exceedingly neat and handwriting was good.

Dyma rai pytiau diddorol a godais o Lyfr Cofnodion 4 (yn y Saesneg gwreiddiol):

28.6.1917: Average attendance 42.

21.3.1918: Dilys Evans, Standard VI is still away suffering with jaundice.

24.9.1918: Received communication from Education Office with respect to giving holiday towards blackberry gathering. The blackberry crop around the district has become a decided failure through inclement weather.

28.11.1918: The School Medical Officer authorised the closure of the school till 6 January 1919. (School closed for 10 weeks because of epidemic).

10.1.1922: Attendance 40 out of 46.

26.1.1922: A children's tea party on the occasion of the opening of the new organ is given at the Wesleyan Chapel this afternoon.

1925: While Welsh and English will receive equal consideration in the upper classes, the

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Welsh language will receive priority in the lower classes since it is the language of the home in this district.

25.1.1927: Number present 11 out of 23.

1947: 16 pupils

28.1.1947–21.3.1947: Terrible storm. Roads closed. Only 3 in school.

1.10.1948: Valma Jones commences temporary duties as Head Teacher.

9.9.1958: Only 4 children on register.

19.12.1958: Last day of the school. Children transferred to Tal-y-bont Primary School.

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Eglwys Sant Pedr, Bontgoch

Adeiladwyd yr Eglwys bresennol yn 1869 ond roedd gwasanaethau'r Eglwys yn cael eu cynnal yn yr ysgol cyn i'r Eglwys gael ei hadeiladu. Roedd yr ysgol yn cael ei defnyddio fel Eglwys ar ddydd Sul ac fel ysgol am weddill yr wythnos.

Mae hanes diddorol i Eglwys Sant Pedr. Mae yna bedair cloch yn nhŵr yr Eglwys er mai dwy gloch a geir yn arferol mewn eglwysi bach yn y wlad. Pan genir y clychau ar y Sul, mae'r sŵn fel petai yn dweud, 'Dewch i mewn'. Ymddangosodd erthygl yn y papur lleol ym mis Gorffennaf, 1933 yn rhoi peth o hanes Eglwys Sant Pedr a'r 'Oxford Movement'. Dyma ran o'r erthygl wedi'i chyfieithu:

Mae Eglwys Sant Pedr, Elerch ... yn un o ddwy eglwys yng Ngheredigion sydd a chysylltiad â'r Oxford Movement. Ffurfiwyd plwyf eglwysig Elerch yn 1868 pryd yr adeiladwyd yr Eglwys a'i gwaddoli gan y Parch. Lewis Gilbertson B.D. a'i chwiorydd, Anne a Mary. Disgrifiwyd y Parch. Lewis Gilbertson fel offeiriad durwiol a dysgedig iawn a bu ar un adeg yn Is-Brifathro Coleg yr Iesu yn Rhydychen ac yna yn rheithor yn Brounston. Roedd yn perthyn i Isaac Williams.

Nid syniad yr Oxford Movement ei hunan oedd adeiladu Eglwys ynghanol y mynyddoedd yn Elerch. Roedd tad y Parch. Lewis Gilbertson wedi meddwl am y syniad ymhell cyn y cynnwrf yn Rhydychen. Ond gan fod mab Mr Gilbertson, Lewis, ynghanol y cynnwrf hwnnw cyn dechrau ar y gwaith yn Elerch, roedd yn naturiol felly fod yr Eglwys yn dilyn ôl y diwygwyr o

St Peter's Church, Bontgoch

The present Church was built in 1869 but Church services were held in the school prior to the Church being built. The school was used as a Church on Sundays and as a school for the remainder of the week.

St Peter's Church has an interesting history. There are four bells in the Church tower although two bells are the usual number for small rural churches. When the bells are rung on Sundays, they seem to be saying, 'Come in'. An article appeared in the local paper in July 1933 relating some of the history of St Peter's Church and the 'Oxford Movement'. This is an extract from the article:

St Peter's Church, Elerch ... is one of two churches in Ceredigion which has a connection with the 'Oxford Movement'. The parish of Elerch was formed in 1868 when the Church was built and endowed by the Reverend Lewis Gilbertson B.D. and his sisters Anne and Mary. The Reverend Lewis Gilbertson was described as a holy and learned priest who at one time was Vice-Principal of Jesus College, Oxford and then a rector at Brounston. He was related to Isaac Williams.

It was not only the Oxford Movement's idea to build a Church in the Elerch mountains. The Reverend Lewis Gilbertson's father had thought of the idea long before the events in Oxford. But as Mr Gilbertson's son, Lewis, was at the centre of those events before the work at Elerch commenced, it was natural therefore that the Church followed the reformers from

Rydychen. Ar un adeg roedd gwahaniaeth mawr rhwng eglwysi'r Oxford Movement ac eglwysi'r cyfnod Efengylaidd. Nid oedd y gwahaniaeth rhyngddynt yn gymaint yn y credo ag mewn creu amgylchedd well ar gyfer addoli, gweddio a chlodfori. Yn Elerch heddiw mae'r hen salm-donau Gregoraidd yn dal i gael eu canu fel yn y Canol Oesoedd ac mae'r dynion yn eistedd ar un ochr a'r gwragedd ar yr ochr arall.

Roedd y Parch. Dad Arthur Jones, offeiriad y Santes Fair, Caerdydd a oedd ar un adeg yn offeiriad yn Llanegryn, Sir Feirionnydd yn ymwelydd cyson ag Elerch a phregethodd ef pan gysegrwyd yr Eglwys yn 1868. Cysylltiad arall rhwng Elerch a'r Oxford Movement yw'r ffaith fod John Keble hefyd yn ymwelydd cyson â Cefngwyn, hen gartref teulu'r Gilbertsons yn Elerch. Dywedir mai yng Nghefngwyn yr ysgrifennodd ef bennill y 'Christian Year' i'r 22ain dydd Sul ar ôl y Drindod ac yn y pennill cyntaf, ar ôl cael ysbrydoliaeth yn yr ardal, gofynna:

*What liberty so glad and gay,
As where the mountain boy,
Reckless of regions far away,
A prisoner lives in joy.*

Roedd ymweliadau cyson y ddau offeiriad Pabyddol yma ag Elerch yn symbyliad i ddiwygio'r bywyd eglwysig a oedd eisoes wedi cychwyn ac a dyfai'n gyson yn y rhan wledig a mynyddig yma o Gymru.

Mae gweddillion y Parch. Gilbertson a'i wraig yn gorwedd yn rhan ddwyreiniol yr Eglwys o dan y garreg sylfaen.

Mae Eglwys Bontgoch yn unigryw gan i deulu'r Gilbertsons adeiladu'r Eglwys, yr Ysgol a'r Ficerdy a hefyd yn rhannol wedi gwaddoli ei bywoliaeth.

Dyma enwau rhai o offeiriaid yr Eglwys: o 1927 hyd fis Chwefror, 1934 bu'r Parch. David Charles yn ficer. Ar ei ymadawiad ef sefydlwyd y Parch. W.D. Williams yn ficer a bu ef yno o 1934 hyd 1938. Y flwyddyn honno gadawodd Elerch a mynd i Begelly yn Sir Benfro a sefydlwyd y Parch. Melvyn Thomas yn ficer yn 1938.

Ym mis Mehefin, 1946 dadorchuddiwyd cofeb yn yr Eglwys gan y Parch Alfred Williams, Archddiacon Ceredigion gyda'r arysgrif canlynol: 'To the memory of the Rev. Lewis Gilbertson, B.D. and his sisters

Oxford. At one time there was a great difference between the churches of the Oxford Movement and the churches of the Evangelical Movement. The difference was not so much in the creed but in creating a better environment in which to worship, pray and praise. In Elerch today the old Gregorian psalm-chants continue to be sung as they were sung in the Middle Ages and the men sit on one side and the women on the other.

The Reverend Father Arthur Jones, priest at St Mary's, Cardiff, who at one time was priest at Llanegryn, Merionethshire, was a regular visitor to Elerch and he preached when the Church was consecrated in 1868. Another connection between Elerch and the Oxford Movement is the fact that John Keble also was a regular visitor to Cefngwyn, the old family home of the Gilbertsons in Elerch. It is said that it was at Cefngwyn that he wrote the 'Christian Year' stanza for the 22nd Sunday after Trinity and in the first stanza, having had inspiration in the area, he asks:

*What liberty so glad and gay,
As where the mountain boy,
Reckless of regions far away,
A prisoner lives in joy.*

The regular visits of these two Catholic priests to Elerch stimulated the revival of church life which had already commenced and which grew consistently in this rural and mountainous part of Wales.

The remains of the Reverend Gilbertson and his wife lie in the eastern part of the Church beneath the foundation stone.

Bontgoch Church is unique because the Gilbertson family built the Church, the School and the Vicarage and also partly endowed the living.

The following are the names of some of the vicars of the Church: from 1927 to February 1934 the Reverend David Charles was the vicar. After he left the Reverend W.D. Williams was inducted and he was there from 1934 to 1938. That year he left Elerch to go to Begelly in Pembrokeshire and the Reverend Melvyn Thomas became vicar in 1938.

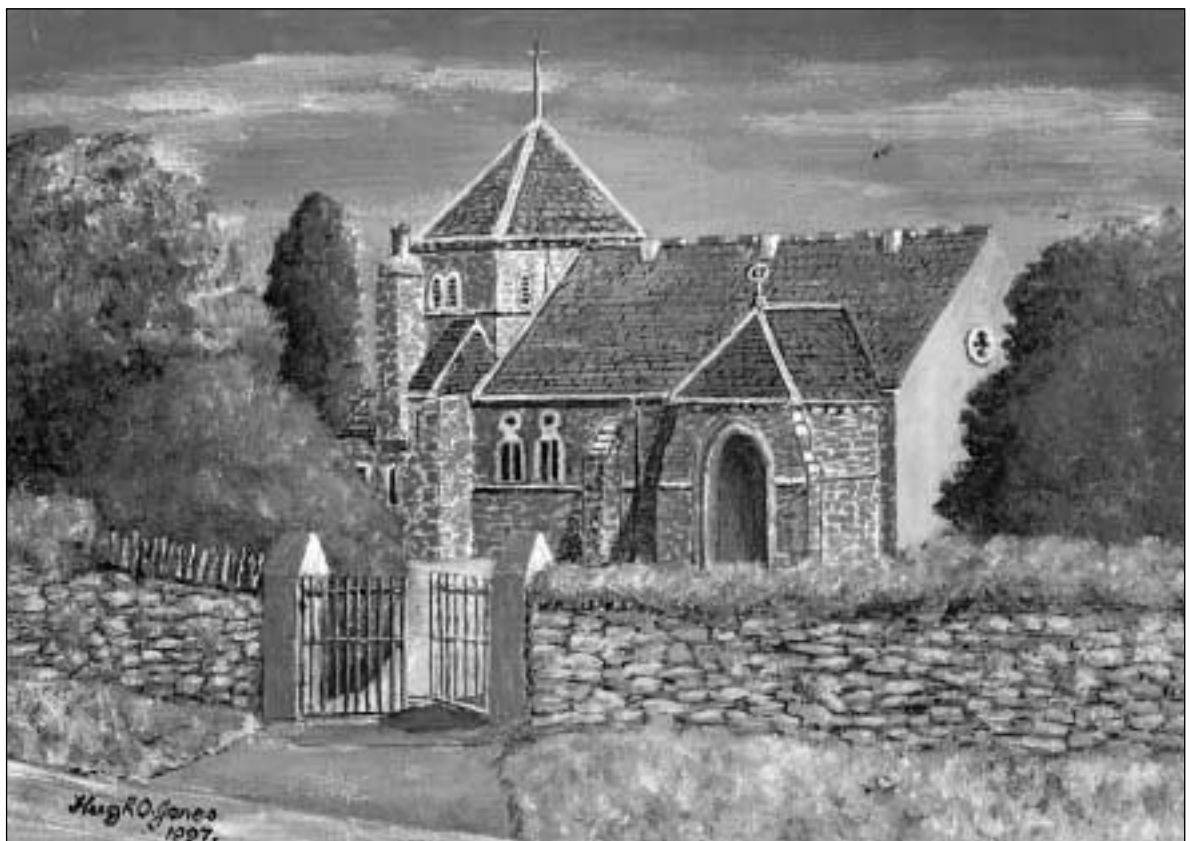
In June, 1946 a plaque, unveiled at the church by the Reverend Alfred Williams, Archdeacon of Ceredigion, was inscribed with the following words: 'To the memory of the Rev. Lewis Gilbertson, B.D. and his

Anne and Mary by whose generosity and self-denying liberality this church was built and endowed to the Glory of God and consecrated on St. Peter's Day, 1868'.

Sefydlwyd y Parch. Leslie Evans yn ficer ar Eglwys Elerch ym mis Chwefror, 1949 ac roedd ef a'i deulu yn byw yn y Ficerdy. Dim ond am flwyddyn yr arhosodd yno ac ar ôl symud i Landegai ym mis Chwefror, 1950 nid oedd ficer yn yr Eglwys. Ym mis Awst, 1950 clywodd yr aelodau nad oedd ficer newydd i gael ei benodi a bod y plwyf i ymuno gyda phlwyf Penrhyn-coch a'r ficer newydd i fyw yn y ficerdy ym Mhenrhyn-coch. Yn dilyn y newyddion yma aeth yr aelodau ar streic hyd nes y ceid ficer newydd yn yr Eglwys. Daeth y streic i sylw'r papurau cenedlaethol a dyma'r penawdau yn rhai o'r rheiny: 'Bells at strike-church call two in – but 28 stayed out' (*Express*); 'Vicar rings the bells: two at service' (*News Chronicle*). Dywedodd William Edwards, Elerch House wrth ohebydd yr *Express*, 'All we want is a fair deal. The church is endowed and has income from land and rents of three cottages. We have a fine house of ten rooms for the vicar and we think we shall lose all that if we go in with another parish'.

sisters Anne and Mary by whose generosity and self-denying liberality this church was built and endowed to the glory of God and consecrated on St Peter's Day 1868'.

The Reverend Leslie Evans was inducted as vicar of Elerch Church in February 1949 and he and his family lived in the Vicarage. He remained there for a year only and after his move to Llandegai in February 1950, the Church was without a vicar. In August 1950 members heard that no new vicar was to be appointed and that the parish was to unite with the parish of Penrhyn-coch and the new vicar would live at the vicarage in Penrhyn-coch. Following this news the members went on strike until a new vicar be appointed. The strike caught the attention of the national newspapers and the following are some of the headlines: 'Bells at strike-church call two in – but 28 stayed out' (*Express*); 'Vicar rings the bells: two at service' (*News Chronicle*). William Edwards, Elerch House told an *Express* reporter, 'All we want is a fair deal. The church is endowed and has income from land and rents of three cottages. We have a fine house of ten rooms for the vicar and we think we shall lose all that if we go in with another parish'.



Eglwys Sant Pedr (Hugh O. Jones 1997)

St. Peter's Church (Hugh O. Jones 1997)

Dyma fel yr ymddangosodd yr hanes yn y *News Chronicle*:

Parishioners of St. Peter's Church at Bontgoch stayed away today from the service as a protest against the decision of the church authorities not to appoint a resident vicar in the future. The church has had a vicar for 80 years until last February. The bishop has arranged with the vicar of a neighbouring parish, the Rev. Marcus Davies, to take charge at Bontgoch until it is amalgamated with a neighbouring parish. When he arrived at the church Mr Davies found that the bell-ringer had joined the 'strike' and he had to ring the bells himself. Watched by many villagers, only two members of the church turned up. They were sisters, the Misses M.L. and G. Edwards. Miss M.L. Edwards said she had attended because she thought it was her duty as churchwarden although she knew she was risking unpopularity. Her sister said that they had enjoyed the service, a normal one, except that no hymns were sung. 'We shall continue to attend each week whether the rest of the village like it or not', she declared. Mr W.M. Edwards, sexton for 47 years, said, 'We are all sticking together in this and shall not attend until we get a resident vicar'.

Yn 1950 roedd dros 30 o aelodau yn yr Eglwys a dros 20 o blant yn mynychu'r Ysgol Sul. Roedd pobl y plwyf wedi casglu £100 y flwyddyn cynt drwy gynnal sosials – un ohonynt wedi codi £28 ac un arall £35. Roeddent wedi talu'r 'quota' o £36 y flwyddyn a derbyniodd yr Eglwys rent o'r tai roedd yn eu perchen.

Ym mis Mehefin, 1951 aeth y trip blynyddol i'r Amwythig er nad oedd yr aelodau yn mynychu'r Eglwys. Ac ar ddiwrnod y cyfarfod blynyddol ar 29 Mehefin dim ond dau oedd yn bresennol yn y bore a nifer o estroniaid yn yr hwyr. Roedd y streic yn golled i'r ardal yn enwedig i'r plant gan nad oedd yr Ysgol Sul yn cael ei chynnal. Ceisiodd y Parch. Marcus Davies gael y plant i'r Ysgol Sul ond methiant hollol fu'r ymgais. Cynhaliwyd sosial lwyddiannus ar 1 Chwefror, 1952 er bod yr aelodau yn dal ar streic.

Daeth y streic i ben pan sefydlwyd y Parch Eifion Evans yn ficer ym mis Gorffennaf, 1952. Yn y gwasanaeth sefydlu eglurodd yr Archddiacon Richard Ward, Aberystwyth nad oedd plwyf Elerch, er ei

This is how the story appeared in the *News Chronicle*:

Parishioners of St Peter's Church at Bontgoch stayed away today from the service as a protest against the decision of the church authorities not to appoint a resident vicar in the future. The church has had a vicar for 80 years until last February. The bishop has arranged with the vicar of a neighbouring parish, the Rev. Marcus Davies, to take charge at Bontgoch until it is amalgamated with a neighbouring parish. When he arrived at the church Mr Davies found that the bell-ringer had joined the 'strike' and he had to ring the bells himself. Watched by many villagers, only two members of the church turned up. They were sisters, the Misses M.L. and G. Edwards. Miss M.L. Edwards said she had attended because she thought it was her duty as churchwarden although she knew she was risking unpopularity. Her sister said that they had enjoyed the service, a normal one, except that no hymns were sung. 'We shall continue to attend each week whether the rest of the village like it or not', she declared. Mr W.M. Edwards, sexton for 47 years, said, 'We are sticking together in this and shall not attend until we get a resident vicar'.

In 1950 the Church had more than 30 members and over 20 children attended Sunday school. Parishioners had raised £100 the previous year by holding socials: one raised £28 and another £35. They had paid the annual quota of £36 and the Church received rent from the houses that it owned. In June 1951 the annual trip went to Shrewsbury although members were not attending the Church. And on the day of the annual meeting on 29th June only two were present in the morning and a number of strangers in the evening. The strike was detrimental to the area, especially for the children as no Sunday school was held. The Reverend Marcus Davies had tried to get the children to attend Sunday school but his attempt had failed. A successful social was held on 1st February 1952 although members were still on strike.

The strike came to an end when the Reverend Eifion Evans took over as vicar in July 1952. During the induction service the Archdeacon Richard Ward, Aberystwyth explained that Elerch parish, although it shared a vicar with Penrhyn-coch, had not



Perfformiad, gan blant yr ysgol, o ddrama'r Geni, yn yr Eglwys yn y pum degau

A performance, by the school children, of the Nativity play, in the Church in the 1950s

fod gyda'r un ficer â Phenrhyn-coch, yn colli dim o'ï annibyniaeth na'i hunaniaeth fel plwyf gan y byddai yn dal gyda'i swyddogion ei hunan, wardeniaid yr eglwys, a'r cyngor plwyfol. Yn ystod y gwasanaeth cysegrodd yr Archddiacon Ward groes arian ar yr allor, dwy ganhwylbren, desg litani a chadair – rhoddion i'r Eglwys gan Mr H. Whitlock Jones, Tŷmawr Mochno er cof am ei wraig, Mrs Bertha Madeline Whitlock Jones, merch y Parch. Alexander Williams a oedd ar un adeg yn ficer Elerch. Yn dilyn y gwasanaeth cafwyd te wedi ei baratoi gan wragedd yr Eglwys. Gyda'r sefydlu yma dywedodd yr Archddiacon fod pennod newydd yn agor yn hanes Eglwys Sant Pedr. Cafodd yr Eglwys ddiddorol a phrydferth yma ei hadeiladu yn 1868 gan Lewis Gilbertson, ficer cyntaf Llangorwen a chyda Llangorwen mae'n rhannu'r anrhydedd o fod yn un o'r eglwysi yng Ngheredigion sydd a chysylltiad â'r Oxford Movement.

Bu Cobb Gilbertson, tad yr adeiladydd yn byw ym Mhlas Cefngwyn, Elerch a phriododd â pherthynas i deulu Cwmcynfelin ac felly roedd mewn cysylltiad ag Isaac Williams, un o'r dynion mwyaf blaenllaw yn yr Oxford Movement. Pan fu

lost any of its independence nor its identity as a parish as it would continue to have its own officers, church wardens, and parish council. During the service Archdeacon Ward consecrated the silver cross on the altar, two candlesticks, the litany desk and a chair – gifts to the church from Mr H. Whitlock Jones, Tŷmawr Mochno in memory of his wife, Mrs Bertha Madeline Whitlock Jones, the daughter of the Reverend Alexander Williams who, at one time, was vicar at Elerch. Following the service tea was prepared by the ladies of the church. The Archdeacon said that this induction marked a new chapter in the history of St Peter's Church. This beautiful and interesting church was built in 1868 by Lewis Gilbertson, the first vicar of Llangorwen and along with Llangorwen it shares the honour of being one of the churches in Ceredigion to be associated with the Oxford Movement.

Cobb Gilbertson, the father of the one responsible for the building of the church lived at Plas Cefngwyn, Elerch and he married a relation of the Cwmcynfelin family and therefore there was a connection with Isaac Williams, one of the most prominent men in the Oxford Movement.

farw Cobb Gilbertson gadawodd swm o arian i'r plwyf ac adeiladwyd yr Eglwys, yr Ysgol a'r Ficerdy yn Elerch gyda'r arian hwnnw.

When Cobb Gilbertson died, he left a sum of money to the parish and it was used to build the Church, School and Vicarage at Elerch.

Atgofion y Teiliwr

Yn rhifyn Ionawr, 1982 o *Bapur Pawb* ysgrifennodd J.R. Jones rai o atgofion James Ellis, Penrow, Bontgoch. Dyma ran o'r erthygl:

Roedd cloddiau trwchus o eira ar ffordd Bontgoch pan alwais wythnos cyn y Nadolig ar aelwyd Penrow i wrando ar atgofion difyr James Ellis a blasu peth o naww ac awyrygylch y fro ym mlynnyddoedd cynnar y ganrif hon. Mae'i wreiddiau'n gadarn yn naear Elerch, yma y treuliodd ei oes gan gartrefu heddiw yn yr un ty â lle ganwyd ef.

Roedd ei dad yn grefftwr medrus â'i ddwylo, wedi ennill llawer am wneud ffyn, a bu'n fuddugol yn Eisteddfod Genedlaethol Aberystwyth ym 1916. Bu'n crwydro cryn lawer yn ei flynyddoedd cynnar, ef a Dan Richards (tad y diweddar Edwin Richards, Penlôn) gan weithio ar y gwaith dŵr ger y Rhaeadr, codi stablau ar ystad ger yr Wyddgrug ac yn Sheffield gyda chwmni

A Tailor's Memories

In the January 1982 edition of *Papur Pawb* J.R. Jones wrote about some of the memories of James Ellis, Penrow, Bontgoch. The following is a translation of an extract from the article:

There were deep drifts of snow on the Bontgoch road when I called at Penrow a week before Christmas to listen to the interesting memories of James Ellis and to obtain a flavour of the area during the early years of this century. His roots are firmly in Elerch, he has spent his life here and lives today in the house in which he was born.

His father was an able craftsman who won many prizes for making walking-sticks; he won a prize at the National Eisteddfod of Wales at Aberystwyth in 1916. James travelled extensively during his early years, he and Dan Richards (the father of the late Edwin Richards, Penlôn) worked for a time at the water works near Rhaeadr, building stables on an estate near Mold and with a company making knives



Capel Ebeneser yn 1986. Cynhaliwyd yr oedfa olaf ar y 12fed o Hydref, 1986

Ebeneser Chapel in 1986. The last service was held on 12th October 1986

Thunderstorm's Trail of Havoc

It is thought that there was also a cloudburst in the mountains beyond Bontgoch in the neighbourhood of Craig-y-pistyll. The Leri assumed alarming proportions as it swept through Bontgoch and some miles further on engulfed the farmstead of Cwmere. In the farmyard the water was about six feet deep and animals and farm implements were floating in the torrent. The farmhouse suffered also and in the dairy butter and eggs were floating around amidst the furniture. The bridge nearby was completely covered by the flood though it sustained no severe damage.

The Welsh Gazette, 28th June, 1935

cyllyll a ffyrc; yna dychwelyd yn saer i waith mwyn Bwlch-glas ac yno y bu nes y darfu'r gwaith ym 1921.

Pan oedd James yn blentyn roedd Bontgoch yn bentref bywiog a thros drigain o blant yn yr ysgol. Deuent o'r cymoedd cyfagos cyn belled â Bryn Fedwen a Llawrcwmbach. Saesneg oedd iaith yr ysgol y tu mewn i'r pedair wal a phe meiddiai un o'r plant ofyn cwestiwn yn ei famiaith – hyd yn oed gofyn am fynd allan – byddai'r gansen yn disgyn yn ddidrugaredd ond mynnodd ein hiaith fyw ym mryniau Elerch er cymaint y chwipio a'r dilorni a fu arni ac er mawr cywilydd i gyfundrefn addysg bwdwr y cyfnod.

Profiad mawr i James oedd cael mynd am y tro cyntaf yn un ar ddeg oed cyn belled ag Aberystwyth gyda brêc dau geffyl John Roberts. Deuai'r brêc bob dydd Llun i gludo'i lwyth i'r dre ac yn ôl a'r daith yn fargen am swllt! Byddai'r gwragedd yn llwythog o wyau a menyn mewn basgedi i'w gwerthu i gwsmeriaid yn y dre a byddai pob math o nwyddau yn dychwelyd yn y brêc yn cynnwys llawer mochyn bach, o dro i dro, yn gwichian yn y cefn.

Bu'r Capel yn gyrchfan i sawl cenhedlaeth o blant gyda rhif yr aelodau dros hanner cant a byddai'r Eglwys mor llawn ar ambell nos Sul fel y byddai'n rhaid cludo meinciau o'r ysgol. Y siop oedd y lle prysuraf ac ar agor hyd hanner nos. Yn wir roedd y siop bentref yn cyflawni gofynion yr ardaloedd gwledig cyn bod sôn am Tesco a Kwiks a'u tebyg. Y siop a fyddai'n pobi bara a chludid beichiau ohonynt i'r mwynwyr ym Mwlch-glas ac nid oedd brinder cwsmeriaid o gofio bod dros ddau gant yn gweithio yno. Cofia am nifer o reolwyr gwaith mwyn a fu'n byw ym mhlas Cefn-gwyn – Holeback, McKormick a Spragon – dynion a'u teuluoedd yn torri steil wrth fynd drwy'r

and forks in Sheffield; he then returned as a carpenter to the Bwlch-glas lead-mines where he remained till the mines closed in 1921.

When James was a child, Bontgoch was a lively village with more than sixty pupils at the school. They came from the nearby valleys, from as far as Bryn Fedwen and Llawrcwmbach. English was the language spoken within the four walls of the school and if a child dared to ask a question in his mother tongue – even asking if he could go outside – the cane was used mercilessly but our language survived in the hills of Elerch despite the caning and the condemnation and much to the shame of the education system of the day.

A memorable experience for James was to go for the first time at eleven years of age as far as Aberystwyth in John Roberts' two-horse cart. The cart called every Monday to take its load to town and back – a bargain for a shilling! The women would have plenty of eggs and butter in their baskets, ready to sell to customers in the town and all kinds of goods, including occasionally a screeching piglet, would be carried in the cart on the return journey.

The Chapel, with over fifty members, was a meeting place for many generations of children and the Church was so full sometimes on a Sunday evening that benches would had to be brought from the school. The village shop was the busiest place and it was open until midnight. Indeed the village shop met the requirements of rural areas before there was any mention of Tesco and Kwiks and their like. Bread was baked at the shop and a load was taken to the miners at Bwlch-glas; there was no lack of customers as there were more than two hundred workers there. He remembers several managers of the lead-mines who had lived at Plas Cefn Gwyn – Holeback, McKormick and Spragon – men and their families who went through the village in style with a pony and trap. He remembers the

pentre mewn trap a merlen. Cofia am blant Spragon yn dod i'r ysgol mewn clocs a bu hynny yn rhyfeddod i bawb. Lle difyr oedd gweithdy'r crydd a John Morris yn grefftwr am fesur a gwneud sgidiau. Byddai'n cerdded i Gwmsymlog â sgidiau i'r mwynwyr, naw swllt y pâr.

Byddai nifer o grwydriaid diddorol yn dod i weithio ar ffermydd yr ardal a byddai digon o hwyl i blant yn eu cwmni. Deuai William Dunn ar ei dro mewn gwisg morwr gan chwarae consortina gyda'r nos a galwai Dafydd swêds pan fyddai'n adeg teneuo'r swêds ond Dafydd y gwair oedd yr entw arno ym Mhonterwyd gan mai adeg y cynhaeaf gwair y byddai'n cyrraedd yno.

Wedi gorffen ysgol a gweithio ychydig ar y tir, penderfynodd James ddsygu crefft teiliwr a bore i'w gofio oedd hwnnw pan ddechreuodd ar ei brentisiaeth gydag Edwards, Pengroes yn Llandre... Wedi cyfnod yn y Llu Awyr yn ystod y rhyfel bu James am flynyddoedd yn gofalu am ei 'length' ac roedd yn bleser gweld y ffordd o Bontgoch i Bencwm, y cloddiau'n drefnus a'r sianeli wedi'u codi'n lân i gario'r dŵr glaw.

Atgofion Mrs Charlotte Griffiths

Ysgrifennwyd erthyglau yn y gyfres 'Dewch am Dro' gan J.R. Jones ym *Mhapur Pawb* ac mae'n werth cynnwys yma ddarn o'r erthygl yn rhifyn mis Tachwedd, 1984 pan fu J.R. yn holi Mrs Charlotte Griffiths a fu ar un adeg yn byw ym mhentref Bontgoch:

Cofia Mrs Griffiths fynd i'r ysgol, llechen las yn ei llaw – dyna'r drefn y dyddiau hynny – gyda phensil carreg, wedi'i naddu gan ei thad, i ysgrifennu arni. Cat, chwaer i'r diweddar William Edwards, Elerch House oedd un o'r rhai a fu'n ei dysgu a'i chyflog blwyddyn yn £5.50. Rhennid yr ysgol yn ddwy ran a thros hanner cant o blant ymhob dosbarth. Pe codai ryw helynt neu gilydd gelwid ar y ffeirad, y Parch Alexander Williams i'w ddatrys a byddai hwnnw yn ei swydd yn cyflawni gwaith offeiriad, cyfreithiwr a phlismon.

Gan amlaf byddwn yn meddwl am bob eglwys fel sefydliad sy'n ymestyn dros lawer canrif ac o flaen ein capeli ond nid dyna'r stori yn Elerch. Codwyd Ebeneser, Capel y Wesleyaid ym 1836 ac yn ôl adroddiad sy'n ei meddiant roedd bron 900 yn bresennol yn y cyfarfodydd pregethu ddiwrnod yr agoriad,

Spragon family coming to school in clogs which was a surprise to all. The cobbler's workshop was an interesting place; John Morris was a craftsman in measuring and making shoes. He would walk over to the miners at Cwmsymlog with boots costing nine shillings a pair.

Several interesting tramps came to work on farms in the area and there would be plenty of fun for children in their company. In his turn, William Dunn in his sailor's outfit came and played a concertina in the evenings; Dafydd Swedes who came when it was time to thin out the swedes was called Dafydd the Hay in Ponterwyd as he arrived there at harvest time.

After finishing school and working on the land for a while, James decided to learn the craft of a tailor and it was a memorable morning when he commenced his apprenticeship with Edwards, Pengroes in Llandre... After a period in the Air Force during the war James spent years looking after his 'length'; it was a pleasure to see the road between Bontgoch and Pencwm with neat hedges and clean channels for carrying rainwater.

Mrs Charlotte Griffiths' Memories

J.R. Jones wrote articles for the series 'Dewch am Dro' in *Papur Pawb* and it is worth including here an extract from the November 1984 edition when J.R. interviewed Mrs Charlotte Griffiths who used to live in Bontgoch:

Mrs Griffiths remembers going to school carrying a slate – that is how things were in those days – and writing with a stone pencil, sharpened by her father. Cat, the sister of the late William Edwards, Elerch House was one of her teachers and her annual salary was £5.50. The school was divided into two parts with more than fifty children in each class. If there were any kind of trouble the Reverend Alexander Williams would be called upon to sort it out and he would carry out the work of a vicar, solicitor and policeman.

Usually we think of our churches as institutions that go back several centuries and as older than our chapels but this is not true of Elerch. Ebeneser, the Wesleyan chapel was built in 1836 and according to a report there were almost 900 present in the preaching festival on the day it was opened,

ond flynyddoedd yn ddiweddarach ym 1868 y codwyd yr eglwys.

Cofia am deulu yn byw ym maracs Bwlchstyllen. Roedd un o'r merched, Maria, yn gwnio a byddai'n cerdded i gapel Bontgoch bob Sul i gael enwau lleoedd a chwsmeriaid i'w chadw mewn gwaith. Byddai wedyn yn mynd o le i le i wnio am ddeg ceiniog y dydd a'i bwyd.

Cofia Mrs Griffiths am bostman o'r enw Abner, cyn dyddiau Lumley, a chyn agor y Swyddfa Bost ym 1895 roedd trigolion Bontgoch yn gorfod cludo'u llythyron i'r siop a'u casglu yno hefyd cyn i'r postman ddod heibio o dŷ i dŷ.

Carys Briddon

but it was years later, in 1868, that the church was built.

She remembers a family living in Bwlchstyllen barracks. One of the daughters, Maria, who was a seamstress, walked to Bontgoch chapel every Sunday to get names of places and customers to keep her in work. She then went from place to place to sew for ten pence a day and her food.

Mrs Griffiths remembers a postman called Abner, before Lumley's days, and before the opening of the Post Office in 1895 the residents of Bontgoch had to take their letters to the shop and collect them before the postman started delivering from house to house.

Carys Briddon

Y Fferm Wynt

Bu raid i Dr Dafydd Huws gyfarfod â chryn wrthwynebiad cyn sefydlu fferm wynt ar Fynydd Gorddu, Bontgoch yn y flwyddyn, 1997.

Sefydlwyd pwyllgor i ddosbarthu £10,000 (Cronfa Eleri) i fudiadau a phrosiectau lleol.

The Wind Farm

Dr Dafydd Huws had to face strong opposition before establishing a wind farm on Mynydd Gorddu, Bontgoch in 1997.

A committee was set up to distribute £10,000 (Cronfa Eleri) to local movements and projects.