

## *Bethel a'r Fro*

Er bod pentref Tal-y-bont ar ddechrau'r ganrif dipyn yn llai o ran nifer y cartrefi i'r hyn ydyw heddiw, eto roedd yma boblogaeth gref gyda'r cymoedd cyfagos yn llawn tyddynnod a theuluoedd niferus. Nid oedd yma brinder gwaith gan fod y ffatrioedd gwlan yn cyflogi llawer o'r trigolion, a rhai o'r gweithfeydd mwyn yn arbennig Bwlch-glas yn parhau mewn bri. Roedd gweision a morynion ar y rhan fwyaf o'r ffermydd, a'r pentref yn llawn o siopau, gyda digon o grefftwyr o bob math i gyfarfod â'r gwahanol ofynion.

Er bod bywyd yn galed a chyflogau yn isel, eto roedd yma ddigon o frwdfrydedd a gweithgareddau amrywiol, gyda'r ardal yn nodedig am ei diwylliant. Gwelwyd yma Seindorf Arian, Corau Plant ac Oedolion,

## *Bethel*

Although the village of Tal-y-bont at the turn of the century had far fewer houses than today, there was a strong population here and the nearby valleys had numerous smallholdings and families. There was no shortage of work as the woollen factories employed many as did the lead mines, especially Bwlchglas which was still flourishing. There were servants and maids in most of the farms, numerous shops in the village and many craftsmen to meet diverse local needs.

Despite the hard life and low wages there was much enthusiasm for cultural and other activities so that the area was noted for its culture. There were a silver band, child and adult choirs, a cultural society, eisteddfodau, the agricultural show and the



*Bethel (E.O. Jones)*

Cymdeithasau Diwylliadol, Eisteddfodau, Y Sioe Amaethyddol a'r ffeiriau, yn arbennig y Ffair fawr a gynhelid yn flynyddol ar yr 17 o Hydref, a'r stondinau yn ymestyn cyn belled â Maesnewydd ac yn ddigon poblogaidd i ddenu ambell ganwr baledi.

Saesneg oedd iaith yr ysgol ddyddiol ond y Gymraeg oedd iaith y fro, a phawb yn ddieithriad yn ei siarad yn rhwydd a naturiol, gyda dylanwad yr Esgob Morgan yn gryfach nag unrhyw fygythiad o'r tu allan. Bu cyfraniad y capeli yn werthfawr; er mai cymharol ifanc oedd Eglwys Nasareth a sefydlwyd tua 1869, a byddai aelodau Eglwys Dewi Sant yn cyfarfod mewn adeilad sinc y tu arall i'r afon cyn codi yr eglwys bresennol ym Mhen-lôn ym 1909.

Roedd achos Bethel a'r Tabernacl dipyn yn hŷn, ac wedi'u sefydlu ar dir Penrhylog ym 1805, ac felly roedd eu dylanwad a'u gafael yn gadarn erbyn dechrau yr ugeinfed ganrif a bu ambell ddiwygiad crefyddol yn hwb ychwanegol, a gwelwyd helaethu ac adnewyddu y ddau gapel droeon. Un o weinidogion Bethel oedd R.E. Jones a chyhoeddodd lyfryn diddorol yn crynhoi yr achosion crefyddol *Crefydd yn Nhal-y-bont o'i chychwyniad hyd ddiwedd 1900*.

Cafodd diwygiad crefyddol 1904 gryn afael ar Dal-y-bont a chyhoeddwyd adroddiadau manwl yn y gweisg lleol, ond faint bynnag fu dylanwad y diwygiad bu effeithiau y Rhyfel Byd Cyntaf, ymhen deng mlynedd yn llawer mwy ysgytwol, gan chwalu ffydd a gobeithion y rhai a fu drwy'r gyflafan. Roedd rhif aelodau Bethel ar ddechrau'r ganrif bron yn 400, ond gwelwyd y nifer yn lleihau o flwyddyn i flwyddyn. Erbyn yr Ail Ryfel Byd roedd rhai o'r ffatrioedd gwlan wedi cau, y gweithfeydd mwyn wedi gorffen, a nifer y rhai a wasanaethent ar y ffermydd yn cilio. Denwyd llawer i Lundain, aeth eraill i gymoedd glofaol y De, a gwelwyd y rhan fwyaf o'r hen dyddynnod yn troi'n adfeilion. Disgynnodd maint y boblogaeth a gwelwyd llawer tro ar fyd.

Eto daliodd yr Ysgol Sul ym Methel ei thir ac yn niwedd y pedwar degau roedd nifer ei haelodau yn 116, gyda thua 40 o blant yn y Festri o dan ofal Tom Lewis Owen, a dwy neu ddau o athrawon ychwanegol i'w gynorthwyo; a'r gweddill o'r plant a'r oedolion yn ddeg dosbarth ar y llawr a'r galeri. Diddorol sylwi ar y gweithgareddau eraill a fu ynghlwm wrth yr Eglwys, a'r

fairs especially the Great Fair which was held annually on 17th October with its stalls extending as far as Maesnewydd and popular enough to attract the occasional balad singer.

English was the language of the daily school but the language of the community was Welsh which everyone spoke naturally with the influence of Bishop Morgan stronger than any external threat. The contribution of the chapels was valuable; although Nazareth Chapel, established about 1869, was fairly new and the members of St. David's Church met in a zinc building on the other side of the river before the present church was built in Penlôn in 1909.

Bethel and Tabernacle were older and were built on Penrhylog land in 1805 and therefore their influence and hold were strong by the beginning of the 20th Century. The occasional religious revival was an additional spur and both chapels were extended and renewed many times. One of Bethel's ministers, R.E. Jones published an interesting booklet *Crefydd yn Nhal-y-bont o'i chychwyniad hyd ddiwedd 1900* (Religion in Tal-y-bont from its beginning to the end of 1900).

The 1904 Religious Revival had a considerable influence on Tal-y-bont with detailed reports in the local press but however much the influence of the revival, the effects of the First World War ten years later were far more traumatic, destroying the faith and hope of those who experienced the slaughter. At the turn of the century Bethel's membership was almost 400 but this number decreased from year to year. By the Second World War some of the woollen factories had closed, the lead mines had finished and the numbers working on the farms had decreased. Many were attracted to London, others went to the mining valleys in the south and most of the small-holdings became derelict. Population figures decreased and there were many changes in lifestyle.

The Sunday School in Bethel continued to flourish and in the late forties the number of members was 116 with about 40 children in the vestry in the care of Tom Lewis Owen and a couple of assistants. The rest of the children and the adults formed ten classes on the floor and in the gallery of the chapel. It is interesting to note the other activities associated with the chapel; everything

cyfan yn tystio i'w brwdfrydedd a'i chyfraniad dros ran helaeth o'r ganrif.

### **Cyfarfodydd y Pasg**

Sul holi'r pwnc a fyddai'r enw ar y Pasg. Deuai aelodau Bethesda, Tŷ-nant; Seion, Ceulan a Thabor y Mynydd (neu Capel Sbaen fel y gelwid ef) i oedfa'r bore i'w holi gan y Pregethwr gwâdd. Deuent o gartrefi anghysbell ar y mynydd – Bwlch-y-garreg, Dôlrhuddlan, Camdwr-bach, Bwlchystyllen gan gerdded gyda'i gilydd a chyrraedd Bethel erbyn deg. Byddai rhan benodol o'r ysgrythur wedi'i dewis ymlaen llaw, a mawr fyddai eu diddordeb yn y pwnc ar y daith flynyddol i Dal-y-bont.

Yn y prynhawn aelodau Bethania, Penlefel a Soar, Pensarn a fyddai'n wynebu'r holwr, ac yn yr hwyr aelodau Bethel welid yn llenwi'r galeri, a byddai dadlau bywiog a ffyrnig gan rai goleuedig iawn yn y Beibl.

### **Cyfarfodydd Pregethu**

Ar y nos Fawrth a'r dydd Mercher canlynol oedfaon pregethu a fyddai'n denu'r cannoedd; y capel ar y ddwy noson o dan ei sang a chyfle i wrando ar ddau bregethwr gwahanol bob blwyddyn, a Chymraeg y pulpud ar ei orau.

### **Y Gymanfa Ganu**

Cynhelid hi ar y dydd Mercher cyntaf ym Mai, ym Methel a Seion Aberystwyth bob yn ail flwyddyn gyda chefnogaeth eglwysi annibynnol y cylch. Diwrnod o wyliau ysgol gydag oedfa'r plant yn y bore, a'r oedolion yn y prynhawn a'r hwyr. Un o'r arweinyddion a wahoddid yn aml oedd y Dr Caradog Roberts, a byddai bob amser yn rhoi datganiad ar yr organ yng nghyfarfod y plant.

### **Trip yr Ysgol Sul**

Y Sul cyntaf ar ôl y Gymanfa byddai'r arolygwr yn crynhoi'r aelodau ar y llawr, ac yn ei eiriau ef, i 'drafod mater y trip'. Penderfynu ar ddyddiad ac enwi nifer o drefi i'w hystyried cyn y dewis terfynol yr wythnos wedyn, ar ôl derbyn y prisiau gan y gwahanol gwmnïau bysus yn Aberystwyth. Y Rhyl fyddai'n cyrraedd y brig gan amlaf. Bore'r trip gwelid ar un adeg gymaint â phum bws yn cychwyn gyda'i gilydd o flaen Bethel, un bws wedi'i neilltuo

testifying to the enthusiasm and contribution of its members for most of the century.

### **Easter Meetings**

Sul Holi'r Pwnc (Question Time Sunday) was the name for Easter. Members of Bethesda, Tŷ-nant; Seion, Ceulan and Tabor (or Capel Sbaen as it was called) came to the morning service to answer questions set by a visiting preacher. They came from remote homes on the mountain – Bwlch-y-garreg, Dolrhuddlan, Camdwr-bach, Bwlchystyllen – walking together and reaching Bethel by ten o'clock. A set section of the scriptures had previously been chosen and there was great interest in the topic on the annual journey to Tal-y-bont.

In the afternoon the members of Bethania, Penlefel and Soar, Pensarn would face the preacher and in the evening Bethel members filled the gallery; those well-versed in the Bible had lively and passionate discussions.

### **Preaching Meetings**

On the following Tuesday evening and Wednesday preaching services attracted congregations of hundreds; the chapel on both evenings would be full to capacity with the opportunity to listen to two different preachers every year and the Welsh language of the pulpit at its best.

### **The Gymanfa Ganu (Singing Festival)**

It was held, with the support of the independent churches of the district, on the first Wednesday in May in Bethel and Seion, Aberystwyth alternately. It was a school holiday with the children's service in the morning and the adults in the afternoon and evening. Dr Caradog Roberts, one of the conductors who was often invited, always gave a recital on the organ during the children's service.

### **The Sunday School Trip**

On the Sunday following the Gymanfa, the superintendent would call the members together to, in his words, 'discuss the matter of the trip' – deciding the date and suggesting several towns to be considered before making the final choice the following week after receiving prices from the various bus companies in Aberystwyth. Rhyl was often the popular choice. On the morning of the trip on one occasion there were as many as five buses setting off from Bethel with one

i'r plant yn unig. Diwrnod o fwynhad, ac i lawer yr unig ddiwrnod rhydd mewn blwyddyn.

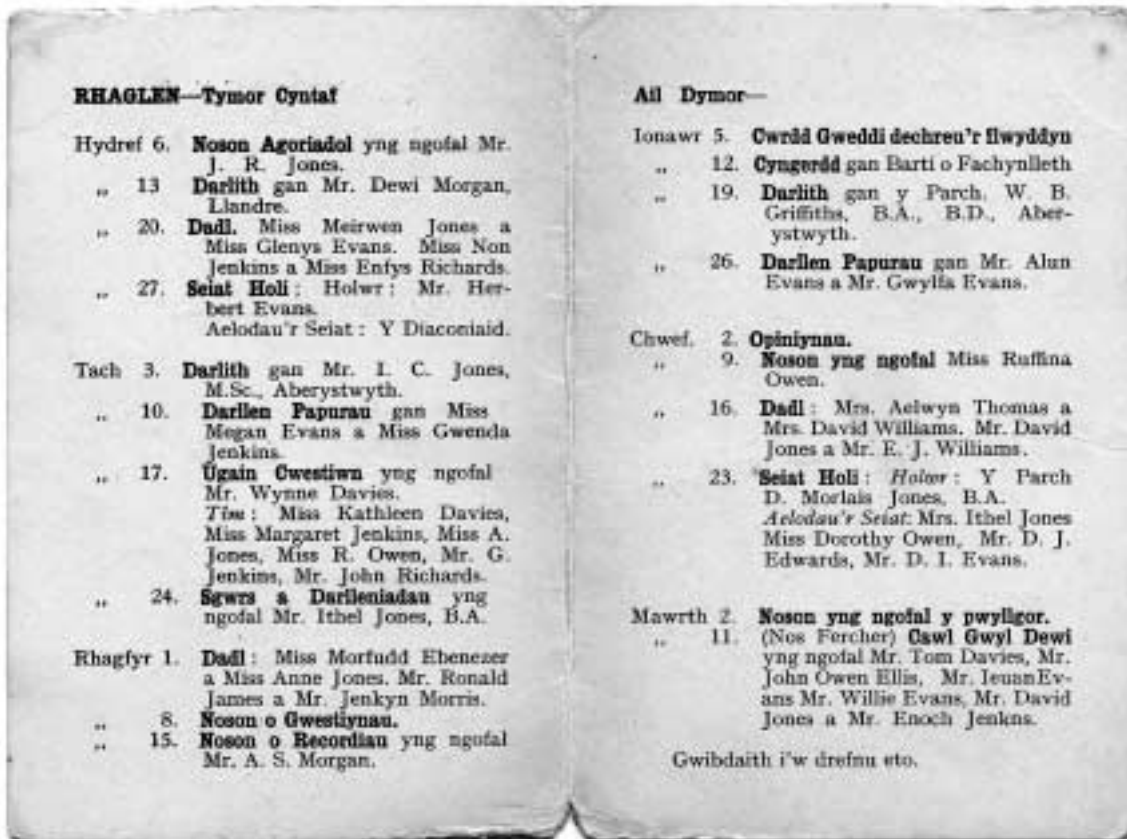
### Y Gymdeithas Ddiwylliadol

Gellir olrhain Cymdeithas Bethel i'r bedwaredd ganrif ar bymtheg ac fe'i cynhelid bob pythefnos dros dymor y gaef. Ar un adeg yn nechrau'r 1950au aeth y festri yn rhy fach a bu sôn am droi'r stablau y tu cefn fel man addas i gyfarfod, ond ymadawodd y gweinidog D. Morlais Jones ac ni ddaeth dim ymhellach o hynny. Yr aelodau eu hunain a fyddai'n cynnal y nosweithiau ac ambell ddarlith weithiau gan wŷr a gwragedd arbennig megis T. Gwynn Jones, Cassie Davies, Gwenallt ac Alwyn D. Rees. Nosweithiau difyr a hwyliog!

bus exclusively for children. It was a day of pleasure and for many the only free day in the year.

### The Cultural Society

The Bethel Society can be traced back to the 19th Century and meetings were held every fortnight during the winter. At one time in the early 1950s the vestry became too small and there was a suggestion to convert the stables at the back into a suitable place to meet but the minister D. Morlais Jones left and nothing came of it. The members themselves conducted the meetings with sometimes the occasional lecture by an outstanding man or woman such as T. Gwynn Jones, Cassie Davies, Gwenallt and Alwyn D. Rees. Entertaining and lively evenings!



Rhaglen y Gymdeithas, 1952–53

The Society's Programme, 1952–53

Pan godwyd yr ysgol newydd daeth aelodau y tri chapel ynghyd i sefydlu Cymdeithas Undebol mewn neuadd fechan gysurus, gyda phaned a sgwrs i derfynu'r nosweithiau. Ni ellid disgwyl gwell awyrgylch, ond pan sefydlwyd y Clwb Nos Wener yn y ddau Lew, daeth dyddiau'r Gymdeithas i ben er colled i'n diwylliant.

When the new school was built members of the three chapels came together and formed the United Society which met in a small, comfortable hall with a cup of tea and a chat at the end of the evening. A better atmosphere could not be envisaged but when the Friday Night Club in the two Lions was established the Society's days came to an end to the detriment of our culture.



*Trip y Gymdeithas i'r Abermaw, 1952*

*The Society's Trip to Barmouth, 1952*

### **Eisteddfod**

Bu'r eisteddfod yn amlwg dros ran helaeth o'r ganrif, a chyn hynny; ac fe'i cynhelid am flynyddoedd ar nos Nadolig yn y capel, cyn codi'r Neuadd Goffa.

Cyrhaeddodd ei phen-llanw ym mlynnyddoedd y pum degau; yn Eisteddfod Goronog, fe'i cynhelid tua chanol Tachwedd a deuai cystadleuwyr, ac eisteddfodwyr o bell ac agos, a byddai'r Neuadd yn orlawn. Gwelwyd nifer o'r enillwyr yn cipio rhai o brif wobrwyr yn Eisteddfod Genedlaethol, ac ar ddiwedd yr eisteddfod byddai dau fws deulawr yn hebrwng y rhai heb geir i Aberystwyth a Machynlleth.

### **Watchnight**

Noson arbennig fyddai'r noson cyn Calan neu'r 'Watchnight' fel y gelwid hi; deuai teuluoedd cyfan o'r pentref a'r wlad i fwynhau noson gymdeithasol, y dynion fyddai'n paratoi'r bwyd ac yn gweini wrth y byrddau, gydag ambell gyngor buddiol gan y gwragedd os byddai angen. Te i'r plant ac ymweliad Siôn Corn i ddechrau, yna hyd ddeg o'r gloch gwledd i'r oedolion yn dilyn gyda dwyawr o Noson Lawen, a digon o dalentau lleol i gynnal y noson.

Yna ychydig cyn hanner nos gwasanaeth yng ngofal y gweinidog i groesawu'r flwyddyn newydd, cyn i bawb wasgaru yn sŵn cyfarchion 'Blwyddyn

### **Eisteddfod**

The Eisteddfod was a special event for most of the century and before that; and for years, before the Memorial Hall was built, it was held on Christmas night in the chapel.

It reached its zenith in the 1950s; a crowning Eisteddfod which was held in mid-November with competitors and eisteddfodwyr coming from far and wide and the hall would be full to capacity. Many of the winners won some of the chief prizes in the National Eisteddfod and at the close of the eisteddfod there would be two double decker buses taking those without cars to Aberystwyth and Machynlleth.

### **Watchnight**

New Year's Eve, or 'Watchnight' as it was called, was a special night. Whole families from the village and the countryside came to enjoy a social evening. The men prepared the food and served at the tables with, if required, the occasional word of advice from the women. To start, tea for the children and a visit from Father Christmas, then at about ten o'clock a feast for the adults followed by two hours of Noson Lawen with plenty of local talent to sustain the evening.

Then, a short while before midnight, the minister held a service to welcome in the New Year before everybody dispersed to the sound of New Year Greetings with some of



*Parti Noson Lawen gyda D. Morlais Jones*

*Noson Lawen with D. Morlais Jones*

Newydd Dda' gyda rhai o'r bechgyn ifainc yn trefnu i gerdded o fferm i fferm i gasglu calennig.

Bu mynd ar gyngherddau, dramâu a nosweithiau llawen gyda chynulleidfa deilwng bob amser yn y Neuadd. Cyn yr Ail Ryfel Byd, bu'r Ysgol Gân, y Band of Hope, Seiat a Chyfarfodydd Gweddi yn sicrhau bod pob noson o'r wythnos yn llawn. Yn ystod ail hanner y ganrif daeth newid amlwg i fywyd yr ardal a'r Capel, wrth i'r setiau teledu gynyddu yng nghartrefi'r fro. Daeth yma ddiwylliant newydd ac estronol, collwyd diddordeb yn y 'pethe', gwelwyd dieithriaid yn dylifo i mewn, ac am y tro cyntaf mewn hanes wele'r Saesneg yn fygythiad i'r iaith; collodd y capeli eu hapêl gyda nifer y ffyddloniaid yn disgyn ymhellach. Eto diolch bod ambell lygedyn o olau; daeth nifer o Gymry ifainc, brwdfrydig i fyw yma dros y blynyddoedd a pharod i rannu o'u doniau yn y capel, yr Ysgol Sul a gweithgareddau eraill yn y pentref.

Yn ystod y ddwy ganrif yn hanes Bethel bu deunaw o weinidogion yn gwasanaethu yma a mawr fu eu cyfraniad a'u dylanwad mewn gwahanol gyfnodau a than wahanol amgylchiadau. Codwyd yn yr eglwys 32 o

the young men arranging to walk from farm to farm collecting 'calennig' (a new year gift).

Concerts, plays and social evenings (nosweithiau llawen) held in the Hall were well supported. Before the Second World War the Singing School, the Band of Hope, the fellowship meeting and the prayer meeting ensured that every weekday evening was catered for. During the second half of the century a significant change took place in the life of the district and the chapel as television sets came to the homes of the area. Interest in 'y pethe' was lost with the advent of a new foreign culture and for the first time in history English became a threat to the language; the chapel lost its appeal with the number of faithful members decreasing further. Yet, thanks for the occasional glimmer of light; over the years a number of young and enthusiastic Welsh speakers, who came here to live, were prepared to share their talents in the chapel, the Sunday School and other activities in the village.

During the two centuries of Bethel's history eighteen ministers have served here and their contribution and influence in various periods and under different conditions were great. 32 men brought up in the chapel became ministers and several of

feibion yn weinidogion, a daeth llawer ohonynt yn ddyinion amlwg ym mywyd ein Cenedl. Bu pump ohonynt yn Llywyddion yr Enwad sef William Evans, David Adams, E.J. Owen, John G.E. Watkin ac F.M. Jones. Yr olaf o fechgyn yr Eglwys a godwyd i'r Weinidogaeth yw D. Gwylfa Evans sy'n weinidog yn Llundain.

Gyda'n gweinidog presennol y Parchedig Gareth Evans Rowlands yn ymadael, bydd yn rhaid i Fethel wynebu pennod newydd, a thybed a fydd honno yn bennod o adfywiad neu yn bennod y cloi? Mae'r ateb yn nwylo ein hieuentid. *Eraill a lafuriant, chwithau a aethoch i mewn i'w llafur hwynt*.

Bu R.E. Jones yn weinidog o 1899 hyd 1917 ac fe'i dilynwyd gan Griffith Jones a fu yma am dair blynedd yn unig. O 1927 hyd ei farw ym 1948 bu Fred Jones yn weinidog yma. Yn un o feibion disglair y Cilie, bu ei ddylanwad yn fawr ar yr ardal, roedd yn ysgolhaig, diwinydd a bardd, a rhoes yn ogystal flynyddoedd o wasanaeth ar y Cyngor Sir gan frwydro yn gadarn dros yr iaith, a phan gododd un tro a mynnu siarad yn Gymraeg, edrychai pawb arno'n syn ac meddai 'Ry'ch chi'n edrych arna i fel pe bai cynn yn tyfu allan o'm pen am siarad fy iaith, mi fyddde yn fwy naturiol pe bai nhw'n tyfu o'ch penne chi am beidio ei siarad'. Bu'n gymorth ac yn gefn i lawer mewn dyddiau anodd, ac i ni a gafodd y fraint o'n derbyn yn aelodau o dan ei weinidogaeth erys ei ddylanwad a'n hedmygedd ohono yn fawr. Yn y gyfrol 'Teulu'r Cilie' a gyhoeddwyd y llynedd ceir portread cyflawn ohono mewn pennod gyfan.

Y gweinidogion eraill â'i dilynodd hyd ddiwedd yr ugeinfed ganrif yw D. Morlais Jones, D. Iorwerth Jones, D. Gwyn Evans, Guto Prys ap Gwynfor, T.J. Irfon Evans a Gareth Evans Rowlands; ac os bu eu blynyddoedd yma yn fyrrach rhoes bob un ohonynt o'u gorau i gynnal yr Achos, a mawr ein diolch a'n gwerthfawrogiad o'u llafur, a than eu gweinidogaeth yn ystod y ganrif codwyd llu o feibion a merched a fu'n bileri yn yr ardal, y rhai di-sôn amdanynt a roes gyfraniad gwerthfawr mewn ffyddlondeb a gweithgarwch.

Daeth eraill yn amlwg ym mywyd y genedl gan amlygu'u doniau mewn meysydd gwahanol. Sylwn ar rai ohonynt.

them became prominent in the life of our nation. Five of them, William Evans, David Adams, E.J. Owen, John G.E. Watkin and F.M. Jones became Denomination Presidents. The last of the chapel's members to be ordained was D. Gwylfa Evans who is a minister in London.

With the present minister, the Reverend Gareth Evans Rowlands, leaving, Bethel will have to face a new chapter. I wonder if it will be a chapter of revival or the closing chapter. The answer lies with our young people. *'Eraill a lafuriant, chwithau a aethoch i mewn i'w llafur hwynt'* (Others toiled, you reaped the rewards of that toil).

R.E. Jones was minister from 1899 until 1917 and was followed by Griffith Jones who was here for only three years. From 1927 until he died in 1948 Fred Jones was the minister here. One of the brilliant sons of 'y Cilie', his influence in the district was great; he was a scholar, a theologian and a poet who also gave many years of service on the County Council and campaigned strongly for the language. Once, when he insisted on speaking in Welsh every one looked at him in amazement and he said, 'You are looking at me as though there were horns growing on my head for speaking my own language; it would be more natural if they were growing on your heads for *not* speaking the language.' He helped and supported many people in difficult times and for those of us who had the privilege to be accepted as members during his ministry his influence and our respect for him remains. In the book, *Teulu'r Cilie* (The Cilie Family), which was published last year, there is a whole chapter giving a full portrait of him.

The other ministers who followed, taking us to the end of the 20th century, were D. Morlais Jones, D. Iorwerth Jones, D. Gwyn Evans, Guto Prys ap Gwynfor, T.J. Irfon Evans and Gareth Evans Rowlands; their years here were shorter but each gave of his best to sustain the Cause and great is our thanks and appreciation for their labour. During the century and under their ministry a large number of men and women were raised in the chapel; these unapplauded people were the stalwarts of the district who made a valuable contribution in faithfulness and service.

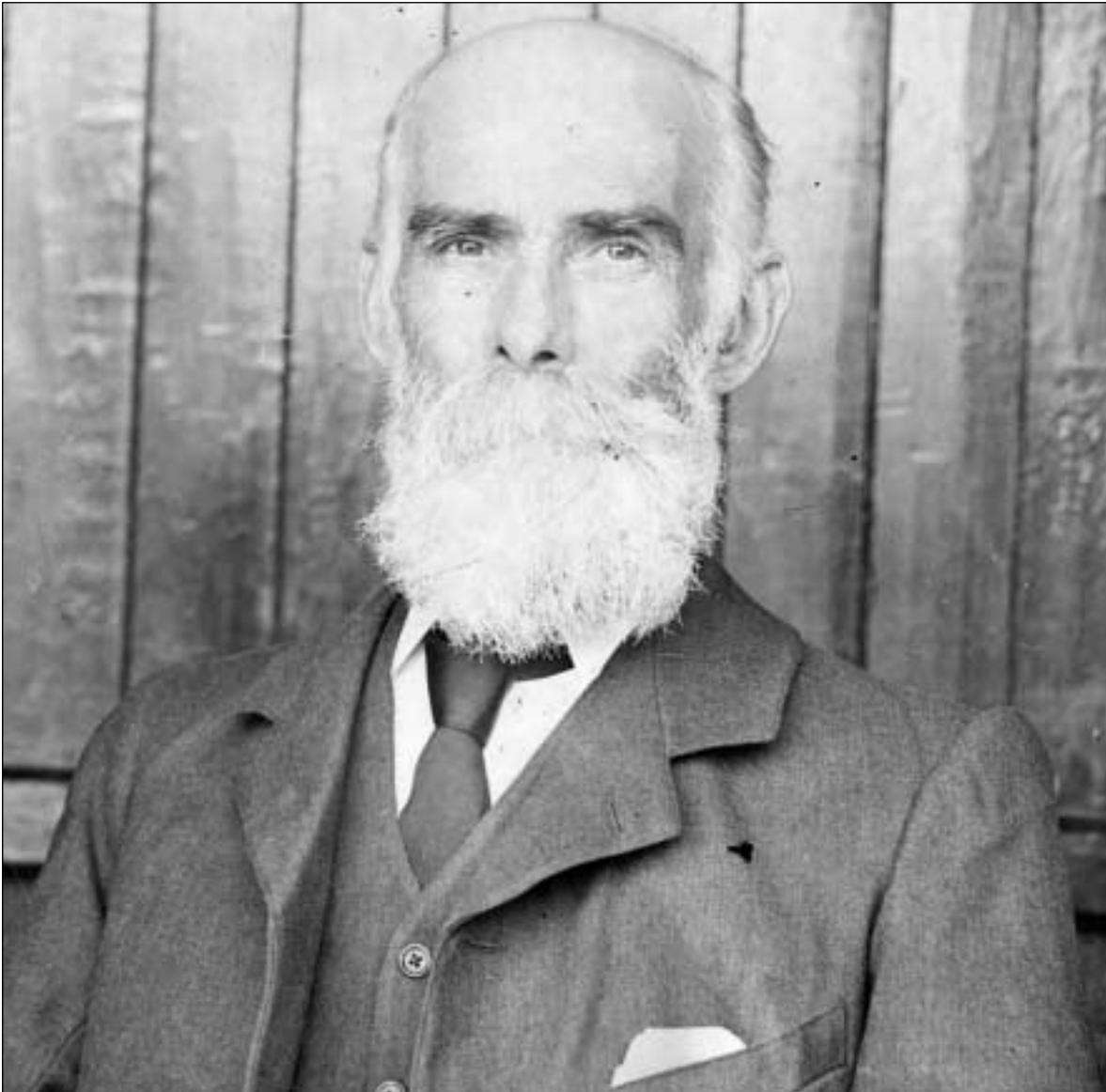
Others, showing their talents in various fields, became well-known in the life of the nation. Let us note some of them.

**David Adams, 1845–1923**

Bu'n gweithio am gyfnod yn y gwaith mwyn cyn ei dderbyn i Goleg Normal Bangor; bu wedyn yn ysgolfeistr cyn mynd yn weinidog yn Hawen a Bryngwenith, yna i Fethesda lle'r oedd R. S. Hughes y cerddor yn organydd, ac oddi yno i Grove Street, Lerpwl. Roedd yn draethodwr gwych, yn llenor a diwinydd disglair, gan ennill am draethawd ar 'Hegel' yn yr Eisteddfod Genedlaethol. Cyhoeddodd nifer o erthyglau ac ystyrid ef yn ŵr arbennig yn ei faes. Enillodd hefyd y Goron Genedlaethol a chafodd radd DD gan Brifysgol Cymru. Dywed un arall o feibion disglair y fro amdano sef y Dr Tom Richards a anwyd ym Maes-glas. 'Adams oedd y meddyliwr mwyaf anturus a beiddgar ym mywyd diwinyddiaeth Cymru yn ein hoes ni.' Ef yw awdur y garol

**David Adams, 1845–1923**

He worked for a time in the lead mine before being accepted at the Normal College, Bangor; afterwards he was a schoolmaster before becoming a minister in Hawen and Bryngwenith, then to Bethesda where the musician, R.S. Hughes, was organist and from there to Grove Street, Liverpool. He was a splendid essayist, a literary man and a brilliant theologian; he was a winner at the National Eisteddfod for an essay on 'Hegel'. He published a number of articles and was considered a specialist in his field. He also won the National Crown and was awarded a DD degree by the University of Wales. Dr Tom Richards, born in Maes-glas and another brilliant son of the district, said, 'Adams was the most adventurous and daring thinker in the life of Welsh theology in our time.' He was the author of the well-



*David Adams (E.O. Jones)*

adnabyddus *Engyl glân o fro'r gogoniant*. Fe'i claddwyd yn Nhal-y-bont a chyhoeddwyd cyfrol goffa iddo gan E. Keri Evans a W. Pari Hughes.

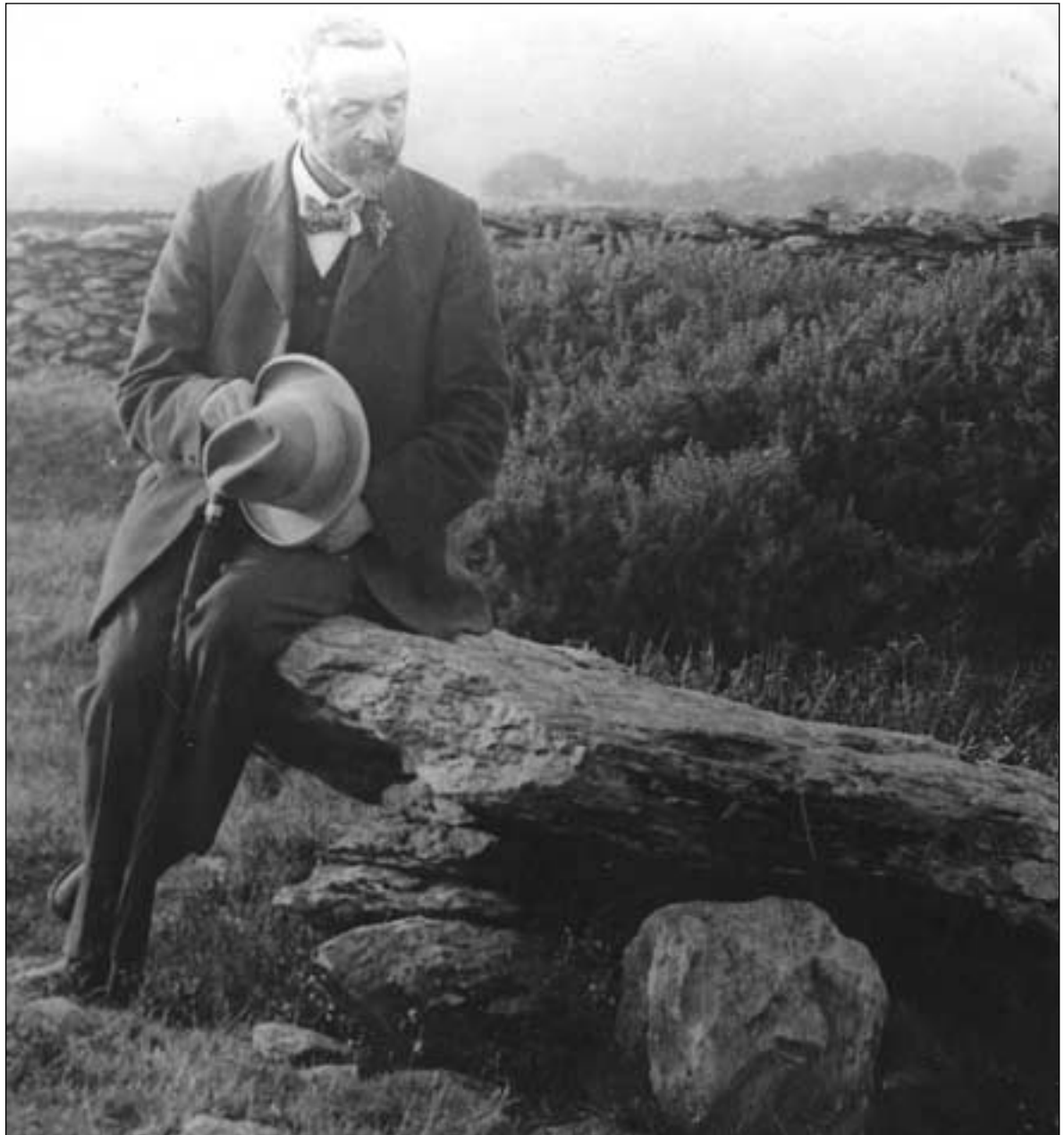
**Richard Morgan, 1854–1939**

Cafodd ei addysg yn ysgol y pentref a bu'n dysgu am ychydig yn Aberystwyth cyn symud i Lanarmon-yn-Iâl, a bu yno am 40 mlynedd yn brifathro. Natur oedd maes ei ddiddordeb ac enillodd deirgwaith yn yr Eisteddfod Genedlaethol am erthyglau ar y pwnc. Cyhoeddodd nifer o lyfrau – *Tro Drwy'r Wig*, *Llyfr Adar*, *Llyfr Blodau*, *Rhamant y Gôg Lwydlas* a chyfrannodd lawer i *Cymru* a chylchgronau eraill. Roedd wedi astudio bywyd natur yn drylwyr ac mae'r cyfan o'i

known carol, *Engyl glân o fro'r gogoniant*. He was buried in Tal-y-bont and a memorial book to him has been published by E. Keri Evans and W. Pari Hughes.

**Richard Morgan, 1854–1939**

He received his education in the village school and taught for a time at Aberystwyth before moving to Llanarmon-yn-Iâl where he was a headmaster for 40 years. Nature was his field of interest and he was a three times winner for articles on the subject at the National Eisteddfod. He published a number of books – *Tro Drwy'r Wig*, *Llyfr Adar*, *Llyfr Blodau*, *Rhamant y Gog Lwydlas* and contributed many articles to *Cymru* and other journals. His study of nature was



*Richard Morgan wrth fedd Taliesin (E.O. Jones).*

*Richard Morgan at Taliesin's grave (E.O. Jones).*

waith yn fywiog a diddorol. Yn ei gyflwyniad i *Llyfr Adar* dywed, 'Ymdrechais ysgrifennu yn syml eithr mewn iaith goeth a phersain'. Dyna a wnaeth. Cafodd MA gan Brifysgol Cymru a threuliodd ei flynyddoedd olaf yn Nhal-y-bont ac yma y claddwyd ef, ond trist meddwl nad oes cymaint â darn o lechen ar ei fedd.

#### William Davies, 1850–1934

Cigydd wrth ei alwedigaeth a byddai ef a'i frawd yn cadw siop ym Mhen-lôn, a gelwid y tir sydd heddiw yn ystâd Maes-y-deri yn 'Cae William Bwtswr'. Dyma un o'r dynion mwyaf diwylliedig a fagwyd yng Ngheredigion, a sut y llwyddodd i gynhyrchu cymaint o waith sy'n ddirgelwch yn wir. Ni chafodd fawr o addysg a thrigai mewn cyfnod pan oedd cyfleusterau'n brin. Llên Gwerin oedd ei faes ac enillodd droeon am draethodau yn yr Eisteddfod Genedlaethol – ym Mlaenau Ffestiniog ym 1898 gwobrwywyd ef gyda chanmoliaeth uchel y beirniad Syr John Rhys am ei draethawd *Llên Gwerin Meirion*, a chyhoeddwyd y gwaith sy'n 200 o dudalennau yng Nghyfansoddiadau'r Eisteddfod. Yn Aberystwyth yn 1916 daeth eto i'r brig am *Llên Gwerin a Thraddodiadau Sir Aberteifi* traethawd sy'n 39 pennod a 537 tudalen ffwlscap. Ysgrifennodd ar *Llên Gwerin Cwm Tawe*, *Llên Gwerin ac Ofergoeliaeth Sir Fôn*, *Caneuon Ychain Morgannwg* a *Casgliad o Dribannau*, heb sôn am nifer o destunau ychwanegol y bu'n cystadlu arnynt mewn eisteddfodau lleol a chenedlaethol. Byddai'n ysgrifennu yng ngolau lamp baraffin a'r cyfan o'i waith mewn llawysgrifen ddestlus. Medrai Ffrangeg a rhai o'r leithoedd Celtaidd. Roedd hefyd yn gerddor gwydych ac yn canu'r harmoniw m ym Methel. Ni chafodd yn ei ddydd y sylw a haeddai na'i gydnabod gan neb am ei gyfraniad. Yn awr dros drigain mlynedd ar ôl ei farw y gwelir ymddiddori yn ei fywyd a'i waith.

#### J. J. Williams, 1869–1954

Fe'i ganwyd yn Nhaigwynion ac roedd ei dad yn aelod ffyddlon ym Methel, a deuai yntau i'r oedfaon ar Nos Sul yn llaw ei dad. Symudodd y teulu pan oedd ond ifanc i Sir Forgannwg, a daeth J.J. yn un o ddynion amlycaf ein cenedl. Enillodd y Gadair Genedlaethol ddwywaith ac erys ei awdl Y

thorough and all his work is lively and interesting. In his introduction to *Llyfr Adar* he said, 'I have tried to write simply but in cultured and pleasing language' – and so he did. He was awarded an MA by the University of Wales and spent his last years in Tal-y-bont and is buried here but it is sad to think that there is no stone on his grave.

#### William Davies, 1850–1934

A butcher by occupation, he and his brother kept a shop in Pen-lôn and the land which is now the Maes-y-deri estate was called 'William Butcher's Field'. He was one of the most cultured men to be brought up in Ceredigion and his ability to produce so much work is indeed a mystery. He received very little education and he lived at a time when there were few opportunities. His interest was in folk lore and he won several prizes for essays at the National Eisteddfod – in 1898 at Blaenau Ffestiniog he received a prize and much praise from the adjudicator, Sir John Rhys, for his essay, *Llên Gwerin Meirion* (Meirion's Folk Lore) and the work of 200 pages was published in the Eisteddfod Compositions. In the Aberystwyth Eisteddfod in 1916, he again came out on top with *Llên Gwerin a Thraddodiadau Sir Aberteifi* (The Literature and Traditions of Cardiganshire) which is an essay of 39 chapters and 537 foolscap pages. He wrote *Llên Gwerin Cwm Tawe* (Swansea Valley folk lore), *Llên Gwerin ac Ofergoeliaeth Sir Fôn* (Anglesey folk lore and superstitions), *Caneuon Ychain Morgannwg* (Glamorgan oxen songs) and *Casgliad o Dribannau* (A collection of verse in triple metre) as well as a number of additional topics for competitions in local and national eisteddfodau. He wrote by paraffin lamp light and all his work was written in neat handwriting. He spoke French and some of the Celtic languages. He was also a splendid musician who played the harmonium in Bethel. He did not in his time have the attention he deserved nor was his contribution acknowledged. Now, sixty years after his death, there is interest in his life and work.

#### J.J. Williams, 1869–1954

He was born in Taigwynion and his father was a faithful member at Bethel and he came to the Sunday evening services with his father. When he was still young the family moved to Glamorganshire and J.J. became one of the most prominent men of our nation.

Lloer ymysg goreuon y ganrif, a thybed nad cofio'r Suliau y cerddai i Fethel a gawn yn ei awdl.

*I ryw dawel Fethel fach  
Rhodd i lu ffordd oleuach.*

Cyhoeddodd gyfrol o'i storïau difyr yn *Straeon y Gilfach Ddu* yn ogystal â chyfrol o farddoniaeth *Y Lloer a Cherddi Eraill*, a dengys testunau fel *Cotiau Coch Gogerddan*, *Clychau Cantre'r Gwaelod*, *Llanfihangel Genau'r Glyn*, nad anghofiodd bro ei febyd. Dyma linellau cyntaf ei gerdd i *Hen Baradwys*:

*Lle rhed Eleri dan y coed  
O Dal-y-bont i'r môr,  
Mae rhyw baradwys wen erioed  
Yn agor im ei dôr.*

Bu'n weinidog ar nifer o eglwysi ac yn olaf yn y Tabernacl, Treforys. Bu'n Archdderwydd yn niwedd y tridegau ac yn feirniad cyson ar yr Awdl yn yr Eisteddfod Genedlaethol dros nifer o flynyddoedd.

#### **E.J. Owen, 1883–1955**

Cafodd ei eni a'i fagu ar fferm Yr Allt Goch. Aeth ei frawd yn offeiriad i Swydd Northampton a bu yntau yn weinidog yng Nghwmaman ac yna am dros 30 mlynedd yn Salem, Caernarfon. Roedd yn un o bregethwyr amlycaf ei gyfnod, a galw am ei wasanaeth mewn Cyfarfodydd Pregethu. Roedd ei ddarlithiau ar Ceiriog ac Eifion Wyn yn boblogaidd iawn a bu'n arweinydd llwyfan fwy nag unwaith yn yr Eisteddfod Genedlaethol.

Do, fe roes Bethel wasanaeth clodwïw dros yr ugeinfed ganrif, ond anodd dyfalu ei dyfodol. Erbyn hyn mae'n rhannu gofalaeth â nifer o eglwysi annibynnol eraill yn y rhan yma o'r sir. Pa mor barod yw ein pobl ifainc i ddod yn aelodau cyflawn a gweithgar? Bu y Tabernacl y drws nesaf yn eglwys fywiog gyda 200 o aelodau yn ei chynnal, ond erbyn hyn trist yw gweld y drysau wedi'u cau, ei gwedd yn dadfeilio ac yn enghraifft barhaus o'r hyn sy'n digwydd yn y Gymru sy' ohoni.

*J.R. Jones*

He won the Chair at the National Eisteddfod twice and his ode, *Y Lloer* (The Moon) remains among the best of the century. I wonder if he was remembering the Sundays when he walked to Bethel in the following lines:

*I ryw dawel Fethel fach  
Rhodd i lu ffordd oleuach*

He published a volume of entertaining stories, *Straeon y Gilfach Ddu* (Tales of Gilfach Ddu) and a volume of poetry, *Y Lloer a Cherddi Eraill* (The Moon and Other Poems). Subject matters such as *Cotiau Coch Gogerddan* (The Red Coats of Gogerddan), *Clychau Cantre'r Gwaelod* (The Bells of Cantre'r Gwaelod), *Llanfihangel Geneu'r Glyn* vouch that he did not forget the area in which he grew up. His poem to *Hen Baradwys* (Old Paradise) begins like this:

*Lle rhed Eleri dan y coed  
O Dal-y-bont i'r mor,  
Mae rhyw baradwys wen erioed  
Yn agor im ei dôr.*

He was a minister at several chapels, the last being the Tabernacle, Morryston. He was Archdruid at the end of the thirties and a regular adjudicator of the ode in the National Eisteddfod for a number of years.

#### **E.J. Owen, 1883–1955**

He was born and brought up on Alltgoch farm. His brother became a vicar in Northamptonshire and he himself was a minister at Cwmaman and then at Salem, Caernarfon for over 30 years. He was one of the most famous preachers of his time and was in demand at Preaching Festivals. His lectures on Ceiriog and Eifion Wyn were very popular and he was a National Eisteddfod compere more than once.

Yes, Bethel has given magnificent service in the twentieth century but it is difficult to imagine its future. Today, a Bethel minister has in his care a number of independent chapels in this part of the county. How ready are our young people to become full, industrious members? Tabernacl, next door, was a lively church with 200 members but today it is sad to see the doors closed, its appearance decaying and it is a perpetual example of what is happening in Wales today.

*J.R. Jones*