Y Tabernacl

Tebyg i achos y Bedyddwyr ddechrau yr un adeg â'r Annibynwyr gan ddilyn mwy neu lai yr un patrwm. Aeth Richard Griffiths, y Felin, ar noson waith i wrando ar Samuel Breeze yn pregethu yn ffermdy Bwlchroser, Bont-goch a chafodd hwnnw y fath ddylanwad arno nes iddo ei gymell i Dal-y-bont a phregethodd o dan y goeden fawr ar waelod y pentref lle bu rhai o arloeswyr cynnar yr Annibynwyr hefyd yn cynnal eu cyfarfodydd cyntaf. Roedd hyn tua 1803.

Yn fuan wedyn trefnwyd i gyfarfod mewn tŷ annedd ym Mhen-lôn, ac yn ddiweddarach codwyd capel y Tabernacl ar dir Penrhylog o fewn ychydig lathenni i Bethel ac nid yn aml yn y wlad y gwelir dau gapel mor agos i'w gilydd ac yn yr haf, pan fyddai ffenestri y ddau adeilad ar agor, byddai'r ddwy gynulleidfa yn clywed ei gilydd yn canu.

Ar ddechrau'r ugeinfed ganrif roedd nifer yr aelodau dros 200 a bu'n eglwys gynnes a gweithgar dros ran helaeth o'r ganrif. Bu'r Ysgol Sul yn ddylanwad cryf ar ei haelodau a'r fro, a dywed un o'i disgyblion, y Dr Thomas Richards, ei fod yn ddyledus iddi am blannu ynddo stôr o adnodau ysgrythurol a gwybodaeth Feiblaidd. Ymhlith gweithgareddau eraill a fu'n llewyrchus dros y blynyddoedd bu'r gymdeithas ddiwylliadol, y cyfarfodydd gweddi, yr eisteddfod gadeiriol a gynhelid yn flynyddol, ac yna'r cyfarfodydd pregethu bob nos Iau a Gwener y Groglith, a dau o gewri'r enwad yn eu tro yn denu'r tyrfaoedd.

Bu bron 30 o weinidogion yn llafurio yma yn ystod y ddwy ganrif a chodwyd 28 o'i meibion i'r weinidogaeth. Y pedwar olaf oedd S.J. Leeke, a fu'n weinidog ym Methesda, Abertawe yn ystod blynyddoedd yr Ail Ryfel Byd pan chwalwyd ei gartre a'i holl eiddo adeg y bomio ar y ddinas; Sidney J. Jenkins; T. Jones Evans a W.H. Rowlands.

Adeg dathlu canrif a hanner yr eglwys ym 1953 cyhoeddwyd cyfrol fechan *Rhamant y Tabernacl 1803–1953* o dan olygaeth y gweinidog ar y pryd W. J. Gruffydd. Ceir ynddi grynhoad o hanes yr eglwys ynghyd â rhan o anerchiad y Dr Thomas Richards ar *Colofnau'r Tabernacl* a draddodwyd yn Nhal-

The Tabernacle

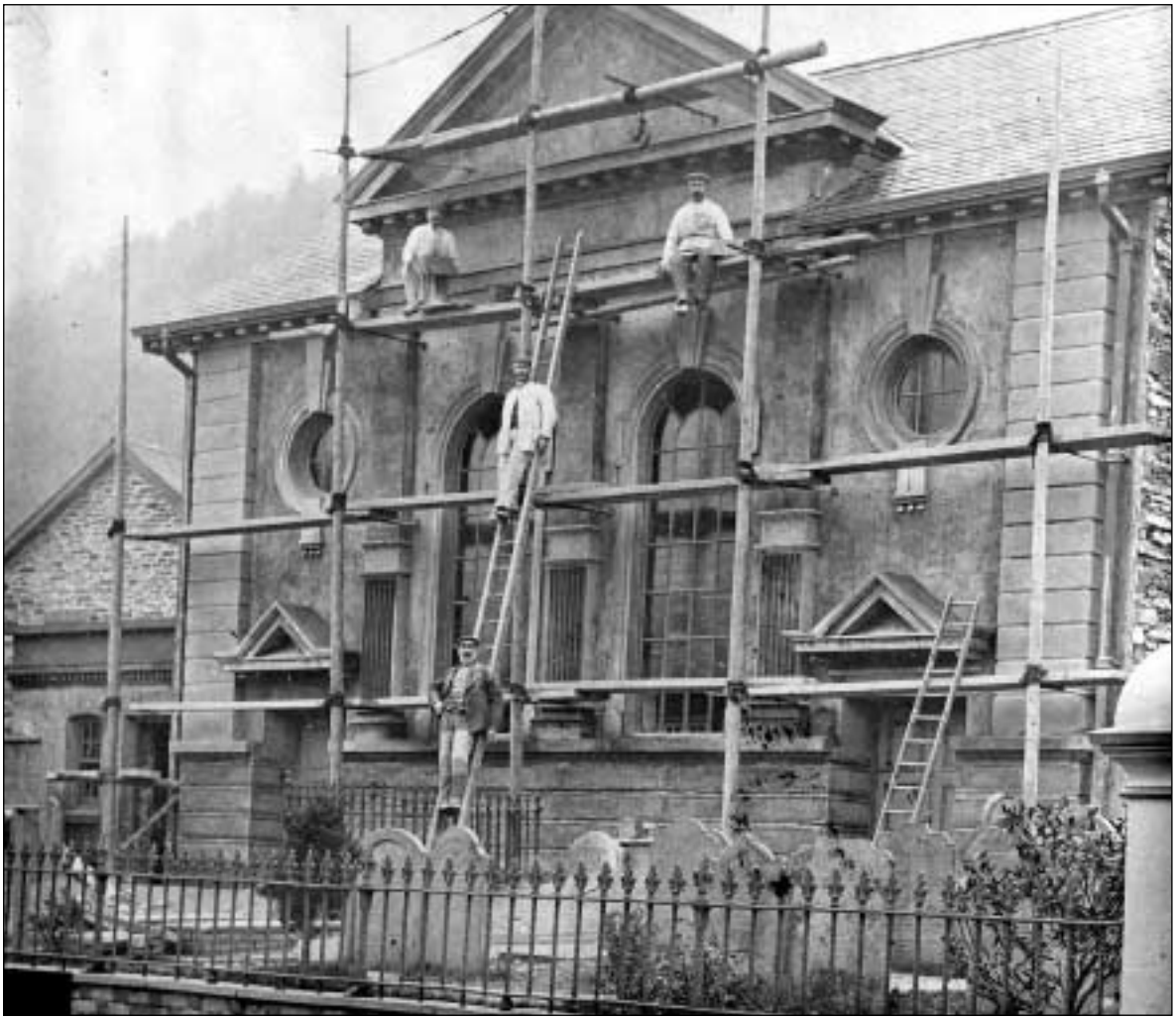
It is likely that the Baptists' cause was started at the same time as the Independants' cause and followed much the same pattern. Richard Griffiths, the 'Felin' went one evening after work to listen to Samuel Breeze preaching at Bwlchroser farmhouse, Bontgoch and he was so influenced by him that he asked him to come to Tal-y-bont where he preached under a large tree at the bottom of the village where some of the early pioneers of the Independants also held their first meetings. This was circa 1803.

Shortly afterwards arrangements were made to meet in a house in Pen-lôn and later the Tabernacle chapel was built on Penrhylog land within a few yards of Bethel. One does not often see two chapels situated so close to each other in the countryside. During the summer when the windows of both chapels would be open the two congregations would be able to hear each other singing.

At the beginning of the twentieth century there were over 200 members and it was a warm and active chapel for a large part of the century. The Sunday School had a strong influence upon its members and the area and one of its pupils, Dr Thomas Richards, said that he was indebted to it for his store of verses from the scriptures and his Biblical knowledge. Amongst other activities which flourished over the years were the cultural society, the prayer meetings, the chairing eisteddfod which was held annually and the preaching meetings which were held every Good Friday and the Thursday evening before with two of the stalwarts of the denomination in their turn drawing the crowds.

Almost 30 ministers served here during the two centuries and 28 of its members entered the ministry. The last four were S.J. Leeke, who was a minister at Bethesda, Swansea during the Second World War when his home and all his possessions were destroyed during the bombing of the city; Sidney J. Jenkins; T. Jones Evans and W.H. Rowlands.

When the chapel was celebrating a century and a half since its foundation in 1953 a small volume was published, *Rhamant y Tabernacl 1803–1953* (The Romance of the Tabernacle



Atgyweirio'r Tabernacl (E.O. Jones)

Renovating the Tabernacle (E.O. Jones)

y-bont ar achlysur ymweliad Cymanfa Caerfyrddin a Cheredigion ym Mehefin 1950. Roedd y cyn-archdderwydd, W.J. Gruffydd, yn weinidog yn ystod y pum degau ac ym Mans y Tabernacl y cyfansoddodd *Ffenestri*, y bryddest a enillodd iddo goron yr Eisteddfod Genedlaethol ym Mhwllheli ym 1955.

Yr olaf o'i gweinidogion i gartrefu yma oedd y diweddar Roger Jones, yntau yn un o'r englynwyr gorau a chyhoeddodd dair cyfrol o'i gerddi. Ar ôl ymddeol ym 1978 dychwelodd i fro ei febyd yn Llŷn. Bu'n weinidog ar y Tabernacl am dros 21 mlynedd.

Erbyn hyn roedd nifer yr aelodau yn lleihau'n gyflym ac oherwydd bod y capel yn dechrau dadfeilio a heb fod yn ddiogel i fynd iddo bu'n rhaid dirwyn yr achos i ben ym 1991.

Un a fu'n gefn i'r eglwys drwy'i oes ac yn ysgrifennydd hyd y diwedd oedd y diweddar Huw T. Huws, yn enedigol o Dy'n-rhelyg. Anodd meddwl am neb a

1803–1953) edited by W.J. Gruffydd, the minister at the time. It contained a summary of the history of the chapel along with part of an address by Dr Thomas Richards on *Colofnau'r Tabernacl* which was given at Tal-y-bont during the visit of the Carmarthen and Ceredigion 'Gymanfa' in June 1950. The former archdruid W.J. Gruffydd was the minister during the fifties and it was at the Tabernacle's Manse that he composed *Ffenestri*, the poem which won him the crown at the National Eisteddfod at Pwllheli in 1955.

The last minister to make his home here was the late Roger Jones, who was one of the best composers of 'englynion' and who published three volumes of poetry. After his retirement in 1978 he returned to Llŷn, the area where he was brought up. He was the minister at the Tabernacle for over 21 years.

By now the membership was diminishing rapidly and because the chapel was beginning to fall into disrepair and was unsafe to enter it had to be closed in 1991.

Huw T. Huws, who was born at Ty'n-rhelyg,

Yr Archdderwydd Dyfnallt yn coroni W.J. Gruffydd, 1955

The Archdruid Dyfnallt crowning W.J. Gruffydd, 1955

wasanaethodd ei filltir sgwâr yn fwy trylwyr, yn fardd gwych ac yn ŵr diwylliedig. Siom iddo oedd gweld cloi'r drysau am y tro olaf. Magwyd nifer o golofnau eraill dros y blynyddoedd, ac amlygodd nifer ohonynt eu doniau fel cerddorion. Cofiwn hefyd am rai o'r gwŷr enwog a fagwyd yn yr eglwys a ddaeth yn adnabyddus drwy Gymru. Nodwn rai ohonynt.

James (Spinther) James, 1837–1914

Cafodd ei eni ym Mraichgarw, Tal-y-bont ond symudodd y teulu i Gwm Tŷ-nant a chartrefu ym Mwlchydderwen gan barhau i addoli yn y Tabernacl. Bu'n fugail a gyrrwr gwartheg cyn mynd i weithio yn un o'r pyllau glo yn Aberdâr. Aeth wedyn i'r Athrofa yn Hwlffordd a bu'n weinidog ar sawl eglwys ac am gyfnod byr yn America; ond fel hanesydd y daeth i amlygrwydd, gyda'i bedair cyfrol ar hanes y Bedyddwyr yng Nghymru yn glod i'w ymchwil a'i waith. Cyhoeddodd hefyd gasgliad o emynau a nifer o gyfieithiadau.

and the chapel secretary until the end, was a stalwart of the chapel throughout his life. It would be difficult to think of anybody who did more to serve his own square mile: an excellent poet and a cultured man. It was a great disappointment for him when the doors closed for the final time. Other stalwarts were nurtured over the years, and several displayed their talents as musicians. Let us also remember some of the famous men who were brought up in the chapel and became well known throughout Wales. Here are a few of them.

James (Spinther) James, 1837–1914

He was born at Braichgarw, Tal-y-bont but his family moved to Cwm Tŷ-nant and settled in Bwlchydderwen, continuing to worship at the Tabernacle. He was a shepherd and a drover before going to work in the coalmines in Aberdare. He then went to College at Haverfordwest and became a minister at several chapels, including a short period in America; but it was as an historian that he became well-known, writing four volumes on the history of the Baptists in Wales which were a credit to his research work. He also published a collection of hymns and several translations.

John Ceulanydd Williams, 1847–1899

Cafodd ei fagu yn y pentref, dysgodd grefft gwehydd a bu'n gweithio yn un o weithfeydd mwyn yr ardal cyn mynd i goleg yr enwad yn Llangollen. Bu'n weinidog ar nifer o eglwysi yn cynnwys Dinbych, Amlwch, Merthyr a Maesteg. Yn fardd a llenor amlwg yn ei ddydd enillodd y Gadair yn Eisteddfod Genedlaethol 1896 am ei awdl *Pulpud Cymru*. Bu'n feirniad barddoniaeth droeon yn y Brifwyl a chyhoeddodd gyfrol ar *Athrylith Ceiriog*.

Richard Machno Humphreys, 1852–1904

Yn enedigol o Dal-y-bont bu'n gweithio yn un o'r gweithfeydd mwyn. Aeth i'r lofa yng Nghilfach-goch, Morgannwg. Dechreuodd bregethu ac aeth i Goleg Llangollen. Bu'n weinidog ar nifer o eglwysi, yn bregethwr amlwg ac enillodd ei Goron Genedlaethol am ei bryddest 'Tom Elis'.

Dr Thomas Richards, 1878–1962

Fe'i ganwyd ym Maes-glas ond symudodd y teulu i Ynystudur ger Tre'r-ddôl. 'Roedd yn hanesydd, darlithydd a chasglwr llawysgrifau. Cyhoeddodd nifer o gyfrolau ysgolheigaidd yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Bu'n Llyfrgellydd Coleg y Brifysgol ym Mangor. Ef oedd awdur y ddwy gyfrol ddifyr *Atgofion Cardi* a *Rhagor o Atgofion Cardi*. Yn Fedyddiwr selog byddai ef a'i dad yn cerdded dros dair milltir bob Sul i oedfaon y Tabernacl. Ar achlysur canmlwyddiant ei eni ym 1978 cyhoeddwyd cyfrol *Rhwng y Silffoedd* yn cynnwys nifer o'i ysgrifau a'i sgyrsiau radio, a dywed Syr Thomas Parry yn ei gyflwyniad i'r gyfrol, '*iddo adael ar ei ôl, nid yn unig helaethrwydd rhyfedd o gynnyrch ysgolheigaidd sy'n glod iddo ef ei hun ac i Brifysgol Cymru ond hefyd gorff o ysgrifau sy'n ddrych i'w bersonoliaeth ef ei hun ac i fywyd Cymru mewn cyfnod arbennig iawn yn ei hanes, cyfnod na welir byth eto ei gyffelyb na'i gystal*'.

Trist yw gweld cyflwr presennol yr adeilad yn arbennig i'r rhai a fagwyd yma sy'n ei gofio mor wahanol pan oedd yr achos yn llewyrchus, ac anodd dyfalu beth a ddigwydd iddo gan fod Cadw â llais yn ei ddyfodol.

J.R. Jones

John Ceulanydd Williams, 1847–1899

He was brought up in the village, learned the craft of the weaver and worked in the local lead mines before going to the denomination's college at Llangollen. He was a minister at several chapels including Denbigh, Amlwch, Merthyr and Maesteg. He was a prominent poet and writer who won the Chair at the National Eisteddfod in 1896 for his ode, *Pulpud Cymru* (The Pulpit of Wales). He was an adjudicator of poetry several times in the National Eisteddfod and published a volume on *Athrylith Ceiriog* (Ceiriog's Genius).

Richard Machno Humphreys, 1852–1904

He was born in Tal-y-bont and worked in one of the lead mines. He went to work in the coal mines in Gilfach-goch, Glamorganshire. He began preaching and went to Llangollen College. He was the minister at several chapels and won the National Crown for his poem, 'Tom Ellis'.

Dr Thomas Richards, 1878–1962

He was born at Maes-glas but the family moved to Ynystudur near Tre'r ddol. He was an historian, lecturer, and collector of manuscripts. He published several scholarly volumes in Welsh and in English. He became Librarian at University College Bangor. He was the author of the two amusing volumes, *Atgofion Cardi* and *Rhagor o Atgofion Cardi*. Being very keen Baptists, he and his father would walk over three miles every Sunday to services at the Tabernacle. In 1978, a hundred years after he was born, a volume called *Rhwng y Silffoedd*, which included several of his articles and radio conversations, was published. Sir Thomas Parry, in his introduction to the book, said, '*He left behind not only an amazing amount of scholarly output, which is a credit to him and to the University of Wales, but also a collection of articles which are a mirror of his own personality and of Welsh life during a special period in its history, a period that will never be matched*'.

It is sad to see the present state of the building especially for those who remember it when things were so different and the Baptist cause flourishing. It is difficult to foresee what will happen to it as Cadw has a say in its future.

J.R. Jones

Y Gwyddonydd, Dr Emrys Gwynne James OBE, the Scientist

Un o blant y Tabernacl a ddaeth yn adnabyddus fel gwyddonydd ac a ddaeth i amlygrwydd byd eang am ei gyfraniad ym maes lled-ddargludyddion oedd Dr Emrys Gwynne James.

Cafodd ei eni yn fab i Mr a Mrs John James, Tanffordd ac addysgwyd ef yn Ysgol y Cyngor, Tal-y-bont, Ysgol Ardwyn a Choleg y Brifysgol, Aberystwyth. Yn y coleg enillodd ei radd BSc yn y dosbarth cyntaf a derbyniodd ei radd PhD am ei waith ymchwil. Cydnabuwyd ei waith gan y Coleg drwy gyflwyno y Sir Garrod Thomas Fellowship iddo.

Gadawodd Aberystwyth gyda chymeradwyaeth uchel Pennaeth yr Adran i ymuno â staff 'Wembley Laboratories of Associated Semi-Conductor Manufacturers Ltd.' a dod i enwogrwydd am ei waith yno. Ym 1957 fe'i anrhydeddwyd â'r OBE am ei gyfraniad i'w faes.

Yr oedd Dr James yn aelod o Gymdeithas Gorawl Harrow ac yn ymddiddori'n fawr mewn garddio. Yr oedd wrth ei fodd yn treulio orig i erlid brithyll blasus y Leri yn ystod ei wyliau.

Bu farw yn 1965 yn 58 mlwydd oed.

Valma Jones

Dr Gwynne James was a Tabernacle boy who became a scientist renowned world-wide for his work in connection with semi-conductors.

He was the son of Mr and Mrs John James, Tan ffordd, and was educated at the Tal-y-bont Council School, Ardwyn Grammar School and The University College, Aberystwyth. He obtained a BSc degree with first class honours and a PhD for his research work. The University acknowledged the value of his work by awarding him the Sir Garrod Thomas Fellowship.

He was held in high esteem by the Head of the Department when he left Aberystwyth to join the staff of Wembley Laboratories of Associated Semi-Conductor Manufacturers Ltd. and became well known for his work there. In 1957 he was awarded the OBE for his contribution in his field.

Dr James was a member of The Harrow Choral Society and was a keen gardener.

He was fond of fishing for tasty trout from the Leri during his holidays.

He died in 1965 at the age of 58.

Valma Jones