



Addoldai Cymru

Welsh Religious Buildings Trust

Spring
Newsletter
2017

Readers of this newsletter will be aware that some 20 months have passed since the last issue. This is of course an embarrassment for Addoldai Cymru's trustees and staff and we sincerely apologise to everyone with an interest in our activities. This has not been a fallow period for the Trust – quite the opposite – but the need to make progress in several spheres has resulted in our neglecting to keep our supporters well-informed. We will make better efforts in future to publish newsletters more frequently. Some issues will maintain the polished appearance of previous newsletters, whereas others may have a rather more “stop press” format. Meanwhile, we hope you enjoy reading this newsletter.

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 a paper copy by post.

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



Carmel, a United Reformed chapel at Nantmel near Llandrindod Wells.

New acquisitions

We are pleased to report two acquisitions, which will extend our portfolio of Nonconformist chapels in Wales to eight in all. The acquisition of the grade II* listed Aion, a Welsh Baptist chapel near Llanuwchllyn, Gwynedd has been a challenge for Addoldai Cymru trustees and staff since it has taken almost nine years' legal negotiation to acquire the freehold of this modest but atmospheric country chapel together with access to it over adjacent land. Built in 1840 and modified in 1887, Aion is a long-wall entry stone chapel with a largely unaltered interior which includes pine box pews and a central panelled pulpit.

By contrast, the acquisition of the grade II* listed Carmel, a United Reformed chapel at Nantmel near Llandrindod Wells has been relatively painless. Built in 1829, Carmel is similarly a long-wall entry stone chapel with a largely

unaltered interior, including a panel-fronted three-sided gallery.

Carmel features in T.J. Hughes' *Wales's Best One Hundred Churches* (2006). Unusually, its lime washed main elevation is punctuated by windows with gothic glazing bars. The URC has agreed to grant Addoldai Cymru a 25 year lease which will allow us to care for this delightful chapel.



Aion, a Welsh Baptist chapel near Llanuwchllyn

Staff and office changes

Gruff Owen, who has been Trust Manager since Addoldai Cymru's inception, indicated early in 2016 that he wished to resign from his post in order to pursue other interests. Having been appointed in 1998 by Cadw and the Wales Council for Voluntary Action, Gruff in effect created the Trust and its modus operandi and then managed its activities (and its trustees!) for the next 18 years. Gruff showed enormous commitment both to the Trust and to the wider cause of protecting and celebrating Wales' Nonconformist heritage, and trustees have expressed their deep gratitude to him.

There was initially a fear that we would have difficulty in replacing so dedicated a servant, but following careful consideration trustees decided to promote our Development Officer Christine Moore (Right) to become Trust Manager, a role she has now fulfilled since November 2016. Christine has retained some of her development duties, whilst a rearrangement of other duties has resulted in the creation of a new post of Trust Administrator. Following a competitive recruitment process in which several excellent candidates were interviewed, trustees

appointed Tanya Jenkins (Left), and she joined Addoldai Cymru in January 2017.

Tanya brings outstanding knowledge and experience to the post. She has had a lifelong interest in Nonconformist history and gained both an MPhil and a PhD through research into the life and work of two 18th century Baptist ministers, Benjamin Francis and Joshua Thomas. She brings a wealth of experience in financial and facilities management, as well as teaching and pastoral care.



Alongside the above, a decision was taken by trustees to relocate our office from Peniel in

Tremadog to a temporary base in south Wales, pending a hoped-for relocation to Bethania, Maesteg. Convenient and comfortable office accommodation has been found at the Wesley Church Centre in Tondy near Bridgend for Addoldai Cymru's new team.

National Eisteddfod, Anglesey

The annual Eisteddfod Lecture, jointly organised by Capel and Addoldai Cymru, will be delivered on Friday, 11th August at 11 a.m. by the Rev. Emlyn Richards, Cemaes, on the Eisteddfod site near Bodedern, Anglesey, at Pabell y Cymdeithasau 1 [Societies Pavilion 1]. His subject will be Dawn Môn [The inspiration of Anglesey] and instantaneous translation facilities will be provided for the lecture which will be delivered in Welsh.

On 1st February, Maesteg Boxing Club became tenants of the vestry in Bethania, Maesteg. The arrangement is proving to be very successful and is an opportunity for a local community group to be involved in using part of the chapel complex.



Pupils from Ysgol Cynwyd Sant came to Bethania on 26th April to film a segment for the children's programme TiPiNi, shown on S4C. This involved interviewing Royston Thomas, one of the first pupils at one of Wales' earliest Welsh Medium schools, which was established in Bethania's vestry.

Royston Thomas and the pupils were filmed sitting in the boxing ring which currently occupies the vestry stage, prior to being filmed singing with presenter Kizzy Crawford in the chapel itself. The programme is scheduled to be broadcast in Spring 2018.

Success with grant applications

In June 2016 we were delighted to receive confirmation that Addoldai Cymru had been successful in both its applications for Listed Place of Worship Roof Grants awarded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Both grants are just short of £100,000 and are for major repairs to the roofs of the grade I listed Peniel chapel in Tremadog, Gwynedd and the grade II Beilu Du in Pentrebach, near Sennybridge, Powys. David A Siggery Ltd. will commence works at Beilu Du in June under the supervision of Alwyn Jones Ltd., Penseiri Architects, whilst it is intended that works at Peniel will commence a month or two later under the supervision of Donald Insall Associates, Architects.

These successes compared with the previous year's disappointment that we had been unsuccessful with a similar application to the LPOW Roof Grant for roof repairs at the grade II* Bethania, Maesteg, Bridgend. However, a funding package comprising grant aid from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Pilgrim Trust, and Cadw has been assembled to enable a significant repair contract at Bethania. David A Siggery Ltd. will commence works in June, under the supervision of Alwyn Jones Ltd., Penseiri Architects. The funding from the HLF will also support a chapels exhibition which will be launched next year.

May of this year saw the completion of repairs to the interior of the grade II Hen Dŷ Cwrdd, Trecynon, Rhondda Cynon Taff, undertaken by Taliesin Conservation Ltd., under the supervision of Page & Dean Ltd., Architects. Also in May, works commenced at the grade II* Yr Hen Gapel, Rhydowen, Ceredigion to undertake further repairs to the chapel and burial ground retaining walls and to improve

pedestrian access. The works are being undertaken by Welsh Heritage Ltd. under the supervision of Carl Morgan, Building Surveyor.

Meanwhile a funding package is being assembled for further repairs at the grade II* Libanus, Llansadwrn, Carmarthenshire. In short, all six of Addoldai Cymru's existing chapels are currently the subject of repair projects, a testimony to the hard work of Addoldai Cymru's staff.



Hen Dŷ Cwrdd: repairs to historic fabric

Cadw Open Doors 2017

Hen Dŷ Cwrdd "Opens Its Doors"
21st September 2017

10.00am-5.00pm All welcome

Alma Street,
Trecynon,
Aberdare,
Rhondda Cynon Taff,
CF44 8NT.

For further information go to our website
www.welshchapels.org



Capel Spring Meeting

Staff and trustees were happy to join Capel members at their Spring Meeting in Morryston for a tour of some of the town's numerous chapels. The day began at Mynyddbach Chapel, one of the oldest causes in Wales, dating back to 1640. The current building has been undergoing a process of renovation since 2011 and has been re-established as the Calon Lân Centre, an Arts and Cultural centre.



Trustee Treasurer – *Voluntary Position*

Addoldai Cymru is seeking to appoint a Trustee Treasurer to its Board of Trustees. The overall purpose of the Trustee Treasurer is to oversee the Trust's finances and financial procedures, to work closely with the Trust's staff and to make a positive contribution to board meetings.

The Trust holds four board meetings per annum in convenient locations across Wales. All related expense will be reimbursed.

The closing date for applications is 30th June 2017

It is intended that short-listed candidates will be invited for interview at the Trust's offices at Tondu as soon as possible thereafter

If you have an interest in the work of the Trust and would like to support in some way, please contact us.

For more details on the above opportunity, please contact the Trust Administrator, Tanya Jenkins on post@addoldaicymru.org or (01656) 728400 or go to our website:

www.welshchapels.org

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 'Donate 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
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