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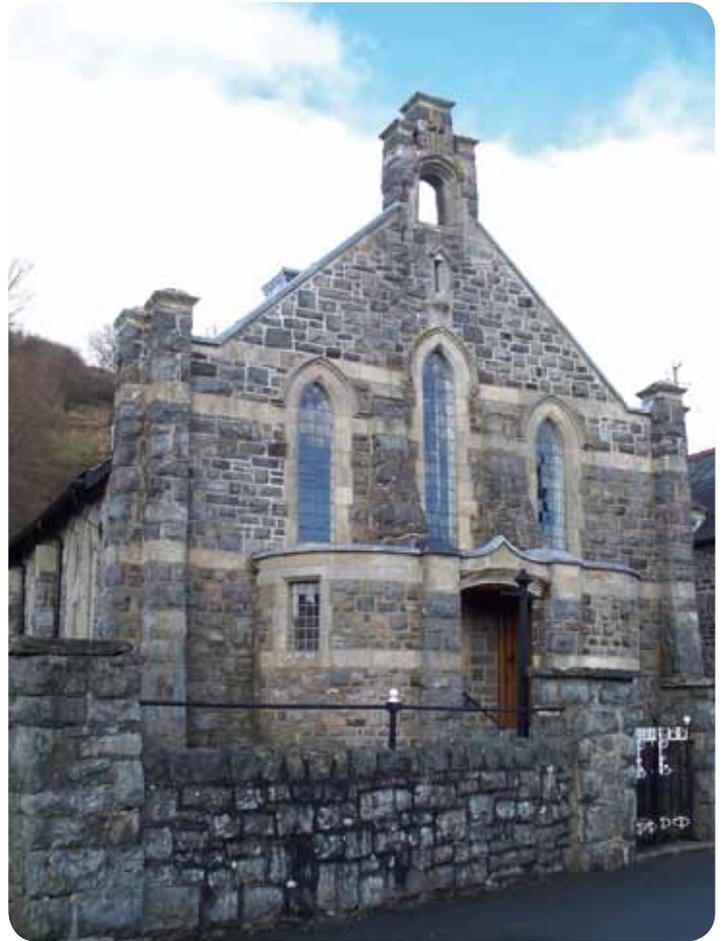
The Ann Griffiths Memorial Chapel

The chapel was opened in 1904 as a memorial to Ann Griffiths, the famous Welsh hymn writer, who spent most of her life in Dolanog. The building is an interesting and unusual example of Arts and Crafts architectural style applied to a Nonconformist chapel.

Ann Griffiths

Ann Griffiths was a Calvinist Methodist hymn writer who lived the majority of her life in Dolanog. She was born in 1776, on a farm called Dolwar Fach and christened in the parish church of Llanfihangel-yng-Ngwynfa. In 1794 her mother died, and she helped to run the farm with her father and brother John until her father's death in 1804. In October of the same year she married Thomas Griffiths, who came to live at Dolwar Fach with Ann and John. Ten months later, in August 1805, Ann died following the birth and death of a baby daughter, Elizabeth. She is buried in the churchyard at Llanfihangel-yng-Ngwynfa. In 1864 a memorial to Ann Griffiths was erected in the churchyard by her great nephew.

Ann was brought up as a member of the Anglican church of St Michael's at Llanfihangel-yng-Ngwynfa, but like many of her family, she was increasingly involved in nonconformist worship. Dolwar Fach, their home, was registered as a religious meeting house and received many visiting preachers and teachers such as John Hughes (who later went on to start the chapel at Pontrobert). Pendref Chapel in Llanfyllin was a link in the chain of events that led to her conversion: in 1795 she heard an open air preacher outside Pendref Chapel when attending the local fair. During the 1790s all her family became Calvinistic Methodists. Ann's spiritual experiences were considered remarkable even at a time of powerful religious awakening. She began to write them down in the form of poems, which were later sung



as hymns. The examples of Ann's work that have been preserved for us are both the fruit of those intense spiritual experiences and an expression of them. The sum total of her surviving work is small: eight letters and just over 70 stanzas, and only one letter and one stanza in her own hand.

The building

The Memorial Chapel is built on the site of the previous Methodist Salem Chapel, which was built in 1830 and known as 'The School House', as permission had not been granted to build a chapel. By 1900 this building was in a poor state, and so in 1901 the Welsh Presbyterians met in Oswestry and decided to build a new chapel, and name it in memory of Ann Griffiths. The chapel was opened on 8th July 1904 and attracted such a crowd that extra seating space was required in a nearby field!



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Architecture

The architect was C Dickens-Lewis of Shrewsbury, who designed the chapel using a combination of Gothic and Arts & Crafts details. This 'Free Style' is relatively unusual for a chapel

and gives the building interest and charm. The architecture is similar in style to that of Seion Chapel in Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant, built in 1904 (also on the Meini Bywiol Trail).



The front gable has buttressed corners and there is a single storey curved porch with small buttresses framing the entrance.

The attention to detail that has been given to functional items, such as the cast iron gutters and the leaded roof vent, is typical of the Arts and Crafts style. The emphasis is on the work of the craftsman, rather than mass production. The result is a simple but charming and attractive exterior.



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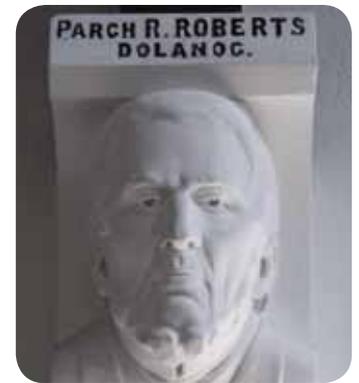
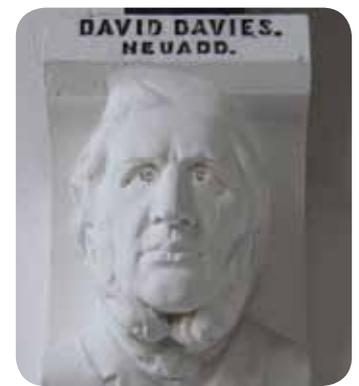
Interior

The pews and other furnishings inside the chapel are generally from the original build, and are in the same style as the building itself. The slight flourishes in the shaping of the pew ends and other details give them an almost Art Nouveau feel, but the basic simplicity of the design means that the interior retains a plain, solid Arts & Crafts feel.



Features

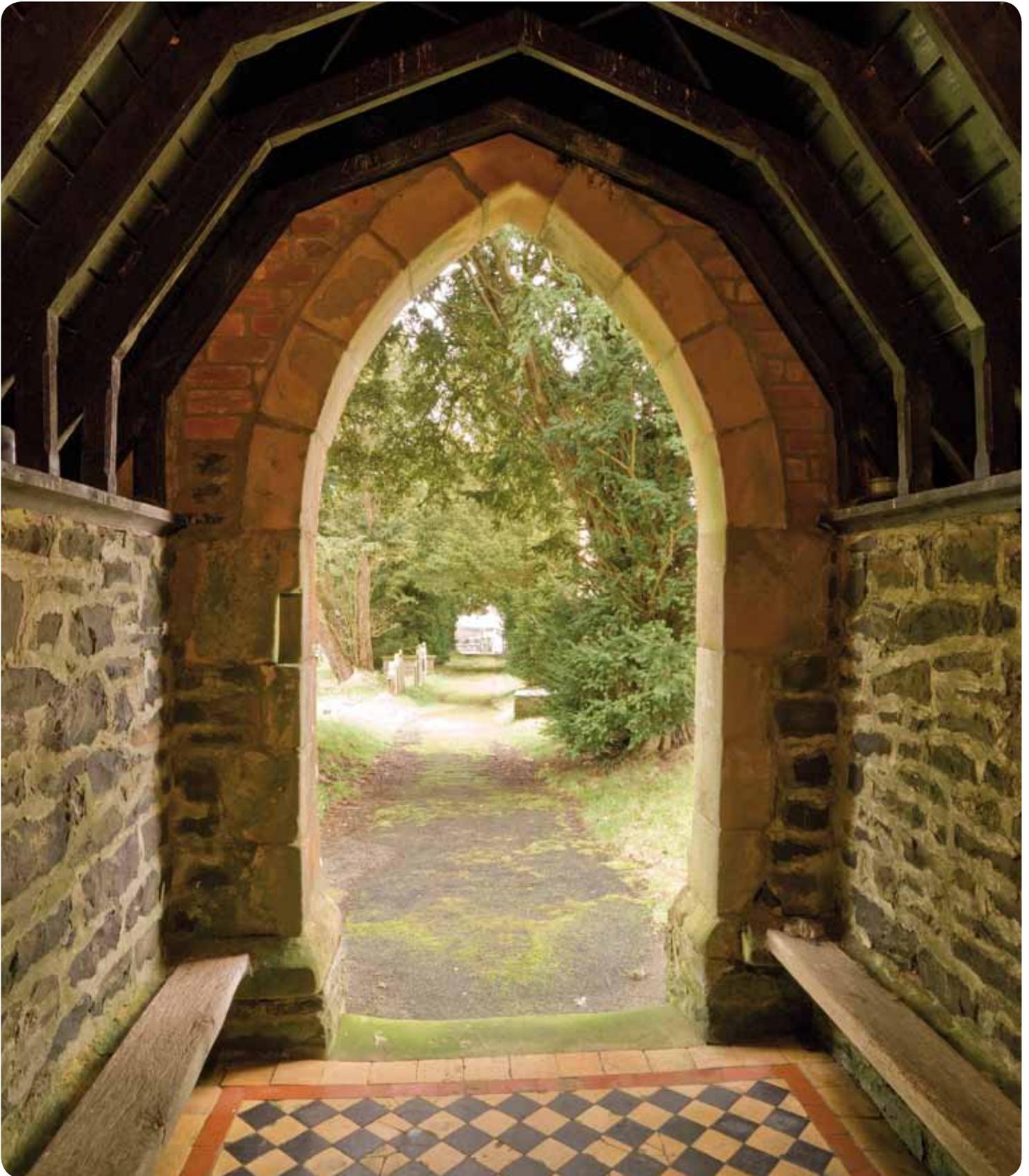
There are four effigies placed at the base of the cross supporting beams. Ann Griffiths is facing Dolwar Fach, her home in Dolanog and John Hughes is facing Pontrobert where he taught and later preached. Rev'd Robert Roberts and David Davies both played a prominent role in the Salem Chapel. Robert Jones was a stonemason from Abergynolwyn and became a minister on the Dolanog preaching circuit. David Davies was born at Rhiwlas near Llanfihangel-yng-Ngwynfa and was a Deacon at Salem Chapel.



Further information

Further information about the life and work of Ann Griffiths is available on the Cardiff University website (www.anngriffiths.cardiff.ac.uk). For further reading, a booklet published by Graham Ashton is available. Several books give an in-depth study of her work. They include *Ann Griffiths, The Furnace and the Fountain* by A. M. Allchin, and *Gwaith Ann Griffith's* by Sian Megan.

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Ann Griffiths is buried at the nearby church of St Michael's, Llanfïangel-yng-Ngwynfa.

The Meini Bywiol Living Stones Heritage trail consists of 15 churches and chapels in north Montgomeryshire. See the trail leaflet and the website for information about the other sites on the trail www.living-stones.info