

Yn ogoneddus ond yn beth prin, mae eglwys Brithdir yn eglwys ‘Celfyddyd a Chrefft’ yng Nghymru. Wedi ei adeiladu 1895-8 ar gyfer Louisa Tooth (Edwards gynt), er cof am ei hail ŵr Charles, sefydlwr a Chaplan eglwys Saesneg Sant Marc yn Fflorens.

Cymynroddodd ei gŵr cyntaf, Richard Richards o Caerwynch, diroedd iddi ym Meirionnydd, felly roedd Louisa yn ddigon cyfoethog i adeiladu fel y mynnai.

Ei phensaer oedd Henry Wilson (1864–1934), Golygydd yr Architectural Review 1896–1901, a Phennaeth Urdd y Gweithwyr Celf 1917. Ar ôl Brithdir, cyfoethogodd du mewn St Bartholomew’s, Brighton, gyda gwaith marmor a metel Bysantaidd (1898–1911); a chynlluniodd y gwaith metel yn Holy Trinity, Sloane Street, “cadeirlan Celfyddyd a Chrefft” yn ôl John Betjeman. Yn ddiweddarach trodd Wilson at emwaith ac arianwaith.

Gweledigaeth a brwydr

Roedd gan Wilson mewn golwg “those delightfully simple churches just south of the Alps”. Ond roedd y gwaith adeiladu yn nwylo asiant Mrs Tooth, Mr Williams, ac “he knows no more of building than a cat.” Roedd Wilson eisiau gadael y garreg ar y tu allan yn arw fras – ond gwrthododd Mr Williams gredu ei gyfarwyddiadau, a gwnaeth y garreg yn esmwyth!

Er hyn, fel y gobeithiodd Wilson, ymddangosodd yn “a simple beautiful setting to a simple beautiful altar.” Teimlai mai “the chief merit of Brithdir is that it is personal... what is done at Brithdir must live, because it has come out of my own life.”

Daeth yr eglwys i’r Friends yn 2005. Gwnaeth y Friends waith atgyweirio a gwneud rhywfaint o addurniadau mewnol yn 2008. Mae’r adeilad yn awr ar gael i ymwelwyr ei fwynhau, ac ar gyfer gwasanaethau o dro i dro. Mae’n rhestredig Gradd 1.



Gwaith cerfio ar feinciau’r côr

Yr eglwys heddiw

Tu allan Yn rymus a llym mewn carreg leol dywyll: “as if it had sprung out of the soil.” Mae’r cynllun yn “hir-wasg”: aleau croes cynnil, a dim ystlysau. Ceir croes fawr syml mewn cerfwedd isel o dan ganopi yn dominyddu’r mur gorllewinol. Nid oes gwaith cerfio allanol, a phrin yw’r ffenestri gyda fawr ddim rhwyllwaith. Delir y gwteri yn eu lle gyda chynheiliaid chwareus siâp calon.

Tu mewn Mae cynllun lliw melyngoch y gangell a melyn-hufen y corff – yn ôl bob golwg – i’r gwrthwyneb o gynnig gwreiddiol Wilson!

Ceir bedyddfaen yn ôl cynllun gan Wilson, wedi ei fodelu gan Arthur Grove (fel Wilson, fe ddechreuodd ei yrfa fel cynorthwydd i John Dando Sedding), ac wedi ei fwrw gan William Dodds, pen-blymwr. Bwriadwyd i’r plac coffa i Charles Tooth (gyda’i lew Sant Marc) gael ei osod yn y cyntedd. Mewnosodwyd y drysau â choed tic, eboni a chragen clust fôr. Ceir geiriau Lladin ar y pulpud (Jeremeia 1 : 17): ‘Torcha dithau dy wisg, cod, a llefara wrthynt bob peth a orchmynnaf i ti.’ Cerfiwyd meinciau’r côr a rheiliau’r allor gan Trasks o Norton-sub-Hamdon gyda llu o anifeiliaid – glas y dorlan, gwiwer, cwingnod, llygod, tylluan a chrwban. Mae “SM” yn dynodi Sant Marc.

Bwriwyd blaen yr allor gan Wilson ei hun. (Neu efallai cafodd ei “argraffu” – mae’r cofnod ysgrifenedig yn aneglur.) Repousse (wedi ei guro o’r cefn) yw’r llythrennu, wedi ei gwblhau olaf. “The [boy] model who sat for the child angel was so restless that the sittings had to be indefinitely multiplied.” Rhyfedd, felly, nad yw’r ffigwr yn dangos ei wyneb, ac mae’n edrych braidd yn ferchetaidd. Mae’r prif destun yn golygu “Henffych, llawn o ras, yr Arglwydd sydd gyd â thi, bendigedig wyt ti ymhlith merched”.

Heb eu lliwio yw’r ffenestri – fel sydd yn gyffredin gyda Wilson – ond wedi eu plymio â mynegiant mewn patrymau geometrig. Roedd Wilson wedi bwriadu ac wedi cynllunio trawst y grog, ond ni chafodd ei osod erioed.



Golygfa o’r eglwys o’r de



Bedyddfaen



Manyl yn o’r pulpud



Allor gan Henry Wilson

Eglwysi cyfagos sydd hefyd dan ofal y Friends

Sant Brothen, Llanfrothen Eglwys un gell Ganoloesol Gradd 1 gyda tho gafaelfachog â bwa; corau cangell colofnresog a sgrin; dwy fedyddfaen a desg ddarllen o 1692. Gwnaeth Lloyd George ei ymddangosiad gwleidyddol cyntaf yma – gyda chladdedigaeath ganol nos! (eglwys ar agor).

Sant Cynhaearn, Ynyscynhaearn Ar ynys gynt ar ben sarn hynafol. Corff 12fed ganrif; tu mewn Sioraidd gydag organ siambr yn y galeri gorllewinol a'r pulpud tribwrdd. Ffenestr ddwyreiniol rymus gan Powells. (mynediad trwy ddeiliad yr allwedd).



Pwy yw'r Friends?

Mae'r Friends yn caru eglwysi sydd heb eu caru. Hebom, byddent yn cael eu dymchwel, eu gwerthu fel tai, neu eu gadael yn angof. Ers 1857 rydym wedi ymgyrchu i eglwysi sydd ddim yn cael eu defnyddio i gael eu cadw, fel "pregethau mewn carreg".

Yng Nghymru, ariennir ein gwaith gan Cadw a'r Eglwys yng Nghymru. Ond yn Lloegr rydym yn dibynnu ar haelioni cyfranwyr ac aelodau.

Beth ydyn ni'n ei wneud?

Yr ydym yn cadw'r eglwysi hyn er mwynhad y gymuned leol ac ymwelwyr. Rydym yn eu gwneud yn gadarn yn erbyn y gwynt a'r dŵr, yn ail osod toeau a ffenestri, yn trwsio peipiau glaw a gwaith carreg. Ac rydym yn gwneud yn siŵr eu bod yn agored, neu bod ceidwaid cyfeillgar lleol ar gael i gadw llygaid arnynt. Nid digyfaill mwyach!

Os gwelwch yn dda, fydddech yn fodlon ymuno a'n helpu? Mae eu cynnal a'u cadw yn her anferth. Yr ydym yn dibynnu ar haelioni pobl fel chi...

Ymuno

Ewch ar y we i ymweld â friendsoffriendlesschurches.org.uk. Wrth ymaelodi yr ydych yn derbyn tri Cylchlythyr bob blwyddyn, yn llawn o wybodaeth am brosiectau cadwraeth, sgysrsiau, cyfarfodydd, llyfrau; a'r Trafodion blynyddol.

Cyfrannu

Anfonwch sic, yn daladwy i 'Friends of Friendless Churches' at FoFC, St Ann's Vestry Hall, 2 Church Entry, London EC4V 5HB. Neu ewch at y wefan.

Yr ydym yn ofalus i gadw ein costau gweinyddiaeth yn isel iawn. Felly mae arian a roddir yn cael ei wario ar yr adeiladau. Gallai cymynrodd wneud gwahaniaeth fwy fyth. Siaradwch â'r Cyfarwyddwr ar 020 7236 3934.

<http://www.friendsoffriendlesschurches.org.uk>

Rhif Elusen Gofrestredig : 1113097



FRIENDS OF FRIENDLESS CHURCHES



FRIENDS OF FRIENDLESS CHURCHES



*Eglwys Sant Marc
Brithdir
cyflwyniad i'w hanes*



Sant Beuno, Penmorfa Daeth Beuno yma yn y 6ed ganrif, gyda'r eglwys bresennol yn cael ei hailadeiladu gan John Douglas o Gaer yn 1899. Gwaith coed bywiog gan fodryb Clough Williams-Ellis's, Constance Greaves: sgrin, pulpud, darllenfa angel o faint gwir. Gwahanol iawn i Bortmeirion! (mynediad trwy ddeiliad yr allwedd).

Y Santes Fair, Penllech Lleoliad gwych ym Mhen Llŷn. Y tu mewn yn waith Sioraidd gwladaidd glân gyda seddau caeedig, meinciau a seinfwrdd wythonglog uwchben y pulpud, gyda heuladdurn ecstatig. (eglwys ar agor).



Brithdir church is a glorious rarity – an ‘Arts & Crafts’ church in Wales. Built 1895–8 for Louisa Tooth (née Edwards), in memory of her second husband Charles, founder and Chaplain of St Mark’s English church in Florence.

Her first husband, Richard Richards of Caerynwch, bequeathed her lands in Merionedd: so Louisa was rich enough to build as she pleased.

Her architect was Henry Wilson (1864-1934), Editor of the *Architectural Review* 1896-1901, and Master of the Art-Workers’ Guild 1917. After Brithdir he enriched the interior of St Bartholomew’s, Brighton with Byzantine marble- and metal-work (1898-1911); and designed the metalwork at Holy Trinity, Sloane Street, “the Cathedral of the Arts & Crafts” according to John Betjeman. Wilson later turned to jewellery and silverwork.

A vision and a battle

Wilson had in mind “those delightfully simple churches just south of the Alps”. But construction was in the hands of Mrs Tooth’s agent, Mr Williams, and “he knows no more of building than a cat.” Wilson wanted the exterior stone left ruggedly rough – but Mr Williams would not believe his instructions, and made it smooth!

Nonetheless, as Wilson hoped, it emerged “a simple beautiful setting to a simple beautiful altar.” He felt “the chief merit of Brithdir is that it is personal... what is done at Brithdir must live, because it has come out of my own life.”

The church came to the Friends in 2005. The Friends carried out repairs and did some internal decorations in 2008. The building is now available for visitors to enjoy, and for occasional services to take place. It is listed Grade 1.



Carving on the choir benches

The church today

Exterior Powerful and severe in dark local stone: “as if it had sprung out of the soil.” The plan is “long-waisted”: under-stated transepts and no aisles.

A large simple cross in low relief under a canopy dominates the west wall. No extraneous carving, and windows few and with little tracery. The gutters are held in place with playful heart-shaped stays.

Interior The colour scheme of terracotta chancel and yellow-cream nave is – it seems – the reverse of Wilson’s original proposal!

The font is to a design by Wilson, modelled by Arthur Grove (like Wilson, he started as an assistant to John Dando Sedding), and cast by William Dodds, master plumber. The memorial plaque to Charles Tooth (with its St Mark’s lion) was meant to go in the porch.

The doors are inlaid with teak, ebony and abalone shell. The pulpit carries a Latin text (Jeremiah 1: 17): ‘Gird up thy loins, arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee.’

The choir benches and altar rails were carved by Trasks of Norton-sub-Hamdon with animals aplenty – kingfisher, squirrel, rabbits, mice, owl and tortoise. “SM” signifies St Mark.

The altar frontal was cast by Wilson himself. (Or perhaps “chased” – the handwritten record is unclear.) The lettering – added last – is repoussé (hammered out from behind). “The [boy] model who sat for the child angel was so restless that the sittings had to be indefinitely multiplied,” Odd, then, that the figure does not show its face, and looks rather girlish. The main text means “Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou amongst women.”

The windows are – as often with Wilson – uncoloured, but expressively leaded in geometric patterns. Wilson intended and designed a rood beam, but it was never installed.



View of the church from the south



Font



Detail of the pulpit



Altar by Henry Wilson

Other Friends churches near St Mark, Brithdir

St Brothen, Llanfrothen Grade 1 Medieval single-cell church with arch-braced roof; balustraded chancel stalls and screen; two fonts and 1692 reading desk. Lloyd George made his political debut here – with a midnight burial! (church open).



St Cynhaearn, Ynyscynhaearn On a former island at the end of an ancient causeway. 12th century nave; late Georgian interior with chamber organ in west gallery and the three-decker pulpit. Powerful east window by Powells. (entry via keyholder).



St Beuno, Penmorfa Beuno came here in the 6th century, the present church rebuilt by John Douglas of Chester in 1899. Energetic woodwork by Clough Williams-Ellis's aunt, Constance Greaves: screen, pulpit, life-size angel lectern. Very unlike Portmeirion! (entry via keyholder).



St Mary, Penllech Wonderful setting out on the Llŷn Peninsula. Crisp, rustic Georgian interior with box pews, benches and octagonal sounding board over the pulpit, with ecstatic sunburst. (church open).



Who are the Friends?

The Friends love unloved churches. Without us, they would be torn down, sold as houses, or abandoned. Since 1957 we have campaigned for redundant churches to be preserved, as "sermons in stone".

In Wales our work is funded by Cadw and the Church in Wales. But in England we rely on the generosity of donors and members.

What do we do?

We preserve these churches for the local community and visitors to enjoy. We make them wind and water-tight, put back roof and windows, repair drainpipes and stonework. And we make sure they are open, or have nearby friendly guardians to keep an eye on them. Friendless no more!

Please, will you join in and help us?

Maintaining and repairing them is a huge challenge. We rely on the generosity of people like you...

Join

Go online to friendsoffriendlesschurches.org.uk. With membership you receive three Newsletters per year, full of information about conservation projects, talks, meetings, books; and the annual Transactions.

Donate

Send a cheque, payable to 'Friends of Friendless Churches' to FoFC, St Ann's Vestry Hall, 2 Church Entry, London EC4V 5HB. Or go to our website.

We take great pride in spending only small amounts on admin. So money given goes directly on the buildings. A legacy could make an even greater difference. Do speak to the Director on 020 7236 3934.

<http://www.friendsoffriendlesschurches.org.uk>

Registered Charity No : 1113097



FRIENDS OF FRIENDLESS CHURCHES



Church of St Mark Brithdir

a guide to its history



FRIENDS OF FRIENDLESS CHURCHES