

What's on your doorstep?

Thanks to the Mid Wales Regional Tourism Partnership, two visits to Church trails in their region were organised, mainly for accommodation providers, to learn more about the wealth of heritage available to their guests.

Ceredigion Faith Trail

from a participant Martin Pilkington

On a typical mixed Welsh weather day in May a dozen people from various businesses in the local area sampled the Ceredigion Faith Trail.

We went in a mini bus from Aberaeron with Peter from Ceredigion Council and John from CTNW. It was an extraordinary run through numerous denominations that have been long established in this part of Wales (Celtic Christian) right up to one of the newest (but oldest churches), the Greek Orthodox church in Lampeter.

We started with St Davids early formatory church at Henfynyw and then proceeded to Llanddewi Brefi, the site of his debate with the Pelagians. Then there was the black spot between Llandysul, Lampeter and Aberaeron with 13 Unitarian chapels, the collegiate chapel at Lampeter and the Chapel where Daniel Rowland the great Methodist preacher gave his sermons. There we were conducted round by enthusiastic locals who had devoted themselves to keeping the history alive.

We were treated to a talk by Dr Jonathan Wooding from the University in Lampeter who specialises in Celtic Saints, two vicars who spoke about St David, a Unitarian minister, a Greek Orthodox minister and enthusiastic locals speaking about Daniel Rowland.

These people between them traced 2000 years of Christianity in a single day. There were sacred stones and tales of missionary links with Madagascar and for lunch sausage rolls, tea and scones in a local cafe. It just showed how much this part of the world has to offer.

Come and see this faith trail before it gets crowded! www.ceredigionfaithtrail.com

Peter Austin tells the story of the missionaries from this chapel -Neuadd Lwyd, nr Aberaeron, who went to Madagascar.

Meirionnydd Church Trail

An account of this trip (with excellent images) can be found

at www.marwynguesthouse.com/churches.htm

The Vale of Glamorgan

Wall Paintings in churches are a great attraction to so many people, imagine, then the excitement in 2008 when in St Cadoc's church, Llancafán a very significant discovery of wall paintings was made. Since that date, funding has been found to employ conservators to reveal these paintings and now enough is on display to make a visit to this church a must when you are in the area. This discovery was probably the most important find of wall paintings in the UK for many a year. For more information see <http://www.stcadocs.org.uk/en/home.html>

Not far away at Llantwit Major is another of Wales' significant places of worship. Founded in 500 AD by the Welsh monk Illtud, the Church of Llantwit Major (Llanilltud Fawr) is believed to be Britain's earliest centre of learning. St Illtud established a monastic school of over one thousand pupils, including, it is said, St David of Wales and St Patrick of Ireland. To enhance the visitor experience, a project is underway to develop the *Galilee Chapel* see <http://www.illtudsgalileechapel.org.uk/>

Whilst Places of Worship make for an interesting trail, there is also some benefit in linking with other places of heritage. In the Vale of Glamorgan, a heritage project has been developed by Creative Rural Communities - *Explore and More* is a trail around the fascinating unique heritage of the Vale of Glamorgan with places of worship central to the trail. For more information on this see <http://bit.ly/ITpjJJ> and <http://www.exploreandmore.co.uk>

The Church and the Social Media

Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and many other social media sites are a very significant part of life in the 21st century. The church is constantly being urged to *be where the people are* so CTNW has organised a symposium for a small audience to learn and explore how these sites can be used in mission and ministry. The symposium is at St Michael's College, Llandaff, Cardiff on Tuesday 12th July from 1030 -1330 and will be led by Lucy von Weber, project manager for the South West Wales regional tourism partnership and Board member of CTNW. Lucy has just completed her Masters degree in digital marketing at the university of Manchester. Attendance at the symposium is by invitation only and we

have tried to create an invitation list that is across the denominations of Wales, is geographically representative and includes delegates of the tourism industries with an interest in faith tourism. If you have not received an invitation and would like to attend, please call John Winton on 07815 062 040.

New Book

The growing interest in visiting places of worship in Wales is reflected in the number of recent publications on this subject. Most of the existing publications have focused, quite understandably, on the author's particular interest and own religious history.

It's refreshing then to have a book that treats Wales' entire ecclesiastical heritage evenly. This book does not claim that the places of worship featured to be the best or most interesting or most beautiful within Wales, just that they illustrate the narrative of Wales's religious history. This narrative is succinctly and neatly related in a most interesting and full introduction. Reading the sixteen pages outlining the journey from Roman times through to the present day is essential if the different buildings featured in the following pages are to be understood.

This book will appeal both to the passionate visitor of places of worship and to the "accidental" tourist in Wales who cannot fail to notice the way in which places of worship from a great variety of traditions inform the sense of place that the visitor regards as extraordinary and the local can often accept as ordinary.

The descriptions of each place of worship are just detailed enough to encourage the visitor across the threshold and written in a relaxed easy-to-read style. For the visitor, directions to the building are less than specific and a post code or OS reference would have been helpful. What is very helpful is the indication about opening times.

Edited by two eminent academics from the University at Lampeter there is an authenticity of narrative which enables the debunking of some previously readily accepted myths.

That one of the editors, Nigel Yates, died before this book was published, is a great loss; this book is a fitting memorial to a fine academic.

A guide to the Churches and Chapels of Wales

Editors; Jonathan Wooding and Nigel Yates

University of Wales Press

ISBN 978 0 7083 2118-8

English Heritage

English Heritage have published their corporate plan for the next five years - the churches

feature strongly in EH's determination to encourage local communities to take more responsibility for the local heritage - see the full report <http://bit.ly/ldh1dy>

Rediscover St Michael's

Refurbished and revitalized, St Michael's College Cardiff is ready to welcome visitors to rediscover its charms. Clergy throughout Wales, and further afield, have trained at St Michael's for many, many years and I think they're in for a pleasant surprise.

Following an extensive £1.1million refurbishment during 2010, St Michael's now offers accommodation, conference and study facilities that more than meet the needs of the 21st Century.

"St Michael's has been hugely improved," says Peter Sedgwick, College Principal. "All the bedrooms have been upgraded and are en-suite, the entrance hall and reception area is bright and welcoming, and our conference and meeting rooms are top-notch. It was an intensive effort but well worthwhile and we're thrilled with the results."

As well as enhancing the student experience at St Michael's, the refurbished and revitalized facilities are available to other groups for retreats, conferences, workshops or meetings.

There are five distinctive meeting rooms that can accommodate up to 60 people, top quality home cooked food, fully refurbished single en-suite accommodation and all the support you'd expect of a high quality meeting venue. The full spectrum of equipment is available whether you require DVD, CD or video players, data projectors, overhead projectors, TV or flip charts A particularly unique feature is that groups may also book the use of the Chapel – built in the 1950's by the architect George Pace who also designed the Chapel for King George VI at St George's Chapel, Windsor.

Whether you know St Michael's from the past or whether it's new to you, do call in if you are passing – you will receive a warm welcome and can see the changes for yourself. If you are looking for a fresh and different venue for your next event, put St Michael's on your list for consideration.

Refurbished, revitalized – now is your chance to rediscover St Michael's.

Visit <http://www.stmichaels.ac.uk> for more information and contact details.

Caerphilly Flower Festival

Flower Festival Fun Day – Be the First!!!

Not keen on crowds of visitors trying to get a piece of the action? Prefer a leisurely browse around, taking in the sights and sounds without the hustle and bustle? Then why not visit Caerphilly's participating Flower Festival churches before the official event date!

On Friday 24th June Caerphilly's key churches will be opening their doors for locals and visitors to get a sneak preview of this year's floral displays, ready for the annual Flower Festival Fun Day. Five of Caerphilly's active churches will be showing magnificent displays relating to this year's theme of 'nature meets industry'.

The event has evolved during its existence, with many themes being incorporated into the event, including last year's well-received 1940's street party. The event was a huge success with the participants really taking to the theme, and visitors flocked from all over to be part of the fun. This year's theme is 'nature meets industry' and will demonstrate how the area has developed through the years in its industry and natural landscape. The churches put a great amount of time and effort into preparing these spectacular displays, and with this extra day on offer it provides them with the exposure they deserve. Come along and view the colourful masterpieces and be the first to talk about these high quality exhibitions. Bring your camera along and take part in the photograph competition. Email your best pictures to events@caerphilly.gov.uk by 1st July to win some great prizes.

The churches will have various activities taking place during the event weekend, with Sunday services all being open to the public. Visit www.caerphilly.gov.uk/flowerfestival to view full details.

In addition to the above, the event is host to a bumper packed programme of activities for the young and old. From workshops, crafts, food and craft stalls, Punch and Judy shows and animal displays to name just a few of the fun things that are planned for the 25th & 26th June.

Don't miss out, be part of the fun. Visit the Flower Festival Fun Day website for full details on what's on, contact Caerphilly Visitor Centre on 029 2088 0011 or email events@caerphilly.gov.uk.

Lightship 2000

A Christian presence, a visitor attraction and a quality, reasonably priced place to have a morning coffee, light lunch or afternoon tea, right at the heart of Cardiff bay. This charity is keen to attract more volunteers - if you could offer some time to help in the galley,

welcome people on board or conduct tours, please contact John Winton - john@ctnw.co.uk

Open Churches Day

Saturday September 17th is the date for this years event. In the seven years that Open Churches Day has been in existence, the interest in it has increased year by year. In 2010 the Open Day had extensive media coverage throughout Wales, including the Daily Post, Western Mail, BBC Radio Wales and the BBC web site. Whilst opening the church will attract some visitors, an event in the building, extensively publicised locally, will attract a bigger audience. If your place of worship wants to be involved, be sure to register **from July 1st** on <http://www.visitwaleschurches.com>
