

ROATH LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

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Project Newsletter



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ROATH LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

VOLUME 5 No.2

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PUTTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

1. Some numbers of the last Project Newsletter (Vol.5 No.1) were despatched with an uncorrected error on page 5 at the end of the paragraph on CHARLES HENRY WILLIAMS, which should read "...and died 1 February 1912 leaving issue". If your copy reads "leaving no issue", please delete the word "no". [See the pedigree charts in this issue]

2. Mr Geoffrey Dart has drawn my attention to inaccuracies in my potted biography of THOMAS HENRY ENSOR (p.7 of the last issue) where I refer to the famous law case involving the alleged libel of John Batchelor.

T. H. Ensor and Lascelles-Carr were not "sued". It was a criminal case - "Regina v Ensor". Hence, the precedent about libelling the dead not being an offence, set by Judge Stephen in ordering an acquittal, applied only to prosecutions for criminal libel.

I'm afraid I had been misled by T.H.Ensor's obituary in the Western Mail of 7 March 1895 which refers to the libel case without making it clear that the proceedings were under the criminal law. I had less excuse for accepting without question the veracity one of the notorious foot-notes in William Rees's "Cardiff - A History of the City", 1969 Ed. p.255. This not only gives the wrong date of the newspaper publication (the offending mock epitaph was published in the "Western Mail" of 24 July 1886, not 1887) but it is inaccurate in referring to the libel case as if it were a civil libel suit. In hindsight, I realise I should have re-read the superb article by the late Mrs Elizabeth Dart entitled "When Legal History Was Made in Cardiff" in "The Cardiff Book - Vol.3" - Stewart Williams, 1977, which sets out the position clearly and accurately. Had I used this as my source, the errors would not have arisen. There is a moral here somewhere for all local historians!

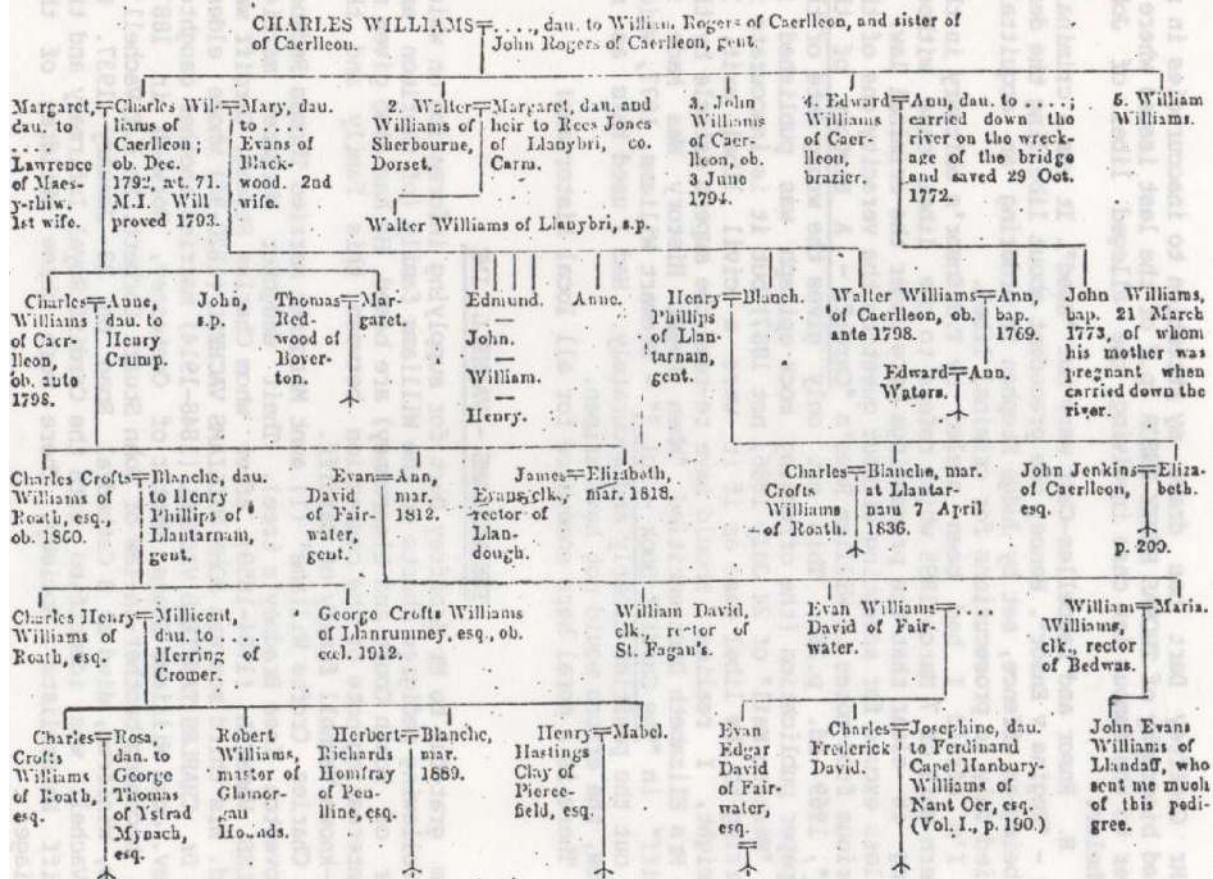
THE WILLIAMS - VACHELL LINK

I am grateful to Mr Geoffrey Dart for supplying information on which the following pedigree charts of the Williams family (of Caerleon and later of Roath Court and Llanrumney) are based. He has also given me an interesting note of the connection between this family and the well-known Vachell family of Cardiff.

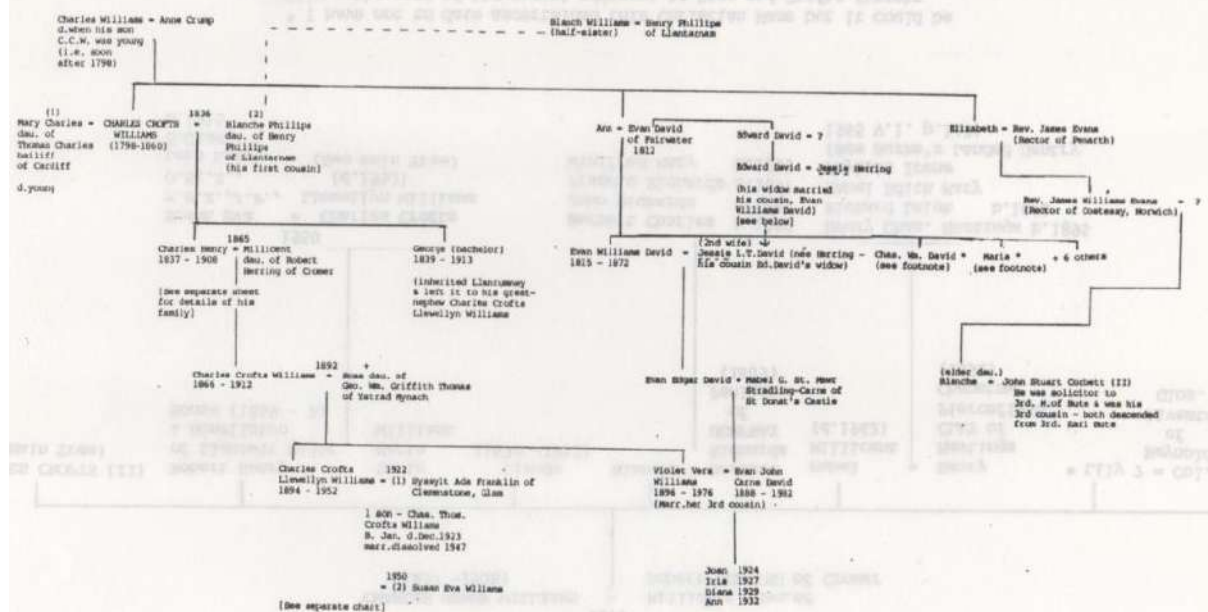
Charles Crofts Williams' (I) aunt Margaret married Thomas Redwood of Boverton (see Bradney's tree). Their daughter Margaret married CHARLES VACHELL (1784-1859) after whom Charles Street, Cardiff was named. His third son was JOHN WILLIAMS VACHELL (1820-98) whose eldest son Dr CHARLES TANFIELD VACHELL (1848-1914) married another daughter of Rev. John Williams Evans, Rector of Costessey, Norwich in 1887, thus becoming brother-in-law of John Stuart Corbett. Dr C.T.Vachell's widow, Winifred, died at 8 Cathedral Road on 23 January 1937. Dr C.T.Vachell was identified with the Cardiff Royal Infirmary and the Cardiff Naturalists' Society. There were three children of the marriage:

- Eleanor, died 6 December 1948, a well known botanist.
- Eustace Tanfield Vachell, M.A., F.G.S., F.S.A., died 5 March 1981.
- Sylvia Vachell, C.B.E., C.St.J. identified with the Girl Guides and RWVS.

Pedigree of the Family of Williams of Roath.



THE FAMILY OF CHARLES CROFTS WILLIAMS - MAIN TREE



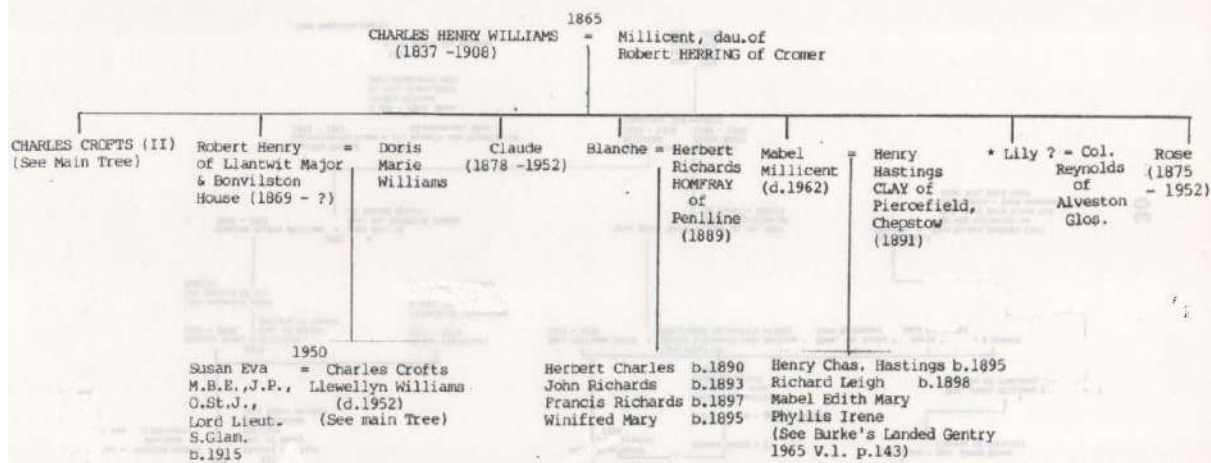
Charles Williams David 1818-1861. bachelor. Alderman, J.P., 5 times mayor of Cardiff. Chas. Williams (11), his uncle, left him the carrier's business in Duke Street. He added the David & Sloger tannery in Sloger Road. He was awarded the Iron Legion of Honour.

Maria David married Rev. Mr. Williams, Rector of Bedwas. They had four children; the youngest, bachelor solicitor John Evan Williams of Llandaff, is named in the Shadow Tree as having provided most of that version of the "tree".

Blanche Thomas was a great-grand-daughter of William Crawshaw (11) of Cyfarthfa Castle and Cheeschan Hall.

THE FAMILY OF CHARLES HENRY WILLIAMS

OF ROATH COURT



* I have not to date ascertained this Christian Name but it could be Lily - the name of the street adjacent to Rose and Crofts Streets.

G.A.C.Dart

THE ROATH DISTRICT BOARD OF HEALTH

PART 2 - 1869

[The Local Board Roath District Minute Book is held at the Glamorgan Record Office, The County Hall, Cardiff. Ref: L/B ROI. The entries are in manuscript.]

The minutes for the year 1869 have been selected for transcription in some detail in order to provide an illustration of the diverse duties and increasing responsibilities of a local government board during a period of unparalleled expansion in house building.

January 1869. The first Board meeting in 1869 was held at the Four Elms inn. Charles Pearson was in the chair, the other members present being John Evans, Daniel Thomas, John Thomas, J.H.Thomas, Rees Enoch, Thos. Evans and Robt. Meyrick. The contract for scavenging was sealed with the Common Seal and signed by five members. Reports of the Collector and the Inspector of Nuisances were read. Mr H.J.Davis (Lord Tredegar's agent) attended the meeting and a discussion took place between him and the Board as to the sale and purchase of the main sewer. Subject to the Board making a similar arrangement with Mr Charles H. Williams, it was resolved that the Board purchase Lord Tredegar's interest in the sewer on the following terms: Tredegar to receive £66.13.4d. by half-yearly payments 30 June and 31 December for 30 years from 1 January 1870. Rights were to be preserved for Tredegar to make connections with the main sewer between the South Wales Railway and the outlet to the Severn. The Board to keep the sewer in good order. Any right which Tredegar may have to require the Cardiff Water Co. to flush the main sewer to be conceded to the Board and Tredegar to contribute £50 towards expense of repairing the outlet of the sewer. The Board to relieve Tredegar and his sequels from all obligation to repair the existing street drains on his estate in their District.

It was ordered that all new streets in the District are to be 36 to 40 feet wide, footpaths 6 feet wide on each side and in streets of other width footpaths should be in similar proportions.

Plans were approved for:

2 houses Clifton St. David G. Price

9 houses Metal Street William Bird

A new street near Clive Street for Mr Charles Pearson

A new street in Splotland for Lord Tredegar.

2 February 1869. Mr John Thomas in the chair. Meeting adjourned until the following day.

3 February 1869. The clerk said he had written to C.H.Williams requesting him to sell his right in the sewer on similar terms to those agreed with Tredegar but had received no reply.

It was reported that David Davies was not attending to the scavenging in the District and had failed to execute his contract and his sureties had omitted to execute the bond. It was agreed that if failure continued somebody else should do the work.

Plans were approved for:

3 houses System Street	Edwin Stride
4 houses - do -	Wm. Williams
3 houses Penylan Road	D. Prosser
12 houses - do -	Leonard Purnell
1 house System Street	John Lewis
3 houses Constellation St.	James Ackland
house altern. in System St. for	Robt. Meyrick

Bills paid:

Job James, blacksmith	£1.17s.2d.
Cross Bros. ironmongers	10s.
E. Morgan, ropemaker	6s.
Knight & Co. for 3 Poll Books'	12s.
	£3. 5s.2d.

2 March 1869. Venue: The Four Elms Inn. C.H.Williams in the chair. It was resolved that David Davies be written to and warned regarding the scavenging contract.

The Surveyor's report was read. An order was made to pave the footpath at Salem Chapel, Splotlands.

Plans approved:

4 houses Clifton St.	Robt. Cotterall
2 houses Constellation St.	R. Palmer
4 houses Metal St.	Philip Gibbs
6 houses - do -	Morgan Thomas
10 houses System St.	Leonard Purnell
1 house - do -	Christopher Howe
2 houses Copper St.	Wm. Lloyd
8 houses Clive St.	David Williams

6 April 1869. Venue: The Four Elms Inn. C.H.Williams in the chair.

The Surveyor was directed to prepare plans and sections and specifications for a system of sewers in the streets in Splotlands now being built on and the Clerk was directed to advertise for tenders for the construction of same.

The Surveyor was directed to affix names to such of the streets and numbers to the houses within the District as he may deem necessary.

Plans approved:

2 houses Crofts St.	Smith & Pring
1 house Star St.	Leonard Purnell
2 houses Constellation St.	Rees Palmer
10 houses Metal St.	Michl. Donovan
10 houses Moon St.	John Lewis
4 houses Rose St.	Robt. Cotterell
4 houses - do -	John D. Hodges
addition to house Castle Road	Jas. A. Marchant
cellars to 3 houses Planet St.	Danl. Lewis
Alterns. in Shakespeare St.	Edmund Snook

4 May 1869. Venue: The Four Elms Inn

Charles Pearson in the chair. Present: John Evans, J.W. Thomas, Thos. Evans, Enoch, Meyrick, John Thomas and Daniel Thomas.

The Clerk submitted to the Board an estimate of a new rate of 1/8d. in the £ and Mr Hodgkinson was requested to prepare the rate by the next meeting.

The Surveyor laid before the Board plans for drainage of streets in Splotlands now in course of construction. Approval was given to get Lord Tredegar's undertaking to pay the expenses thereof so far as proposed drains abut upon the unbuilt streets or portions of his Lordship's property.

Tenders were received for construction of sewers in the improved portion of the Splotland district.

That of Smith & Pring was declared to be the lowest and same was approved.

Of three tenders received for private improvements in Constellation Street, that of Cooper & Day for £415 was accepted.

The report of the Surveyor was read and the Clerk was directed to write to Mr Charles Harris, butcher of Plucca Lane to remove an obstruction on the footpath in a field in the front of Plas-newydd.

The Surveyor was requested to order a water cart for use in the District and to ascertain from Cardiff Water Works Co. the terms upon which they will supply water for the purpose of watering the streets - also to arrange with a haulier to do the necessary work under the direction of the Surveyor. Should the cart arrive before the next meeting the Surveyor to be at liberty to get the streets watered in the meantime.

More complaints were received about the inefficiency of the scavenging contractor.

Plans approved:

3 houses Crofts Street
4 houses Partridge Rd.
4 houses - do -
2 houses Planet St.
workshop - do -
3 houses Clifton St.
3 houses Southey St.
6 houses Woodcock St.
10 houses Metal St.

1st June 1869. Venue: The Four Elms Inn. Mr Charles Pearson in the chair.

The Surveyor reported that Mr H.J.Davis would guarantee the cost of the drainage in the Moon, Planet, Star, Polar Streets, portion of System Street, Metal and Copper Streets. Messrs Smith & Pring's tender was accepted.

Cardiff Water Works were willing to supply water for watering the streets and flushing the sewers at 6d. per 1000 gallons, the Board paying rent for meters and laying on the hydrants. Offer was accepted.

Resolved that 3 hydrants be placed in such positions as the Surveyor may direct.

The Clerk to write to Mr Harris again asking him to remove the obstruction.

A new rate of 1/8d. in the £ was sealed and signed by five members.

Plans approved:

- 1 house Oakfield St.
- 2 houses Partridge Rd.
- 2 houses Clifton St.

6 July 1869. Venue: The Four Elms Inn.

C.H.Williams in the chair.

Jellings to be given a month's notice and his services would no longer be required by the Board.

A deputation was received complaining of the want of repair in the back road between Oakfield Street and Partridge Road. The Surveyor was requested to prepare a plan for the reconstruction of the said road and to give the necessary notices to the owners prior to the next meeting.

The Collector was instructed to take proceedings against Thomas Jeans, Thomas Evans, Stephen Evans and Messrs Blake & Cutlan to recover amounts due from them to the Board in respect of private improvements.

Plan approved:

- 1 house Constellation St.

3 August 1869. Venue: The Four Elms Inn.

C.H.Williams in the chair. Present: Charles Pearson, I.W. Thomas, Thomas Evans, John Thomas and Rees Enoch.

The Surveyor's report was read. He was directed to advertise for tenders for private improvements in Oakfield Road Lane.

Mr Maxey had written complaining of nuisance in back lane between Elm Street and Oakfield Road.

The Clerk was directed to call the contractor's attention to it and write to Mr Page and request him to refrain from depositing his garden refuse in the lane.

Plans approved:

- 2 houses Metal St.
- 3 houses Rose St.
- 7 houses Clifton St.
- shop & stockroom Vere St.
- 7 September 1869.

Surveyor's report was read.

He was requested to employ James Dibble to flush the sewers when required at a salary of 30 shillings per quarter.

Notice to be given to owners & occupiers at premises rear of the Great Eastern Inn for construction of the sewer and to serve private improvements notices on the owners & occupiers in System Street. Mr Ensor, Mr Hugh Bird, Edward Merrick, Mr Hodgkinson, Howell Thomas and Mr Charles Honeychurch were appointed to assist the Chairman at the ensuing election.

Plan approved:

2 houses Constellation St. for Mr Fredk Durk.

2 October 1869. Venue: Four Elms.

Mr C.H.Williams in the chair.

Present: I.W.Thomas, John Thomas, Daniel Thomas, Robert Meyrick and Rees Enoch.

The Clerk reported that Thomas Evans, John Thomas and Robert Meyrick had been duly elected members of the Board and thereupon Messrs John Thomas and Meyrick made the necessary declaration and took their seats at the Board.

Mr C.H.Williams was unanimously elected chairman for the ensuing year.

Messrs John Evans, Pearson, Daniel Thomas and John Thomas were appointed Finance Committee for the ensuing year.

The Inspector's report was received. It was ordered that summonses for nuisances be issued to Messrs Stanley, Mathias & Kennesley, Charles Gardner and Thomas Davies.

It was ordered that the gate of the market be repaired.

Plans approved:

2 houses Partridge Rd.

3 houses' Grouse St.

oven & bakehouse Crofts Street

2 November 1869. Mr Thomas Evans made the necessary declaration and took his seat at the Board.

The Clerk to advertise for tenders for scavenging and watering the District from 7 December to 25 March 1871 - such contract to include the removal of all garden refuse in the District.

Plans approved:

10 houses Zinc Street

2 houses Constellation St.

3 houses Grouse Street

stable Oakfield Lane.

7 December 1869. Tender accepted for wall around water tank in Milton Street.

Clerk to write to the Secretary of State and ask permission for the Board to borrow £5,000 on security of the general District rates.

Plans approved:

16 houses Zinc St. for Wm. Bird

2 houses' Constellation St.

9 houses Clive Street

NONCONFORMITY IN ROATH

Brian Llewellyn James

A lecture given to the Roath Local History Society on 7th April 1988

INTRODUCTION

After being invited to speak on this topic, it became clear after some thought that it is not possible to talk about the history of nonconformity in Roath without taking account of the history of nonconformity in Cardiff as a whole. As indicated by Mr Keir in his article (Vol.2 No.4 p.114), an Anglican parish is not a suitable framework for such a subject. Nevertheless, Roath has an important place in the history of nonconformity in Wales for two reasons: one is the connection of William Erbery with the parish, and the second is that the Forward Movement of the Presbyterian Church of Wales began here.

17th CENTURY BEGINNINGS

I do not propose to say much here about William Erbery - he really deserves a whole lecture at least - but he obviously has to be mentioned. The received wisdom is that he was born in Roath in 1604 but I have my doubts about this. The only source for the information is Anthony a Wood, a seventeenth century writer, who says that Erbery was born "at, or near, Roath-Dogfield in Glamorganshire". Erbery certainly lived in Roath towards the end of his life and in the letters of administration of his estate granted to his widow in 1654 he is described as "late of Roath Dogfield*.

Erbery was an important figure - a pioneer of nonconformity but a very quirky one, whose theological and political views went through a whole series of changes. He began as Vicar of Cardiff in 1633 and ended outside any denomination, though closer to the Quakers than any other group. Possibly as a result of Erbery's influence, nonconformity was comparatively strong in Cardiff and district in the later 17th century, but I cannot see much evidence to support the contention of Philip Jenkins (The Making of a Ruling Class, p.105) that there was a long-lasting radical tradition in Roath itself. The Quaker society was strong in Cardiff and District in the 1660's, but it soon dwindled to nothing. The Presbyterian congregation which eventually emerges as the church in Womanby Street continued throughout the period of persecution from 1662 to 1689; and there is known to have been a Baptist conventicle at the house of Llewellyn John in Llanedeyrn in 1669. Doubtless there were nonconformists living in Roath itself after 1662 but the records are silent about them until well into the eighteenth century; in fact, the Compton Census of 1676 records that there were no nonconformists in Roath.

18th CENTURY EVIDENCE

In May 1739 the house of Llewellyn Thomas in Roath was registered in Quarter Sessions for nonconformist worship but no minister and no denomination are mentioned. But I feel fairly

confident that this was a branch of the Womanby Street church, Cardiff, where David Williams was then minister. In the period 1738-40 David Williams was a keen supporter of the Methodist Revival and he was described by Howel Harris as "indefatigable night and day in preaching the Word not only at his meeting but from house to house and sometimes in the fields". - (New Trinity p.14)

No minister is named and one cannot be sure which Baptist church was responsible; it could be either Hengoed or Bassaleg, but was probably the latter.

It is difficult to know if either of these meetings lasted long; in fact we know nothing about them apart from their registration in the Quarter Sessions. At the bishop's visitation of 1763 the curate of Roath reported that there were a few Presbyterians and a few Baptists in his parish. Another curate replied to the visitation in 1771 that there were three or four nonconformists (denomination unspecified) in his parish. There is no mention of a meeting.

19th CENTURY

For the next piece of evidence we have to leap forward to 1840 when a "dwelling house being the property of Charles Crofts Williams and intended for use as a schoolroom and as a place of worship" was registered in the Bishop's court by David Jones of Cardiff, Baptist minister. (He was minister of the Tabernacle Welsh Baptist chapel in the Hayes from 1834 to 1854).

LACK OF CONTINUITY

These bits of evidence from rural Roath indicate the existence of nonconformist activity from time to time: there is no reason to think that there was any continuity of a nonconformist meeting in the parish, though there may always have been a few nonconformists living in Roath who were sometimes numerous enough to hold their own cottage meetings. Even for the Baptists, the evidence for a conventicle in Llanedeyrn in 1669 and meetings in Roath in 1752 and 1840 cannot be strung together to suggest a continuance of activity. All that it does suggest is the permanence of the Baptist mission in this general region, which gradually resulted in the founding of Baptist chapels in Castleton, St Mellons, Lisvane, Capel Gwilym (Thornhill), Gwauntreoda in Whitchurch, Croesyparc near Peterston-super-Ely and Tabernacle, Cardiff. The Baptist missionary impetus in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries came from the east - from Monmouthshire.

CHAPEL BUILDING IN ROATH

We can now consider a different question - the building of nonconformist chapels in urban Roath in the fifty or sixty years before the First World War. And it is at this point that we need to bring in the Cardiff dimension, since Roath was not a town in itself, but merely an extension of the town of Cardiff - an urban overspill. As the urban expansion of Cardiff moved into rural Roath, so the nonconformist churches of the old town centre extended their activities into the newly built up areas.

In 1800 there were only two nonconformist chapels in the borough of Cardiff (as then constituted) - the old meeting-house in Womanby Street built in 1696, and the Wesleyan Methodist chapel in Church Street built in 1742. English was the predominant language in both chapels, although there is some suggestion that Welsh services were occasionally held in the early nineteenth century.

LARGE CONGREGATIONS

A number of important chapels were built between 1800 and 1850: Bethany and Tabernacle (English and Welsh Baptist), Ebenezer (Welsh Independent), Zion (Welsh Calvinistic Methodist) and Bethel (Welsh Wesleyan Methodist). The Religious Census of 1851 shows that some at least of them had very large Sunday congregations; this was especially true of the English Wesleyans (who had built a new and much grander chapel in Charles Street in 1850), and the Welsh Baptists at the Tabernacle. The Wesleyans claimed a Sunday evening attendance of 1,000 and the Baptists a Sunday evening attendance of 850. The Welsh element in Cardiff nonconformity in 1850 was very prominent; by that date most of the denominations had separate Welsh and English chapels.

MOTHER CHURCHES

Most of the key "mother churches" which later spearheaded the mission into urban Roath had been established in Central Cardiff by 1850. But I must complete the picture by mentioning three others which became very important in the story: namely, Charles Street English Congregational which started as a breakaway from Womanby Street in the 1850's (the chapel dates from 1855); the United Methodist Free Church in Guildford Street (now the Masonic Temple in Churchill Way) built in 1862; and Windsor Place Presbyterian Church of England which was founded in 1865 (by exiled Scots, just to confuse matters).

CARDIFF CENTRAL CHURCHES

More must be said about these city centre churches before we move on in the direction of Roath itself. Most, if not all the congregations had begun in the early nineteenth century as small groups of Christians meeting together in private houses or rented rooms (Bethany began in a stable; Ebenezer in a coach-house); the members were mostly people such as craftsmen, Shopkeepers, or labourers, with little money to spare. As time passed, their numbers grew, chapels were built, then enlarged, and then rebuilt. By the middle of the nineteenth century - and increasingly as the century wore on towards its end - chapel membership included many of the wealthiest and most prominent families of Cardiff (like the Corys) who went to Sunday services in their carriages, wearing top hats and crinolines and attended by large families of children and servants. This was particularly true of the two fashionable chapels in Charles Street (the English Wesleyan and the English Congregational) and the Presbyterian chapel in Windsor Place. The important point is that these city-centre congregations became wealthy and influential and they were ready to use their money and the organising abilities of their members to further the cause of their denominations in the new suburbs.

One must also mention that these congregations were led by a succession of very able and powerful ministers who maintained a very high profile in Victorian Cardiff: men like Alfred Tilly of Tredegarville, W.E. Winks of Bethany, Nathaniel Thomas of Tabernacle, John Williamson of Charles Street, J.D. Watters of Windsor Place, and many others.

OUTER CARDIFF AND ROATH

The move outward of the various denominations into the growing suburbs on the east side of Cardiff seems to have taken place in two stages. The first was the establishment of new chapels just within the borough boundaries (that is, the pre-1875 boundaries), in Adamsdown, Cathays and Tredegarville. Tredegarville English Baptist was founded from Bethany in 1861 in what must then have been one of the most fashionable residential parts of Cardiff. Tredegarville chapel later became a powerhouse for the Baptist mission into outer Cardiff. In the same year, the Tabernacle Welsh Baptists built Salem chapel on the corner of Moira Terrace and Meteor Street. A couple of years later the English Wesleyans (whose headquarters were in Charles Street) established a mission room near St Peter's Roman Catholic Church; they then built what was called a "school-chapel" in Castle Road (City Road) and finally in 1870-1 built a grandiose gothic chapel complete with tower on the corner of City Road and Newport Road (to use the current names). This was the great and fashionable Roath Road Methodist chapel, destroyed by enemy action in 1941 and never rebuilt.

In the 1870's and 1880's several other chapels, missions and Sunday schools were opened on or close to the eastern boundary of the old borough - Mount Tabor in Moira Terrace (1875), Woodville Road Baptist (1881), Cathays Methodist in Crwys Road and Fanny Street (1882), Horeb Welsh Calvinistic Methodist in May Street (1884), later rebuilt in Crwys Road and several others.

Although all of these places of worship were on the Cardiff side of the parish boundary, they must all have drawn their congregations -at least in part - from the parishioners of Roath. The sighting of a large number of chapels in Cardiff but close to Roath explains why nonconformists seemed to be slow to provide places of worship within Roath itself. The population of Roath parish was nearly 8,000 in 1871, but the only nonconformist provision actually within its boundaries that I have been able to trace was as follows:

1) Sunday school-room in Comet Street run mainly by Charles Street English Congregational church. The first service there was on 27th November 1859 and it proved so successful that on 7th May 1870 land in Copper Street was leased from Lord Tredegar for the erection of a permanent chapel. On 27th September 1870 the foundation stone of what became known as the Star Street Congregational chapel was laid by H.O. Wills of Bristol. The chapel was opened for public worship on 26th April 1871.

2) Welsh Calvinistic Methodist "lecture hall" in Clifton Street, built in 1868. The gothic chapel fronting Newport Road was built in 1880, and from about that date onwards English became the main language used in the services there.

These two, then, were the only nonconformist places of worship in Roath. Contemporaries were aware of the problem of under-provision of places of worship, but even in the remaining years of the 1870's the record of expansion is surprisingly poor - especially when one remembers that the population of Roath increased from 8,000 to 23,000 between the 1871 and 1881 censuses. And so it was that most chapel people in Roath were still having to attend services in Cardiff.

The Methodist chapel was built in Broadway in 1879-80, having been preceded by a mission hall in Nora Street; the Bible Christians built their schoolroom and chapel in Diamond Street between 1876 and 1879 and I shall refer to this again later; the Strict Baptists built Zion chapel in Longcross Street at some date before 1878 when the chapel is marked on the 6" O.S. map. So by 1880 we have five nonconformist chapels in Roath.

The 1880's saw a substantial expansion, especially with the large working-class suburb of Splott on the Tredegar estate. Lord Tredegar appears to have been very ready to give plots of land for building places of worship; there is at least the tradition that the Marquess of Bute was very unwilling to release land for this purpose to nonconformists. The Tredegar Estate, however, does seem to have insisted that its firm of architects, Habershon & Fawckner, should be employed to design the buildings - which explains why Star Street Congregational and Diamond Street Bible Christian chapels were identical.

The 1890's saw the erection of some of the largest and most pretentious nonconformist buildings as the population of Roath soared to 61,000 in 1901. We all know them: Roath Park Methodist on the corner of Albany Road and Wellfield Road (1897-8), Roath Park Presbyterian (now St Andrew's United Reformed Church) at the other end of Wellfield Road (1897-1900), Roath Park English Congregational (1909), Splott Road Baptist Church (1893-5) and Splott Methodist (1895-6). The United Methodist Free Church abandoned their chapel in Guildford Street and built very extensive premises in Newport Road at the junction of Four Elms Road and Piercefield Place in 1896-7; it was given a modest spire and it would have been clearly visible to anyone standing on the pavement in front of Roath Road Methodist or Broadway Methodist. (In 1955 the three congregations united to form Trinity Methodist Church, which now occupies part of the U.M.F.C. premises).

These all became very prominent feature of the urban landscape; it is as if the denominations were competing with one another to build the biggest and most ostentatious chapels. The Presbyterian chapel in Wellfield Road on the corner of Pen-y-lan and Marlborough Roads was the grandest of all with its 150-feet spire and its west front modelled on Tintern and Melrose abbeys. All this could only have been done by incurring large debts which remained a serious burden upon many congregations for years to come; and they pose intolerable burdens of upkeep in our own time. Splott Methodist and Splott Baptist churches have solved their problem by demolishing their vast chapels and retreating to their former schoolrooms.

But not all congregations could or even wished to build on this scale. There were plenty of more modest chapels and halls, especially belonging to newer denominations such as the Plymouth Brethren and missions such as the Forward Movement.

Good examples of how new congregations were formed and new chapels built are afforded by the well documented story of two chapels - Diamond Street Bible Christian and Aion Welsh Baptist.

BIBLE CHRISTIANS

The Bible Christians are an almost forgotten denomination.

Founded in 1815 by William O'Bryan at Shebbear in North Devon, the Bible Christians or "Bryanites" as they are often called were in reality a breakaway from the Wesleyan Methodists. Like the Primitive Methodists of the Midlands and the North of England, the movement appealed to the rural poor; as a major influence it was confined to Devon, Cornwall and the Isle of Wight. The denomination ceased to exist in 1907 when it merged with two other Methodist splinter groups which eventually re-united with other groups to form the present Methodist Church of Great Britain in 1932.

The Bible Christian denomination was really brought to Cardiff by immigrants from the west of England, but the distinction of having gathered the first viable congregation belongs to the Rev.W.F.James who published an account of his activities in *Seven Years' Pioneer Mission Work in Cardiff* in the year 1881. Despite the rather off-putting title, this is a remarkable and very readable book. The author had a sense of humour and a self-depreciatory style, rare indeed in nonconformist literature, and yet it has an almost heroic story of the struggle of a minister and his small flock with no funds of their own to build a schoolroom, a chapel and a manse. The leaders of the Bible Christian denomination were anxious about the fate of its members who migrated to Cardiff where they either joined other churches or lapsed altogether. W.F.James, a Cornishman then ministering at Neath, was asked to go to Cardiff and gather a church. He began in November 1874 in a second-floor room in the Swiss Hall, a wooden structure in Crockherbtown (now Queen Street). The multi-occupied building which has long since been demolished, was in the block between Charles Street and Frederick Street. It was not a convenient place and could be used only for two Sunday services. Since most of the congregation of about 50 lived in Roath, it was decided to look for a building site there. A site on the corner of Diamond Street and Nora Street had been set aside by the Tredegar Estate for a Chapel; the Bible Christians secured the site and immediately began to collect money to build a schoolroom. The first meeting to consider raising a fund produced sixpence in cash and a promise of £10. It was estimated that £4,000 would be needed to complete the schoolroom, chapel and manse; and in the end £3,905 was so spent. The schoolroom was built in 1876, the chapel in 1878-9 and the manse in 1879.

How did they do it? W. James provides the answer in meticulous detail, with plenty of amusing asides; there were many disappointments and a few betrayals as well as endless effort, self-sacrifice and generosity. During his seven years in Cardiff (1874 to 1881) he calculated that he had travelled 15,000 miles, half of it on foot, made 10,000 begging calls, written 20,000 pages, presided over 200 business meetings, framed 800 resolutions and accounted for £6,000. All this in addition to preaching three times a week and conducting the other meetings of the church. Grants were received from the central funds of the Bible Christians, but the bulk of the money was gathered the hard way. The largest donations came from John Cory, to whom James dedicated his book.

Although Cory was not a member of the Bible Christian denomination, he did, of course come from North Devon, but he was famous for his willingness to support evangelical and charitable campaigns of all sorts. As W.F.James puts it: "it would not be orthodox to build a chapel in Cardiff without a donation from Mr John Cory J.P."

With all their humble origins and working class affiliations , the Bible Christians at Diamond Street were not averse to splashing out on the grand occasion. When the foundation stones of their chapel were laid on 3 October 1878 representatives of eight denominations participated, led by H.H.Vivian, the Swansea industrialist and M.P. for Glamorgan, representing the Church of England. Stone-laying ceremonies were very important for new chapels desperate for money since it was well understood that all who attended were expected to dig deep into their pockets on that day. £187 was collected at the Diamond Street ceremony.

Unfortunately torrential rain poured down as the stones were being laid; in fact pouring rain was something of a theme in James's book - I don't know if the 1870's were particularly wet. He describes the first winter at Diamond Street after the schoolroom had been erected; the site for the chapel adjoining became a deep pond - also only one of the roads approaching the school-room had been made up and they turned into quagmires.

The Rev. Joseph Waite of Charles Street, one of Cardiff's leading ministers, was invited to visit and foolishly attempted to find his way without a guide - he was almost drowned.

After discovering W.F.James's marvellous and informative little book some years ago, I immediately rushed round to Diamond Street only to find that it was once again a muddy building site, all trace of the chapel having gone.

AINON WELSH CHAPEL

I now turn to the story of Aion Welsh Baptist chapel, Walker Road, Splott. There is not so much humour in the Rev. G. Sorton Davies's history of the cause published in 1929, but it does give a very instructive idea of the beginnings of Aion.

Aion was very different from Diamond Street in various ways, the most important being that it was first established as a branch of an existing church - that is Salem Welsh Baptist on the corner of Meteor Street and Moira Terrace. In the 1880's Salem was a flourishing church of 400 members; it had been founded in 1861. The background of Aion is, of course, the development of Splott in the early 1880's and Lower Splott in the late 1880's and early 1890's. One of the crucial factors was the building of the Dowlais Iron Works (later the East Moors works) from 1888 which attracted many Welsh speaking families from the declining iron towns at the heads of the valleys.

About 40 members of Salem lived in Splott and they were well aware of the need to provide a place of worship for the growing number of Welsh-speaking people in the area. In July 1889 they rented a wooden structure in Marion Street for 6 shillings a week, put one of their deacons in charge and started to hold services in what became affectionately known as the "shed". Despite the

unsatisfactory building which among other defects had a leaky roof, the meetings were well attended, and the choir led by Mr R. Rhedynog Price began to become well known in the district. An organ was purchased despite some opposition from the mother church at Salem which did not have one. It was pointed out that Spurgeon's Tabernacle in London did not have one either. (It is remarkable to find principled opposition to church organs as late as 1890)

The congregation rapidly outgrew the accommodation at the "shed" in Marion Street and the acquisition of permanent premises was soon under discussion. Land at the corner of Walker Road and Adeline Street was secured and a schoolroom was built at a cost of £765 in 1891.

By October 1893 the congregation at the Walker Road schoolroom felt strong enough to apply to the mother church for permission to become a separate Baptist church. Salem agreed; 103 members were released from Salem to form a new church to be called Aion. Salem agreed to take responsibility for the debt of £286 remaining on the schoolroom. The new church thus came into existence at the beginning of 1894 and membership rapidly increased thereafter. There was however no minister at this time and the need of one was immediately felt. The Rev. Thomas Morgan of Dowlais was chosen and he began his ministry early in 1895.

Under his leadership the new church faced the prospect of collecting money to build a chapel on the ground adjoining the schoolroom. They did not delay, and the foundation stones were laid with due ceremony in October 1895. Among those who laid a stone was Mr Richard Cory, John Cory's brother and partner. (Richard Cory was a prominent Baptist who belonged to the Longcross Street church). The inevitable Habershon & Fawckner were the architects. The building was gothic with a stubby tower at one corner surmounted by a miniature Spire. It cost £2,600, most of which was raised by a mortgage with the Ancient Order of Foresters. The chapel was opened in June 1896, by which time membership had increased to 224. The debt on the building remained a great burden for more than twenty years and it was not eliminated until the early 1920's. Every kind of fund-raising activity was tried - bazaars, concerts and sales of work without number.

Well before this time Aion was having to face an even greater problem - that of language. The older generation was passing; the younger Cardiff-born generation rarely had an adequate grasp of Welsh. English was first introduced into services in 1911; Sunday evening services were regularly conducted in English from 1918 and by the time the minister wrote his book in 1929, Welsh had entirely disappeared from public worship.

The chapel closed in 1975 and was subsequently demolished. A block of flats called Aion Court now occupies the site.

The founding of Aion was only one of many nonconformist missions to be started in Splott in the 1880's and 1890's.

THE FORWARD MOVEMENT

The most remarkable of all such missions was called the Forward Movement. It was started by the Rev. John Pugh who was minister of Clifton Street Presbyterian Church of Wales from 1889 to 1892.

The background to John Pugh's missionary movement was the belief shared by many religious leaders throughout Britain in Victorian times that they had virtually lost the battle to evangelise the urban working classes. Like William Booth of the Salvation Army, Pugh viewed the respectable, well-to-do middle-class Chapel congregations as complacent and lacking in evangelical zeal. He borrowed a great deal from the Salvation Army, though not of course the pseudo-military uniforms and organisation. Splott was close to where he lived and it was thought of as one of the darkest spots in Cardiff, which perhaps echoes the title of William Booth's famous book, *In Darkest England*, published in 1890. In May 1891 Pugh erected a tent on a vacant lot in Ordell Street, had it roughly furnished, and began to preach. There were many critics and scoffers; one said that you might as well try to demolish the fort of Gibraltar with boiled peas as to convert the people of Splott in a tent. But the mission was in fact an immediate success and in little more than a year East Moors Hall had been built in Carlisle Street, with seating for a thousand people at a cost of £2,000. The policy was to build as cheaply as possible for the maximum accommodation; there were no architectural frills, no gothic spires and stained glass windows. John Pugh was glad - as so many were - to receive practical support from John Cory, but the financial mainstay of the Forward Movement as it spread throughout Wales was the generosity of the Davieses of Llandinam.

The Presbyterian Church of Wales officially adopted the Forward Movement in 1892 and Pugh resigned his pastorate at Clifton Street to become full-time superintendent. Other missions were quickly organised in Grangetown and Canton and by 1906 there were eight capacious halls in the working-class districts of Cardiff and about forty in other parts of Wales. In that year the Movement had some 30,000 members and adherents. It was a remarkable achievement by what was generally a rural-oriented denomination in which the Welsh language was supreme. The Forward Movement was urban and English-speaking.

Although the Forward Movement was primarily an evangelical campaign for the salvation of souls, it developed, like the Salvation Army, a social concern for the poor to whom it ministered. Having gone to live in Grangetown, Pugh wrote a strong attack on the town council for allowing appalling housing conditions to persist in Saltmead. He also had a special loathing for strong drink. One Sunday in 1893 he led a group of supporters to break up a notorious shebeen called "Hotel de Marl" in the lower part of Grangetown. He received the thanks of the Earl of Plymouth, the local landowner, for his action. The Movement also maintained a home for fallen women in Grangetown.

The Forward Movement no longer exists, but the East Moors Hall Still stands in Carlisle Street, though now a youth community centre. The Moorland Road Hall was burned down in 1974 and rebuilt as a day centre for the elderly. The only hall in Roath still used for services is the Crwys Hall in Monthermer Road.

CONCLUSION

The final question to be answered is to what extent the religious denominations were successful in their heroic efforts to evangelise the new suburb of Roath.

Using the lists and statistics provided by the Welsh Church Commission for the year 1905, together with Kelly's Directory for 1906, there seem to have been at least 15 places of worship in Roath at that time, including chapels, halls, missions and Salvation Army barracks. Altogether they provided seating for perhaps 19,000 people and they claimed 5,500 members or communicants and a further 8,600 adherents. It is not clear whether these figures include children. If we reckon the population of Roath at 65,000 in 1905 then the chapels were claiming about a fifth of the population. But if the figures of adherents do not include children of members of the congregations, then the proportion would rise considerably - to perhaps as much as one third. (There is no way that one can take account of those residents of Roath who may have attended one of the Cardiff chapels)

To complete the picture of churchgoing, one must take account of the Church of England and the Roman Catholics, but it is not easy to find comparable statistics. By 1905 the Anglican parish of Roath had been sub-divided into four parishes - St Margaret, St Martin, St German and St Saviour. In addition to the four parish churches, there were chapels of ease, mission churches or mission rooms, totalling 13 places of worship within the ancient parish boundaries providing accommodation for about 5,500 people. There were just over 3,000 communicants. But there are no figures for the size of the congregations in the 13 places of worship. One might hazard a guess of 5,000 adults with 5,000 children in the Sunday Schools and other young people's organisations. All told, 15% of the population.

I have no figures for the Roman Catholics, though John Hickey suggests in his book *Urban Catholics* that there were large numbers in Roath. There is a problem that the main Roman Catholic church serving Roath was St Peter's (dating from 1861), which in Anglican terms is within the parish of St John, Cardiff, not in Roath. The only Roman Catholic church in Roath itself in 1905 was St Alban's in Railway Street, Splott, - at that time a temporary building. There may have been Catholic mission rooms, but I have no knowledge of them. It is possible that the Catholic community in Roath numbered as many as 5,000, mainly people of Irish descent, but whether all of them practised their religion I cannot say.

Some of the figures are admittedly little better than guesswork but if one adds them all together it is possible to suggest that slightly more than half of the population of Roath in 1905 were at least occasional church-goers at a time when churchgoing was nationally at its height. My figures probably err on the optimistic side. A firmer statistic is that seating accommodation was provided in places of worship for about 40% of the population, which may indicate that about a third of the population were regular churchgoers. However one doctors the statistics the unavoidable conclusion is that a very large number of people living in Roath even in 1905 had no connection with a place of worship.

NONCONFORMIST CHURCHES IN THE OLD PARISH OF ROATH BEFORE 1914

DENOMINATION/ Church	Earliest Date (Mother church)	Dates of permanent buildings	Present state
INDEPENDENT (CONGREGATIONALIST)			
Star Street	early 1860s (Charles St)	1870-1	Star Street U.R.C.
Stacey Road	1880 (split from Star St)	?1894	Church disbanded 1916; chapel now used by BBC
Bethlehem (W), Eyre St	1892 (Ebenezer)	1895-1908	chapel for sale:1988, now demolished
Roath Park	1896 (Charles St)	1909-27	Roath Park U.R.C.
BAPTIST			
Longcross St	c.1878 (Zoar)	c.1878	closed 1967, now part of the Infirmary
Splott Road	1880 (Tredegarville)	1886-95	Splott Road Baptist; chapel demolished 1983, schoolroom now in use.
Pearl St	1883 (Tredegarville)	1888-92	Pearl St Baptist, now a Sikh temple
Albany Road	1893 (Baptist Assoc.)	1897-1932	Albany Rd Baptist
Ainon (W) Walker Rd	1889 (Salem)	1891-6	closed 1975 and since demolished
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ENGLAND			
Roath Park	1897 (Windsor Place)	1897-1900	St Andrews U.R.C.

DENOMINATION/ Church	Earliest Date (Mother church)	Dates of permanent buildings	Present state
CALVINISTIC METHODIST (PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF WALES)			
Clifton St	1868 (Bethania/Zion)	1868-80	closed and derelict
Plasnewydd	1885 (Clifton St?)	1886-1901	Plasnewydd Presbyterian Church of Wales
Jerusalem (W), Walker Rd	1884 (Pembroke Terrace)	1891-1902	demolished 1987
Metal St	1905 (Clifton St)	1905	Metal St Presbyterian Church of Wales
CALVINISTIC METHODIST FORWARD MOVEMENT			
East Moors Hall, Carlisle St	1891	1892	closed 1928, now youth community centre
Crwys Hall, Monthermer Rd	?1899	1899-1906	Cathays Presbyterian Church of Wales
Moorland Road Hall	1900	1903-4	burned down 1974
WESLEYAN METHODIST			
Broadway	1872 (Roath Rd)	1879-80	closed c.1955, now a warehouse
Splott Road	1881 (Wesley/Roath Rd)	1886-1905	Splott Methodist; chapel demolished 1964; schoolroom adapted for services
Roath Park	1893 (Wesley/Roath Rd)	1897-8	Roath Park Methodist

DENOMINATION/ Church	Earliest Date (Mother church)	Dates of permanent buildings	Present state
PRIMITIVE METHODIST			
Mount Hermon,	1892 Splott Rd/Pearl St	1892	Salvation Army
Mount Zion	1896	1896	closed and demolished
BIBLE CHRISTIAN			
Diamond Street	1874	1876-9	closed and demolished
UNITED METHODIST FREE CHURCH			
Newport Road	1862	1896-7	Trinity Methodist (amalgamated congregations of Newport Rd., Roath Rd., & Broadway)

NB: The United Methodist Free Church, the Bible Christians and the Methodist New Connexion united in 1907 to form the United Methodist Church.

The United Methodist Church, the Primitive Methodists and Wesleyan Methodists united in 1932 to form the Methodist Church in Great Britain.

The Congregational Church in England and Wales and the Presbyterian Church of England united in 1972 to form the United Reformed Church.



ALBANY ROAD BAPTIST CHURCH

The new building was erected in the 1930's. The original chapel in Blenheim Road was the present adjoining schoolroom which dates from 1898 (foundation stone laid 22 Sept. 1897). The old Roath Baptist fellowship at the beginning of the century consisted of 10 men and women who used to meet in a room over a stable in Cottrell Road.



ROATH PARK METHODIST CHURCH

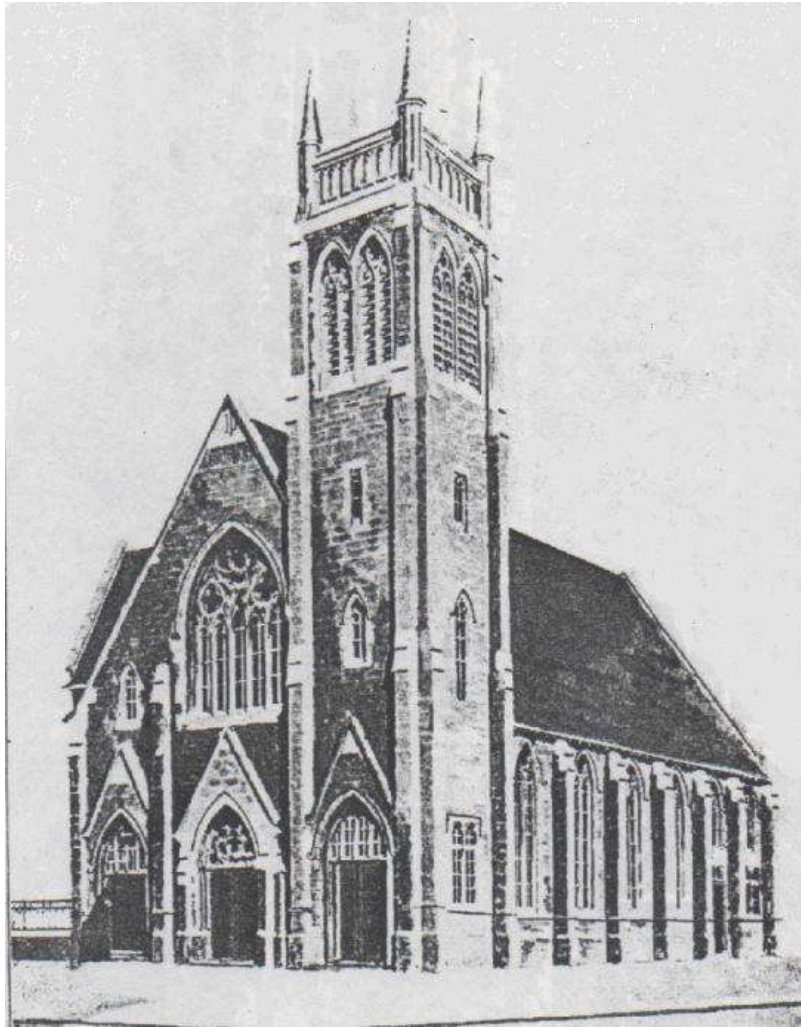
The church which stands on the corner of Albany Road and Wellfield Road dates from 1898. Architects: Jones, Richards & Budgen. It is a large cruciform structure in Perpendicular style with a tower capped at the corners with crocketed pinnacles and is a "listed" building.



PLASNEWYDD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The church, which stands near the Mackintosh Institute, was largely the outcome of the devoted exertions of Edwin Rees. A Sunday School was started here in 1885 and in 1886 a school chapel was erected. The church was opened November 3rd 1901. The architect was W.R.Rees.

[For its history see Project Newsletter Vol.3. No.1 p.22 ff.]



ROATH PARK CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

It stands on the corner of Morlais Street and Penywain Road, facing Mackintosh Place. When the present chapel was built in 1910, the original iron building dating from 1898 was used as the schoolroom. The first pastor was the Rev. Silas Charles (1898 - 1902).

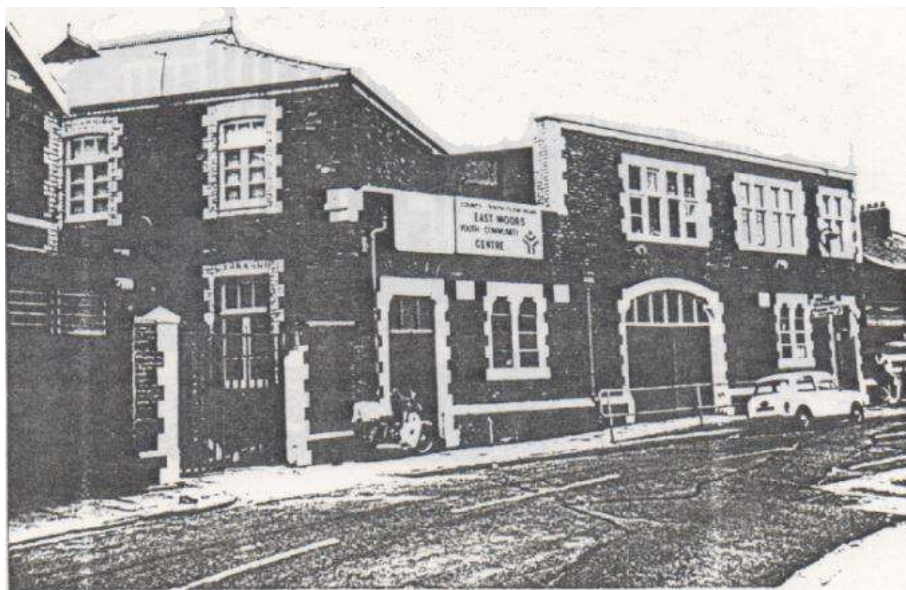


ROATH ROAD WESLEYAN METHODIST CHURCH

The church no longer exists. Built in 1870, it stood on the corner of Newport Road and City Road. Destroyed by incendiary bombs in 1941, the ruins remained until 1955 when they were pulled down to make room for Heron House.



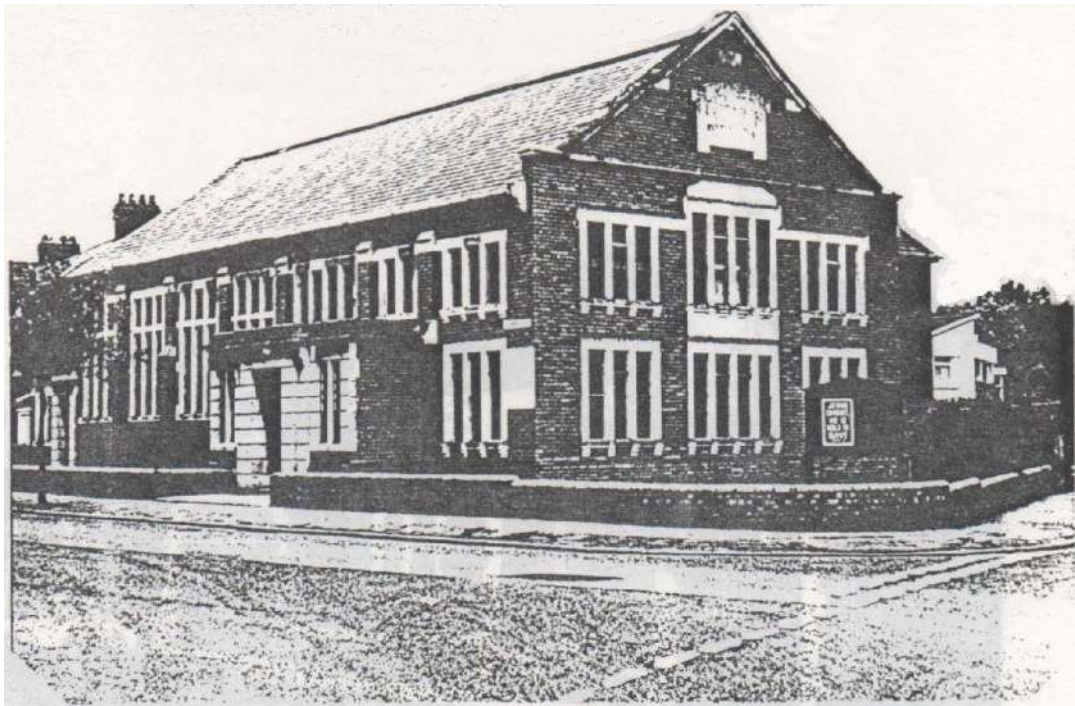
STAR STREET U.R.C. (Congregational)



EAST MOORS HALL (1892), Carlisle Street.
(Former "Forward Movement Hall").



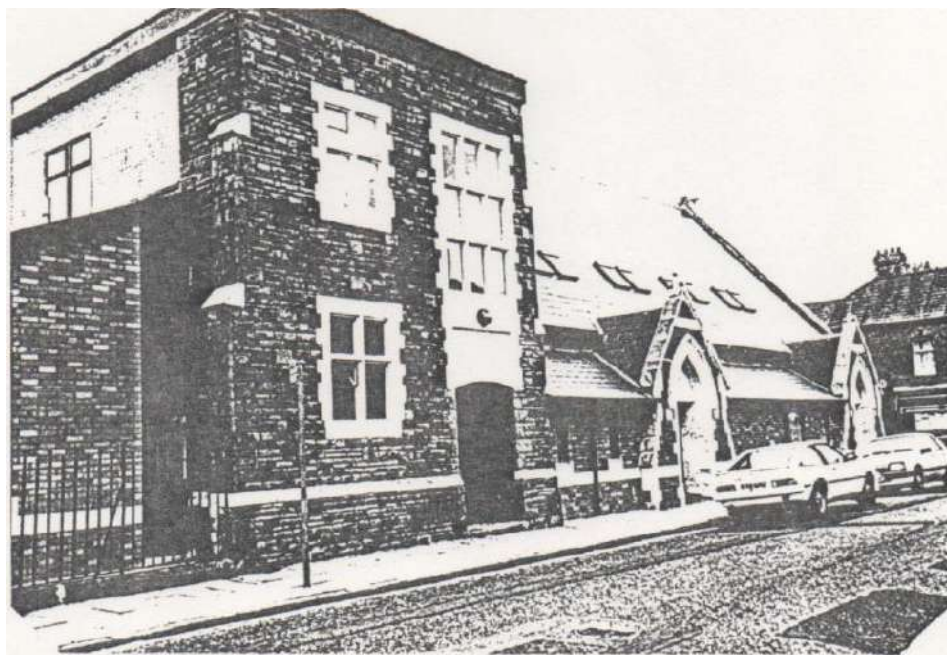
Minster Road Congregational Chapel - provincial office of the U.R.C.



Minster Gospel Hall, Newminster Road



St Andrew's U.R.C. (Roath Park Presbyterian Church of England) (1897-1900)



Splott Road Wesleyan Methodist Schoolroom (1905)
now adapted for services.(Chapel demolished 1964)