

St Dyfrig's Parish Registers & Archives



Document 15

"Treforest Parish" by Rev. E. L. Butler Probably from a souvenir brochure, 1963

Original Content:

In the parish archive cabinet was found, on photocopied pages, an article by Rev. E L. Butler together with a cover for a Centenary Souvenir brochure. The two are assumed to be part of the same original publication. It is unclear what centenary is being marked as there is no obvious focus in 1863 – the parish began to have its own registers in 1868 and the date of the opening of the old church on Wood Road is uncertain.

Copyright:

© E. L. Butler, 1963

Digitised:

Digitised November 2011 by Rev Gareth Leyshon, Parish Administrator

For Further Information

St Dyfrig's Parish Homepage: http://www.pontypriddrcdeanery.org.uk/churches/treforest.html

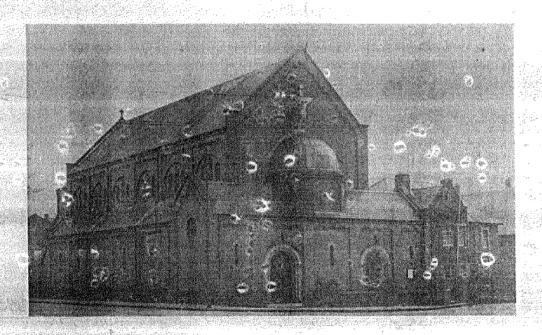
To contact the parish: Telephone UK 01443 402 439 / International Dialling +44 1443 402 439

In writing: St Dyfrig's Presbytery, Broadway, Treforest, PONTYPRIDD. CF37 1DB (Wales, UK)

By email: Use the contact page at http://www.pontypriddrcdeanery.org.uk/churches/treforest/contact.html and please ensure you enter your email address correctly, or we will be unable to reply to you.

ST. DYFRIG'S CHURCH

BROADWAY, TREFOREST, GLAM.



Centenary Souvenir

PRICE: TWO SHILLINGS AND SIXPENCE

ST. DYFRIG'S CHURCH

BROADWAY, TREFOREST, GLAM.

CLERGY:

Parish Priest: Very Rev. E. L. BUTLER, V.F.

Assistant Priests:

Rev. BRENDAN McNAMEE, Rev. JAMES O'BRIEN

Address — St. Dyfrig's, Broadway, Treforest, Glam.

Tel.: Pontypridd 2439.

SERVICES

MASS

Sundays: 8.0, 9.30, 11.0 a.m. Evening Mass & Benediction: 6.30 p.m. Weekdays: 7.30, 8.15 and 9.0 a.m. Thursday Evening: 7.30, Rosary, S. * Instruction and Benediction.

Holydays of Obligation: 7.0, 8.0, 9.0. Evening Mass and Benediction 7.30 p.m.

First Fridays: 7.30, 9.0 a.m. Evening Mass and Benediction 7.30 p.m.

CONFESSIONS

Saturday, 12.0-1.0 p.m.; 6.30-8.0 p.m. Also after Thursday Evening Devotions.

SODALITIES

C.Y.M.S. General Monthly Communion Fourth Sunday 8.0 Mass Meeting Institute, 7.45.

U.C.M. General Monthly Communion Third Sunday 8.0 Mass. R.S.B. Wednesday after.

Weekly Meeting Wednesday, 7.30, p.m.

Legion of Mary: Seniors Meet Wednesday, 7.30; Juniors 6.45 Fridays. First Sunday: Monthly Communion for Archeonfraternity of Sacred Heart, all Altar Servers and All Children.

Second Sunday: Monthly Communion—Legion of Mary, Cadetts and Children of Mary.

TALBOT GREEN

Mass said in Welfare Hut - 10.0 a.m. Confessions before Mass.

CATECHISM

St. Dyfrig's Church 2.45 p.m. Also in Glyncoch. Friday in Talbot Green; 6.30 at Mr. C. Lynch's house. Friday in Taffs Well, Friday, 6.30. p.m. Secondary Schoolchildren Friday, 4.20 p.m.

BAPTISM SUNDAY BAPTISM — Sunday, 4.45

The Clergy will gladly meet Parishioners from 9.30 to 10.30 a.m., and from 9.0 to 10.0 p.m. Newcomers and non-Catholics welcomed.

* Instruction and Benediction 7.30 p.m.

Cum Permissa Superiorium

NOTE: The Account of the Sacraments was so well received by readers a few years ago that the Publishers have agreed to reprint. Plain bound copies, with envelope to size price 9d. each, including postage, may be had on application (see Imprint for branch address).

TREFOREST PARISH

Rev. E. L. BUTLER

Pontypridd

Strategically situated almost midway between Merthyr Tydfil in the north and Cardiff in the south, and between Llantrisant and Caerphilly, Pontypridd is the natural market for Aberdare and Rhondda Valleys and for the beautiful Vale of Glamorgan that stretches south-westerly towards Cowbridge.

Ponty-typridd originally meant the bridge of the mudhouse, or turf-house, which was supposed to have been built one night on the bank of the Taff. In the minds of most of the local inhabitants it now signifies the bridge of the broken arch, as shown in the coat-of-arms. Oak forests flourished along the Taff and Rhondda Valleys and one of the largest trees at Llwynypia had a diameter of six feet. Consequently, the first bridge built by William Edwards in 1746 was of oak, but it was carried away in a flood.

In 1818, Dr. R. Griffiths was the first to send coal out of the district, which must have been deposited by the oak forests. Yet, within half a century, Pontypridd became known as the "metropolis of coal." The same year, Brown Lenox opened the Chain and Cable Works where 1,200 people were employed, yet a single store supplied the needs of the village. A daily coach went from Merthyr to Cardiff and passengers alighted at the Bridgewater Arms near Glyntaff Church, and walked to what was then called "Newbridge." To avoid confusion, Postmaster Mr. Charles Bassett changed the name to the original Welsh, calling it Pontypridd. The old Rocking Stone was a Druidic symbol that could be rocked by gentle pressure, from the southern side. It was at Pontypridd that the Welsh National Anthem "Mae Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau" was componed in 1856 at Mill Street. The tune was composed by James James and the words by his father Evan James.

Today, we have two miles south, the Treforest Industrial and Trading Estate, which began in 1937 and has now some 75 factories. The population is now more than 40,000.

St. Dyfrig's, Treforest

In the post-famine years, no doubt numerous Irishmen came to this part of the country looking for work. Quite a number settled in Treforest. A priest came from Merthyr and later from Aberdare to minister to their spiritual needs. The necessity of a church and parish must have been obvious from the first. Persons seeking Baptismal Certificates for the years between 1854 and 1868 were directed to the Aberdare Catholic Church. A school of some kind seems to have been begun. It was probably an annexe to the main building in Wood Road as far back as 1850. When St. Dyfrig's Church was opened, the school was transferred to Treforest Hotel, Wood Road. In 1884, it moved to St. Michael's where it is today. The first entry in the Baptismal Register is on 30th November, 1868 by Father Thomas Murphy, who describes himself as a missionary apostolic, and seems to have looked after the district until 1870. Father Daniel Hallaghan followed and looked after the area until May 1879. Father Thomas B. Noonan, Inst. Ch., seems to have been remembered in the district, but his name is not in the registers. Father James B. Moore succeeded Father Hallaghan, and prepared the parish for a permanent parish priest, remaining until the 10th November, 1890. It was left for Father Alphonsus Van den Heuval, the celebrated Dutch priest, to be the first resident parish priest, who did tremendous work there. In 1895 he was transferred to St. David's, Charles Street, Cardiff. In July, 1922, he retired to his native Holland, where he celebrated his diamond jubilee. Monsignor H. Irvine, V.G., and Canon Daniel J. Hannon, represented the archdiocese there. In his lifetime he was almost a legend. The grand old patriarch lived to the great age of ninety-six.

In 1884, the Headmistress was Mrs. Kiely, who retired after two years, handing over to Mrs. Dacey about 1886. She was Headmistress until she was succeeded by Miss Murphy about 1889. In 1893, Miss Daly succeeded, until in turn she handed over to Miss Maher. Miss Maher was Headmistress for only a short time, from 1896 to 1898. It was just after the 1898 strike arid the Dragoon Guards were called out to keep order. Miss Maher said that they were fine men and commented on what they were doing. At the beginning of 1899, Miss Moire O'Brien, an active

Clarewoman, took over. Miss O'Brien became a member of the Glamorgan County Council. She was also a member of the Board of Governors Grammar School and treasurer for the Blind Institute. A sincere Catholic, she was the organist in the old Church and turned up for the 9 o'clock and 11 o'clock Masses, for the Catechism and the Evening Devotions. After thirty-four years she had her last class on the 10th December, 1934. She was succeeded by Miss Sarah Kelly, who was head until the end of 1960. Mr. Cornelius McCarthy became head as from January, 1961.

About June, 1894, Father Michael Joseph McManus came here, he was the wellknown Scottish priest who did an incredible amount of work in Treforest and the surrounding districts. The frightful explosion at the Albion Colliery, Cilfynydd, happened on the 26th June, 1894, taking a toll of 276 lives. Quite a number were young Irishmen, e.g. Joseph Cullen, who had two nieces teaching in St. Michael's School. Father McManus never forgot to pray for them. He used to ride over the Eglwysilian mountain, with a lantern to guide him on his way across the Hafod, when out on a night sick call to Caerphilly, Abertridwr or Senghenydd. A few men still living remember accompanying him. They still recall his Victorian figure in frock coat and high hat and walking stick, as he made his way among the parishioners. It was about this time that Nazareth House was built by Sister Morgan, one of the old Morgan family of the Vale of Glamorgan. People still recall her and Sister Catherine as they took care of the boys and girls in what is now the Central School. That building cost £4,000. Unhappily, there were difficulties about a chaplain and the Mother General said that Nazereth Nuns should move. They went to Sketty, Swansea, about 1930. They still had difficulty about a suitable



Canon McManus

building. Finally, a house was built for them on the verge of Bishopston Common, and they moved there shortly after it has been opened by the late Archbishop Mostyn. The building vacated near Calvary Chapel was sold for £1,400 and was altered for the Central School. People still say that it was a shame that it was not kept as a school instead of the present building. It is only fair to say that times were extremely hard and unemployment rampant in the "thirties" after the lock-out strikes.

Senghenydd Disaster

On the 14th October, 1913, one of the most tragic explosions in mining history took place at Universal Colliery, Senghenydd. It was so violent that it shook the whole valley and it was felt in Merthyr, and 439 lives were lost in a blast that echoed round the world. We are told that cows in a neighbouring field stampeded into St. Michael's school yard. It caused a pall of smoke over Senghenydd and deep mourning and lamentation in the whole locality with so many families bereaved. The place was stunned by shock. A miner's lamp went out and 440 men died. In 1914, All Soul's Church was opened, in Senghenydd and that part was cut off from Treforest. Then the Great War I began and able-bodied men were called up, and the congregations seemed to be all women, with perhaps just a figure in khaki home on leave.

It was now clear to most Catholics that the Church was much too small for the congregation and that a new Church was needed. It was a common sight to see people kneeling in the porch or out in the street during Mass. Father McManus got down to the strenuous task of raising funds to start the project. No hall seemed available, yet a big dance on the Feast of St. Patrick at the Town Hall or Drill Hall was always a huge, success. Father McManus was a member of the old Board of Guardians and of the Board of Governors, and a member of the Burial Board. But it had not always been easy. The minutes of the School Managers, 1903-1905, make sad reading, when there was a lack of sufficient equipment for the school and there was little or no salary for the teachers. Lloyd George, almost worshipped here at that time, told the people not to take on the Church schools. There were only two in the district. The Glyntaff gave up and was taken over by the Council. Mr. Milton Jones, who was the Local Director of Education, advised Father McManus what to do. In 1905 the teachers were not paid. Mrs. Williams was one of these teachers. Finally, the local Council took on the equipment and payment of the teachers.

New Hall and New Church

The years rolled on and in October 1923, Lord Treowen opened the Catholic Memorial Hall. He had an accident on the journey here, and had a plaster on his nose. A Three Day's Bazaar was opened by Sir Thomas Jones of Porthcawl. Meanwhile plans for the new Church were going ahead. At last, the foundation-stone was laid by Archbishop Mostyn, and everyone rejoiced to see the building take shape, where the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass would be offered. Finally, on Monday, 14th November, 1927, the Feast of St. Dyfrig, the Church was dedicated and opened by the Most Reverend Francis Mostyn, Archbishop of Cardiff. Pontifical High Mass was sung at 11.30 a.m. by the Archbishop; Monsignor H. Irvine was assistant at the throne, where Canon Philip Kelly and Canon D. J. Hannon were Deacons. Deacon of the Mass was Reverend D. J. Quigley of Barry, and Reverend T. Vearncombe of Tredegar, Sub-Deacon. The Church had been blessed on the previous Saturday by the founder and parish priest, Canon M. I. McManus, by permission of the Ordinary. The choir was led by Mr. William Crowley, choirmaster, and on this day all the clergy of the archdiocese joined in the Pontifical Solemn Mass. Rt. Reverend Francis J. Vaughan, Bishop of Menevia, preached a moving sermon on the opening of the fine Church and congratulated the parish priest and people on such an historic occasion.

St. Dyfrig was a great Welsh Bishop and Confessor, who had died in Bardsey Island in the Llyn Peninsula, described by the twelfth century bard Melir as "Mary's fair island with its sea-embosomed cemetery." Archbishop Mostyn had a precious Welsh Mitre of Gothic design with fine wrought metal; it had in repoussé a dove in front, a symbol of the Holy Ghost, and two, panels of St. David and St. Winefride with the inscription:

"Sant Dewi. Sant.-Gwenfrewi"

"Gweddiwch dros Gymru"

Over the panel was an exact copy of the famous ancient "Araindlws" (silver harp) which the Mostyns had the right of the Pencerdd at eisteddfodau convoked in past ages by royal mandate. The Mostyns never lost the faith. Bishop Vaughan was one of the well-known Vaughan family of Courtfield. He had an uncle Cardinal of Westminster, another Archbishop of Sydney, another Auxiliary Bishop of Salford, a family that never lost the faith, noted for vocations, whose forefathers suffered much during the persecutions. He was a relative of Archbishop Mostyn. On this occasion, the flowers were presented by Mrs. Low and Mrs. Arthur Faller. The High Altar was decorated by Miss A. J. McManus, the Canon's sister. Miss Davies of Danygraig House, Llantrisant, gave the High Altar, the Lady Altar and the Sacred Heart statue. A wonderful event indeed! Even non-Catholics helped. Councillor Seton gave the pulpit. There was a penalty. Canon McManus, who had worked so hard and so long to get the Church, found his eyesight failing and his health deteriorating, and he was only to say Mass on the following three Sundays. To everyone's regret he announced his resignation. Father W. Boulton was appointed to succeed him and left Abersychan and Blaenavon to come down here. The last day the Canon preached, he was led to the pulpit which he did not see very clearly, and thanked the parishioners for their loyal support. That day the choir played "Ecce Sacerdos Magnus". He retired to Swansea and within six months was dead. He had seen the town grow and knew what a struggle it was, how Treforest became the centre of the Deanery and a foundation parish of the archdiocese.

The Memorial Hall cost £3,500. The House which was built by Mr. Evan Jones, the Canon's friend, cost £2,750. The Hall was built during a big strike. The first £2,000 was raised by dances and other functions at the school.



The Very Rev. William Canon Boulton

A London-born priest, Father W. Boulton was the youngest of four sons of a Nurseryman, born in 1892. He studied at Douai Abbey School and at the English College, Rome. He was the choir-leader who often sang with the Reverend W. Godfrey, who was destined to become Cardinal at Westminster. He was ordained at Rome, Easter 1917, and said Mass at all the shrines before becoming a Curate at St. Patrick's, Grangetown. He was for a short period at St. David's Cathedral, at All Saints, Ebbw Vale, Barry and Tonypandy. In 1922 he was appointed parish priest of Abersychan and Blaenavon. In November, 1927 he succeeded Canon McManus. At first he had to overcome a certain amount of opposition. One of his three sisters is Sister Mary Magdalen of Notre Dame Convent, Blackburn. He had a debt of £14,500, and a depression set in following a big lock-out strike, and young men and their families left the district. Work was on short shifts and the Pits closed down.

His main source of help came from the weekly whist and weekly dances. The Second World War broke out and the Memorial Hall and Institute were taken by the military. The debt from £13,000 was reduced to £9,750, when in April, 1951, Father Boulton left to become parish priest at Barry, after being at Treforest twenty-four years and four months. A chalice and paten had been presented to him at Easter 1930. He saw three altar servers ordained priests. In March, 1962, he became a Canon of the Cardiff Metropolitan Chapter. On the 27th September, 1962, a new church dedicated to St. Michael and All Angels was opened for the people of Colcot, Barry. Treforest people were upset to hear that Canon Boulton had only six months to live. After several transfusions he died on the 18th July, 1963. His chalice and paten were willed back to St. Dyfrig's Treforest.

Rev. Thomas Crowley Treorchy succeeded. Born, in Newtown, Cardiff, 10th October, 1886. Father Crowley went to Cardiff High School and later to Valladolid, where he was ordained in June, 1913. He was one of the last priests who had never been a Curate, but supplied for about six weeks, and then became parish priest in Treorchy. Mgr. Irvine used to tell how miners sat on his window-sill and cursed. Father Crowley was a great sportsman and very popular in the Rhondda. He was a great pigeon fancier who won many cups with racing pigeons from Marseilles, Gibraltar, Algiers and different parts of Europe. He was an inveterate smoker. He built the Church of the Immaculate Conception in 1915 in Glycoli Road, where he secured a useful ground in a residential area. He succeeded Canon Dent at Tonypandy in 1926, where he was parish priest until the 8th May, 1941, when of his own wish he returned to Treorchy. On Low Sunday, March, 1951, he took over Treforest. A new organ was installed costing £2,000. There was a total debt of some £9,850, but Father Crowley set to work in the Hall by promoting football pools and dances, and in a remarkably short time he had cleared the parish debt. He had great influential Italian friends, who threw themselves into decorating the Church, beginning with the



Very Rev. Thomas Canon Crowley

Sanctuary. The Church was, built on leasehold ground, and the owners appeared unwilling to sell. On Archbishop McGrath's advice, a Novena was' made to Our Lady for a successful end to the negotiations. Two months later the freehold was purchased, a wonderful response to prayer! All the altar candlesticks were renewed. It was a great joy for the parishioners when they learned that he had been made an Honorary Canon for his great work— 1st March,

1956. It was short-lived, as Canon Crowley suffered from severe blood-pressure and had to spend some time in East Glamorgan Hospital. He crossed by air to Ireland, for a wedding, and he died suddenly at the Metropole Hotel, Cork, after proposing the bride's health, and on the 22nd August, 1956, his body was brought back to Treforest and laid to rest after the Solemn Requiem in Cathays Cemetery. Canon H. Holland gave a short panegyric on his life. His cousin, Father Michael O'Donovan, was the celebrant.



Very Rev. Joseph H. L. Johnson, V.F.

He was succeeded by Father .J. H. Johnson, the son of a pottery official, born at Longton, near Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, on the 5th July, 1903, and was a fellow-townsman of Frederick Canon Garrett, who became his first parish priest at St. Patrick's, Grangetown. He studied at St. Mary's College, Holywell, where Herbert Canon Holland was two years his senior. He went to St. Mary's College, Oscott, Sutton Coldfield in1922, where he had as classmates Bishop Bright and Mgr. P. Rees, V. G. Shrewsbury. He was ordained priest on the 2nd June, 1928, and did a long tour of Ireland. He was then appointed to St. Patrick's, Grangetown. In 1937 he succeeded Father John Mahoney at Rumney. He joined the Territorial Army Reserve of Officers on the 1st September, 1939, and was soon called up where he looked after

Searchlight and AA units around the coast of South Wales. In 1941 he was appointed to the "Buffs", the East Kent Regiment, who were then stationed at Padgate outside Eastbourne. It seems that they had a fire and everything that the Quartermaster could not find, he said, must have been burned, and he got away with it. After D-Day, Father Johnson went to France where he stayed until the end of the war. At this time lie was a heavy smoker and very popular as chaplain. He returned for a short time to Rumney, Cardiff, and then went to St. John's, Rhymney, Mon., after two years he spent some time at Abertillery, then owing to illness he was appointed parish priest at Dinas Powis. From 1947 to 1950, he was in charge of St. Clare's, Mill Road, Ely. In 1950 he. became parish priest at Whitchurch, where he celebrated the silver jubilee of his priesthood. In November 1956 he became parish priest of Treforest He was very keen on St. Michael's school and started a great deal of improvements. He was Secretary of the Welsh Catholic Truth Society, a Manager of the Cardiff Secondary Schools and member of the Infirm Clergy Society, to which he left a legacy. He was Deacon at Archbishop McGrath's Episcopal Jubilee, and later at his Requiem, and again at the Enthronement of Archbishop Murphy. The death of his favourite brother early in 1962, he felt very deeply. Sickness marred his ministry and at the Osotian Meeting he got terribly ill. At the prize drawing in 1962, he was obviously' in pain. . . . All his friends, clerical and lay, were dismayed when the Doctors at the East Glamorgan Hospital and Sully Hospitals, diagnosed that he had lung-cancer. After the last rites he died on the 1st December; 1962, at Sully Hospital. A tremendous crowd of clergy and laity attended the Solemn Requiem, and his remains were laid to rest at Cathays Cemetery in the grave next to that of his fellow townsman and parish priest, Canon Garrett. May the Good Lord have mercy on his gentle soul, and on the souls of all the parish priests of Treforest.

Reverend E. L. Butler was appointed parish priest on the 17th January, 1963, and arrived when nine inches of ice covered the outside approach. An effort is now being made for another side altar in the Church, and for an annexe to the Memorial Hall. We hope to get the Church consecrated soon.

As a matter of interest, the parish has been served by seven Parish Priests and twenty-seven Curates, all of whom took an active interest in its development.



Father E. L. Butler, presenting Shield to David Williams when St. Michael's School won it on Sports Day, 22nd June, 1963.