Angels, Doves and Minerva: Reading the memorials to the Great War in Welsh Presbyterian chapels

The starting point for this lecture is the premise that war memorials are interesting. They were important for those who went to the trouble of commissioning and creating them, and they were important for the relatives and friends of those whose names were commemorated upon them. Each individual memorial has its own messages – even the plainest and simplest memorial will have some feature that is worthy of further consideration. There are also some memorials that are overflowing with imagery which demand careful study to decode the messages they are meant to convey.[1]

For the past few years I have been actively searching for images of war memorials from around Wales, and information about them.[2] I am less interested in the 'civic' memorials – or what you might call the 'village green' memorials – those created to commemorate the losses of a town or village.[3] Although they can be interesting and surprising, I think they tell us less than the memorials created by smaller, specific communities for their loved ones. Thus the ones that I am most interested in are those created by chapels, schools, workplaces and clubs. I have been building a database of these memorials and sharing my information with partners such as the Imperial War Museum and the Archaeological Trusts of Wales.[4]

So today I will be focussing on First World War memorials in Welsh chapels – and there is more than enough to say to fill up the time allotted to this lecture. Almost all of the memorials I will refer to today come from places that were Calvinistic Methodist chapels at the time of the First World War, but I will start with a consideration of one which is in a Baptist chapel. I usually use this example to close my talks on war memorials in Welsh chapels – it is the memorial at Bethel, in the area of Llanelli known as Seaside.[5] This memorial abounds with a host of imagery and messages. The first aspect I would like to note is the sheer number of names – 144 men, of whom twelve were killed in action. That not only tells you that Bethel had a substantial congregation but it hints that the church and its hierarchy were supportive of their men's involvement in the war as it was being fought. This is indeed borne out by looking at the reports in the Llanelli newspapers from the war years, in which it is clear that local soldiers' connections with the chapel were highlighted. When Archie Evans was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Certificate while serving with the Royal Field Artillery in 1917, his connection with Bethel was mentioned.[6] When he was killed in

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[1] For other considerations on the importance of war memorials and how to understand their messages, see Catherine Moriarty, 'Private Grief and Public Remembrance: British First World War Memorials', in Martin Evans and Ken Lunn (eds) *War and Memory in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Berg, 1997), pp.125–42; Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, 'Setting the framework' in Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (eds) *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp.1-39 and William Kidd, ''To the Lads who came back': memorial windows and Rolls of Honour in Scotland' in William Kidd and Brian Murdoch (eds) *Memory and Memorials: The Commemorative Century* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp.107–26. Further elaboration on some of the points raised in this lecture can be found in my 'Angels, Tanks and Minerva: Reading the memorials to the Great War in Welsh chapels' in by Martin Kerby, Margaret Baguley and Janet McDonald (eds)*The Palgrave Handbook of Artistic and Cultural Responses to War* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming, 2018), ch.27.
[2] The 'Welsh Memorials to the Great War' project was kindly supported by the Living Legacies Engagement Centre, run out of Queen's University Belfast, in 2015-17, and since the close of that project I have been involved in the 'Material Cultures and Landscapes' strand of the second phase of the Living Legacies project. See http://www.livinglegacies1914-18.ac.uk/
[3] The key monograph on the establishment of civic war memorials across Wales is Angela Gaffney, *Aftermath: Remembering the Great War in Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998).
[4] The Imperial War Museum website hosts the 'War Memorials Register': see https://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials
[5] Images of most of the memorials mentioned in this lecture can be found online at http://war-memorials.swan.ac.uk/?p=438. Another image of the memorial at Bethel, Llanelli, can be seen at https://www.wwwmp.co.uk/carmarthenshire-memorials/llanelli-bethel-chapel-memorial/
[6] 'Local War Items', *Llanelly Star*, 28 April 1917, 3.

action in September 1918, the chapel held a memorial service for him at which it was noted that over a hundred members of Bethel were 'serving with the colours'.[7] When this memorial was unveiled, in April 1919, the newspaper report spoke of 'the gallant lads who went forth from Seaside and other districts to play their part in the great fight for civilisation'. Seaside is the district of Llanelli where Bethel is located. The report went on 'The war record of Bethel is indeed, one of which pastor and people may well be proud'.[8]

The newspaper described this memorial as a 'beautiful production'. Its imagery might strike us today as incongruously militaristic. At the top of the memorial is an image of the Union flag, with the flags of four Allied nations below emanating from an image which represents Britannia. Below her is an image of a warship under steam; in the corner to the left there are images of a Red Cross wagon and a tank; in the corner to the right, images of a biplane and a large artillery piece.

Even though we today might be taken aback or disturbed by the imagery, this *does* reflect how the war was understood by communities all over Wales at the time. This this memorial is unusually rich in imagery and detail, but nevertheless it fits in with the pattern of how Welsh chapels commemorated their contribution to the war in the immediate aftermath of the war.

For the rest of this talk I will focus particularly on the Calvinistic Methodist denomination in Wales, beginning with the thorny issue of how, and to what extent, the denomination accepted the rhetoric of the war and supported the war effort. I will look at examples of commemoration that were developed as the war was being fought, and then consider different examples of memorials that were commissioned at the war's end. I will give examples of memorials which commemorate everyone who served, and those which remember those who were killed in the war, and I will look at what we conclusions we can come to when we consider the memorials as a collection, looking at the patterns of inclusion and patterns of remembrance.

So one of the conundrums for Welsh historians trying to understand the First World War period is how the Nonconformist denominations of Wales, which had previously been strident in their rejection of militarism, became such loyal backers of Britain's war effort.[9] The vast majority of ministers and their congregations did support Britain's war effort, though contrary to what you might read in populist versions of history, there was very little war enthusiasm or jingoism.[10] In August and September 1914, the leaders of Welsh Nonconformity almost universally accepted the argument that Britain was waging a just war, and that was a decision they came to based on the evidence that was available to them. Germany *did* invade neutral Belgium and German troops *did* commit atrocities there. There were other factors that pushed many of these leaders to go a step further, and to become active recruiters for the Armed Forces. John Williams, Brynsiencyn, is, of course, the most notorious of these. I do not seek to excuse his actions, but I hope I can help to explain them. I think it is essential to bear in mind something else that came to a head in August and September 1914: the Welsh Church Act was finally passed by Parliament on 18 September 1914,

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[7] 'Roll of Honour', *Llanelly Star*, 21 September 1918, 4.

[8] 'Roll of Honour', *Llanelly Star*, 19 April 1919, 3.

[9] I have sought to grapple with this question in the chapter ''Un o ryfeloedd yr Arglwydd': eglwysi Anghydffurfiol Cymru a'r Rhyfel Mawr, 1914–15', in Gethin Matthews (ed.), *Creithiau: Dylanwad y Rhyfel Mawr ar Gymdeithas a Diwylliant yng Nghymru* (Cardiff, 2016), pp. 34-62 (54-5) and in my article '"For Freedom and Justice": The Responses of Chapels in the Swansea area to the First World War', *Welsh History Review* 28, no.4 (December 2017): 688–95. Further considerations can be found in Harri Parri, *Gwn Glân a Beibl Budr: John Williams, Brynsiencyn a'r Rhyfel Mawr* (Caernarfon: Gwasg y Bwthyn, 2014) and D Ben Rees, 'Cloriannu'r Parchedig Ddr John Williams, Brynsiencyn', *Cylchgrawn Hanes Cymdeithas Hanes y Methodistiaid Calfinaidd* (2011), 108-127.

[10] Harri Parri gives the estimate of nine out of ten Welsh ministers accepting the argument that this was a just war. For the lack of jingoism, see Catriona Pennell, *A Kingdom United: Popular Responses to the Outbreak of the First World War in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), especially chapters 1 and 2.

and was immediately suspended for the duration of the war.[11] Of course, the Nonconformists of Wales had been campaigning vigorously for decades for the Disestablishment of the Church in Wales, and so now it was almost secured. This situation led to a heightening of the rivalry between the Church and the Nonconformist denominations. Prominent Churchmen believed that they could get disestablishment reversed if they proved their loyalty to the state; the leader of Nonconformity saw the need to demonstrate that the chapelgoers of Wales were as loyal as the Churchmen. Now, how do you prove your loyalty to king and country? By securing volunteers for the Armed Forces. At exactly the same time as this was playing out in Wales, there was a very similar situation in Ireland, where the forces of Unionism were shouting about their loyalty and their contribution to Britain's war effort, which pushed the leaders of the constitutional nationalists to demonstrate their support for Britain's cause.

So in a nutshell, the situation in Welsh Nonconformist circles from August 1914 onwards was that the vast majority of opinion-formers and congregations accepted that the war had to be fought despite the moral qualms that arose, and that they regarded the volunteers that went from their chapels as *representing* their communities. This helps to explain the phenomenon of the Rolls of Honour which appeared in Welsh chapels from the early months of the war. There are many references to rolls of honour on display in Welsh chapels from late 1914 onwards. For example, there was a vigorous debate in the letters pages of the *Western Mail* in January 1915, over the issue of whether the Nonconformist denominations were pulling their weight in the war effort. Joseph M. Davies of the South Wales Baptist College weighed in to defend the honour of the Nonconformists, declaring 'The Free Churches are giving the very flower of their manhood. Their finest young men are enlisting in tens of thousands. Their names are inscribed in Rolls of Honour hung up on the walls of our churches'.[12]

It is quite rare to find contemporary Rolls of Honour from the early period of the war, because in most cases they were superseded by a more ornate memorial commissioned at the war's end. One interesting survivor can be found in London Road Presbyterian church, Neath. This is a pre-printed parchment, in which the central image is based upon a recruiting poster which was issued in November 1914, which focuses in on the question of the assault on neutral Belgium by Germany. So although we don't have the exact date for the creation of this document, it must be very early in the war. The names of the volunteers from the chapel have been added not in alphabetical order, but presumably in the order of their joining up. You can also see that the names have been added in different hands.

Another example of a contemporary Roll of Honour comes from Philadelphia, Morriston. This has a very simple design, created locally.[13] Again, the names are not in alphabetical order, and are presumably in the order that the men volunteered, except that the first name on the list is that of the chapel's minister, the Rev. Picton Evans. This gives us a suggestion for when this was created – the newspapers reported that he took up a position as chaplain in April 1917, so we can surmise that the roll of honour was created around that date or later.[14]

However, it seems that most of the early contemporary Rolls of Honour were created from a pre-printed template, rather than being created from scratch. A typical example is that of Zoar Presbyterian, Maesycwmmer, which shows the flags of the Allies, the direct exhortation to the viewer, 'Please remember in prayer the following who are on active service', and the message 'God

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[11] The following section summarises the details of my argument in 'Eglwysi Anghydffurfiol Cymru a'r Rhyfel Mawr', pp.37-42 and 55-6.
[12] J. M. Davies, 'Welsh Nonconformists and the War', *Western Mail,* 30 January 1915, 9.
[13] This memorial is included in my online article, 'WW1 memorials in Morriston's chapels', http://war-memorials.swan.ac.uk/?p=421.
[14] 'Chaplain Picton Evans', *South Wales Weekly Post*, 21 April 1917, 3.

save the king'.[15] This and other rolls of honour were 'live' documents, being added to as the war progressed. Names of new recruits were added and, as in this case, when a serviceman was killed, a cross was placed by his name. This example also shows how vulnerable these memorials are: this chapel closed in 2008 and I don't know where this memorial is now.

So although these rolls of honour were in a private space, inside the chapels, they were public documents: a visible statement of the loyalty of the congregation to king and country. There was a definite element of boasting with these rolls of honour: there are numerous reports in the newspapers of these memorials being unveiled, in which adjectives such as 'magnificent' are used. In one example from 1915, the work on the Roll of Honour of a Wesleyan chapel in Caernarfon is decribed as 'rhagorol' ('outstanding'), and it says that the roll 'wedi ei fframio'n dlws, ac yn cael ei gosod ar ffynt y capel' ('has been prettily framed and is placed in the front of the chapel').[16] Another example can be found at Smyrna Calvinistic Methodist chapel in Plasmarl, Swansea in October 1916 , when at the half-yearly services 'the Roll of Honour was unfurled, containing the list of members who had joined His Majesty's forces'.[17]

It is worth noting that previously the Nonconformist denominations in Wales were very suspicious of introducing overt visual imagery into their chapels – of course, they focussed upon the Word of God, and took seriously Calvin's arguments against visual representations of God.[18] So to have strong visual statements in the place of worship was to a great degree a novelty.

In the newspaper reports, comparisons were routinely made, so that the reader could judge which places of worship were 'doing their bit' for the cause. A report in a Bridgend paper in November 1915 listed the numbers of volunteers from the Anglican churches (132 from three churches) and from the Nonconformist congregations (206 from seven chapels). It noted that at every service taken by the pastor of the English Presbyterian Church 'the roll of honour of those serving King and country is read out, and prayer offered on their behalf'.[19] Thus the Roll of Honour could become an integral part of the worship on Sundays.

There were other ways in which chapels made public demonstrations of their commitment to the war effort, and that was through organising presentations to servicemen who returned home on leave. Three examples can be found in the Swansea newspapers of such receptions at Smyrna, Plasmarl, showing how the chapel honoured their own with wrist watches and gifts of money.[20]

As well as public displays to remember and honour members of the congregation who were serving, one can find many examples in the annual reports. Very often these would list the names of members who were in the Armed Forces. One example comes from Salem, Canton: it is interesting that in a publication which is otherwise entirely in Welsh, they use the English term 'Roll of Honour' for their list of servicemen. There are 17 names in the Roll for the Annual Report of 1915; 23 in 1916; 25 in 1917 and 26 in 1918. The Rolls also give information on those who have been wounded or killed (with details of five deaths by 1918). As well as increasing in length, this feature also becomes more of an ornate feature in the latter two years, with the title printed in a gothic script and a fancy border around the names.

[15] Information and a photograph of the memorial can be found in Ray Westlake, *First World War Graves and Memorials in Gwent, Vol. 2* (Barnsley: Wharncliffe Books, 2002), p.109.

[16] 'Rhestr Anrhydedd', *Y Dinesydd Cymreig*, 30 June 1915, 4.

[17] 'Swansea', *Cambria Daily Leader*, 2 October 1916, 4.

[18] On this point see John Harvey, *The art of piety: the visual culture of Welsh nonconformity* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1995), pp.4–5.

[19] 'Bridgend Churches', *Glamorgan Gazette*, 19 November 1915, 8.

[20] 'Plasmarl', *Cambria Daily Leader*, 22 December 1917, 3; 'Plasmarl', *Cambria Daily Leader*, 2 February 1918, 3; 'Plasmarl', *Cambria Daily Leader*, 20 February 1918, 4.

Another sad duty of the Annual Reports was to give details of those who had been killed in action. Often, as in the example of Salem, Canton, there are photographs of the deceased in uniform to go with their obituaries. Thus the report of 1916 contains photographs of 'Second-Lieut. Sidney Thomas' and 'Signaller Cerwyn Phillips'. Of Sidney Thomas, the minister (Rev. Cuthbert Thomas) wrote:

> Gŵr ieuangc ydoedd a garwyd gan bawb a'i hadwaenai, a rhagolygon ei fywyd yn neillduol o ddisglaer. Tybiem bob amser y byddai iddo ddyfodol gwych. Yn mlodau ei ddyddiau, rhoddodd ei fywyd yn aberth.

> (He was a young man who was loved by all who knew him, and the prospects for his life were exceedingly bright. We always thought he had an excellent future. In the flower of his youth, he gave his life as a sacrifice.)

Some chapels put up memorials to individual soldiers who had been killed as the war was being fought. In November 1916 a brass tablet was put up to David Dupree at Alexandra Road Presbyterian Chapel, Swansea, following his death in action in September, alongside another tablet which recorded the names of members on active service.[21] This is another case where the whereabouts of these memorials is unknown, as the chapel was demolished in the 1960s.

Rolls of Honour were still being commissioned and unveiled in chapels right into the final months of the war.[22] There is one interesting example at Hyfrydle, Holyhead. This must have been created during the war because the text says 'Enwau rhai *sydd* yn gwasanaethu eu Gwlad ynglyn a'r Llynges a'r Fyddin o "Hyfrydle", Caergybi' – 'Those who *are* serving their country in the navy or army, from "Hyfrydle", Holyhead' [my emphasis]. It is very likely that it was created during the final months of the war. There are 121 names inscribed, with the first 114 in alphabetical order, and then there are seven names at the end, in a different script, not in alphabetical order. Thus the best guess is that this document was created in the spring or summer of 1918 with 114 names, and then the seven others were conscripted during the final months of the war and their names added.

However, the majority of the memorials in Welsh chapels were commissioned after the war's end. At this juncture the chapels had a choice of whether to create a memorial to all those who served or one dedicated just to those who died. Some did both: a study into the memorials of Gwent contains details of those in ninety two chapels, of which twenty five had just a roll of honour listing everyone who served, fifty seven had only memorials to those who died, and ten had both.[23]

The rest of this talk will look at individual examples of these memorials and also look at them as a collection, trying to see what they can tell us about how the war was understood at the time of their commissioning.[24] In the majority of cases, these memorials were created in the immediate aftermath of the war – there is a wealth of reports in the newspapers of 1919 and the first half of 1920, giving details of unveiling ceremonies in chapels across Wales. In fact, most chapel memorials were created *before* the town or village memorials, as the chapel communities were able to respond quicker than the civic authorities to decide what kind of memorial they wanted. I will first consider

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[21] 'Swansea Memorial Service', *Cambria Daily Leader*, 20 November 1916, 4. For more on David Dupree, see 'Dai Dupree', http://war-memorials.swan.ac.uk/?p=250

[22] The latest example I have found of the unveiling of a wartime Roll of Honour is at Zoar Congregational Chapel, Swansea, on 3 November 1918: see 'Swansea', *Cambria Daily Leader,* 4 November 1918, 4.

[23] Ray Westlake, *First World War Graves and Memorials in Gwent, Volume 1* (Barnsley: Wharncliffe Books, 2001); Westlake, *Volume 2*.

[24] My database of Welsh chapel memorials as it stood in November 2017 was mapped by the Living Legacies centre and is available via: http://www.livinglegacies1914-18.ac.uk/CommunityResources/DigitalResources/DigitalMapping/.

examples of memorials that name those who served and returned, referring to these as Rolls of Honour, the term used at the time. Then I will look at the memorials to those who were killed in the war.

Rolls of Honour come in a great variety of designs, and they also have differences in their content. This reflects the fact that the chapel communities decided for themselves what kind of memorial they wanted: there was no-one telling them that they had to do it in a certain way, and indeed, there was no-one telling them that they had to have a memorial at all. Thus it was entirely up to them.

The design seen in the Roll of Honour in Hyfrydle is probably the most common one across Wales. It is customised from a pre-printed template, with the title 'Roll of Honour' over the Union flag enveloped by the laurel wreath of victory, and 'For King and Country' in a dynamic ribbon design in smaller letters beneath. The memorial is customised to give the name of the chapel, and of course, as in the case of Hyfrydle, these details can appear in Welsh. Then the names appear in columns underneath – sometimes three columns, sometimes two, and very occasionally, four. This design was mass produced, being seen also in Welsh chapels of the other denominations and chapels in England, as well as in schools and Anglican churches.

Rolls of Honour created from other mass-produced templates can be seen in many other chapels. Another common design has the Royal Crest in front of a Union flag at the top, with flags of four Allies on either side. The columns of names are in the middle flanked by pillars on either side which contain British imagery: the rose; the thistle; the shamrock; the daffodil and lions at the base. This design can be seen in two Presbyterian chapels in the lower Swansea Valley: Salem, Capel y Cwm, and Carmel, Pentredwr, Llansamlet. In the latter chapel there is also something which is quite rare – a photographic record of all those who served.[25] This was clearly created after the war's end because it highlights the two soldiers who had died.

More often, however, chapels commissioned their memorials from local artists or printers. The memorial in Gorffwysfa, Skewen, has the name of 'Morgan Thomas, artist, Swansea'. Once again the Union Flag is prominent in this design, but the language of the memorial is Welsh. Two Calvinistic Methodist chapels in the Merthyr area – Graig and Libanus, Dowlais – commissioned their memorials from D. Pugh Williams of Dowlais. His design contains a feature that is commonly seen in many of these memorials, of quasi-Classical pillars either side of the list of names. The Roll of Honour for Graig gives the date of 31 October 1919, so it was created just before the first anniversary of the Armistice.

Another example with pillars can be seen in the Westgate Calvinistic Methodist chapel, Pembroke. This also has a pediment to add to its classical aura. The Roll of Honour for the Presbyterian Church, Abergavenny, also has pillars, and in the centre at the top of the design is a picture of the building. This clearly has the effect of emphasising the link between the chapel and the war service of its members: there are many example of this in memorials in Baptist and Independent chapels.[26]

These examples we have seen so far have come from chapels in urban or industrial areas, and they have a multitude of names on them: 121 for Hyfrydle; 75 for Capel y Cwm; 33 for Carmel, Llansamlet; 70 for Gorffwysfa, Skewen; 21 for Graig; 34 for Libanus, Dowlais; 41 for Westgate, Pembroke and 55 for Abergavenny. One pattern which is self-explanatory is that chapels in rural areas in general had fewer names on them. Thus there are eleven names on the memorial in Llywarch, Dyffryn Ceiriog, of whom one died. It is worth focussing in upon the wording of this

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[25] Other examples of chapel memorials which contained photographs of all who served were created by Tabernacl (Baptist) Pontypridd; Caersalem (CM) Barmouth and Tabernacle (Baptist) Newbridge, Gwent. A few other examples have photographs of those who were killed.
[26] See the five examples from Morriston's chapels in 'WW1 memorials in Morriston's chapels'.

memorial: 'Ymunodd yr uchod ar fyddin i sefyll dros gyfiawnder a rhyddid eu Gwlad yn y Frwydr Fawr, 1914 – 1918' – 'the above joined the Army to stand up for justice and the freedom of their country in the great battle, 1914 – 1918'. I refer to this kind of language as 'the language of 1914', using words like cyfiawnder / justice and rhyddid / freedom.[27] This memorial and many others show that this is the way the war was understood in its immediate aftermath – a war that was *for* something, and had some meaning.

So far, the examples of rolls of honour considered have been created on paper or parchment, which is the most common medium. However, they could also be created in other media. The memorial in Capel y Garn, Bow Street is in brass, commemorating 54 men and two women who served (the latter as nurses), including eight men who died.[28] Similarly, Capel Bowydd, Blaenau Ffestiniog, has a brass tablet naming 39 men, including four who died.[29]

An impressive stone memorial commemorates sixty men from Rehoboth, Holywell, who served (six died; 54 returned). The language used in this memorial is quite telling: 'Er Gogoniant Duw – Er Anrhydedd Gwlad' – 'For the Glory of God; For the Honour of the Country'. It also uses the word 'arwyr' – heroes – to describe the men. At the top of this memorial is a laurel wreath, to represent victory. Again, this is a very common feature on these memorials.

The next example is the most local memorial that I will be considering today, from Capel Mawr, Rhosllannerchrugog. This is the most ornate war memorial in wood that I have seen in any Welsh chapel. The craftsmanship is ornate and intricate, with some really fine carvings, for example of flowers and an image of a soldier sounding a bugle. This example was created later than most of the ones I am introducing today – it was unveiled in a ceremony on 1 October 1922. The newspaper report notes that it was carved from the wood of a 150-year old oak.[30] There are eight names of those who died, including one Canadian. Three of the men died in the same unit on the same day – 25 January 1915. There are a further 110 names of those who served – all men, although the chapel's annual report for 1919 also lists three women who served in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC).

Another wooden memorial can be found in Jerusalem, Ton Pentre. The design here is obviously less intricate than that of Capel Mawr, though it does display the laurel wreath and also a crown with the Cross behind it. There are the names of twelve men who were killed; 58 soldiers who served and returned; ten sailors who served and returned; and then, what makes this most interesting, 'Gweithwyr Cad-Ddarpar' – 'Munitions Workers'. The names are given of Miss C. Lloyd, Miss M. Morgan and Miss M. Roberts. This is highly unusual. There are other examples of memorials in Welsh chapels which commemorate munitions workers who were killed in the war, but I have only found one other example where they were commemorated for their service. This is in the memorial from Bethania-Siloh, Ystrad Mynach, (which was created from the same template as Hyfrydle). Among the 28 names here is 'D Parry Jones, Munitions'. This memorial also commemorates Edith Humphreys, who served in the Military Hospital, Epsom.

Although the inclusion of female munitions workers in chapel memorials is unusual, in fact a fair proportion *do* include women who served as nurses or with the WAAC. My database currently contains information on 93 such rolls, of which thirty include women – that is, just under a third.

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[27] For more on this question of the power and longevity of such language, see my 'Rhwygau', in *Creithiau*, pp.1-20, (11-13).

[28] As this memorial notes that it was 'codwyd gan yr ardalwyr' – 'established by the local people', it is not entirely clear whether all of those commemorated were in fact members of Capel y Garn. The list of those who fell includes one who served with the Canadian Forces. For an image of this memorial, see http://walesatwar.org/cy/memorial/detail/1566

[29] This memorial was unveiled on 18 May 1922.

[30] 'Y Gofeb', *Rhos Herald*, 7 October 1922.

However, creating a map to show their locations demonstrates that these memorials are not uniformly distributed around Wales but are grouped in clusters.[31] The best explanation I have for this is local rivalry. There is one very interesting cluster in the Pontypool area, which relates to Baptist chapels in this area. There are five Baptist chapels here which have ornate memorials to all those who served, including women as well as men.[32] It seems likely that there is an element of imitation here, coupled with a desire to have as long (and therefore honourable) a roll as possible. Thus after the first of these memorials was unveiled in Ebenezer, Griffithstown, in March 1919 (naming 88 men and ten women), the other local chapels had an example to follow. Thus in October 1919, Merchant's Hill, Pontnewynydd, displayed their Roll of Honour naming 52 men and one woman, and the following month a marble tablet was unveiled at Pisgah, Talywain (44 men and four women) and a Roll of Honour at High Street Baptist, Abersychan (78 men and seven women). Four years later the memorial was unveiled at Noddfa, Abersychan, naming 60 men and six women.[33] Thus, as a result of this imitation, in this patch of south Wales there are more Rolls of Honour that include women than those which don't.

Thus far, my database contains information on memorials in 57 Welsh Presbyterian chapels, of which 14 have just Rolls of Honour (i.e. lists of all who served, which may include information on those who died); 33 have just memorials to those who died, and 10 have both kinds of memorial. So I will now turn to look at the memorials which commemorate only those who died in the war.

The simplest kind of memorial to those who were killed is a plain brass plate. Sometimes, these have just one name commemorated, as in the example of Tregeiriog CM chapel. Here the memorial names Robert Owen Lloyd, who died in France aged 27 on 28 October 1918. At the bottom there is an epitaph – or an exhortation – 'Ei enw nid a'n anghof' ('May his name not be forgotten'). I understand that the chapel has closed, so this memorial is now in the possession of the family.

Chapels with larger memberships suffered more casualties, so we see the eleven names on the brass memorial at Bethlehem, Treorchy. The wording on this memorial echoes the 'language of 1914': 'Mewn Hiraethus Gof am ein Gwyr Ieuanc a Aberthasant eu Bywyd dros eu Gwlad au Cenedl yn y Rhyfel Mawr' – 'In mournful memory of our young men who sacrificed their lives for their country and their nation in the Great War'. There are eleven names on this memorial: two Jones-es, two Williams-es, two Thomas-es, and a Davies, an Evans, a Lloyd, a Lodwig and an Owen. Of course, the names may not mean anything to the observer – they are all unknown soldiers in the sense that no-one alive today ever met them. However, sometimes doing this research and sharing the lists of names leads to me being contacted by people doing their own investigations into individuals who died in the war. In this case I was contacted by a researcher writing a history of Oldham Rugby League club and the First World War, who identified the Thomas Owen Jones named here as being one of their players. Thus we have a photograph of him, and some details of his sporting career.[34]

We don't know whether Thomas Owen Jones kept up his membership at Bethlehem while he was living in Oldham, but clearly his family connection with the chapel was enough to get him included on the list of the fallen. The same is true of many other men who had moved away before the start of the war. On the brass memorial to the fallen in Seion, Corwen, nine men are commemorated, of whom two were serving with the Canadian forces. Indeed, both Owen Vaughan Jones and Thomas Ogwen Davies had taken part in the Battle of Vimy Ridge in April 1917, which is remembered in

[31] There is a map available online which displays the distribution of these memorials as of February 2017, when the numbers stood at 25 out of 73 including women: http://go.qub.ac.uk/WelshChapels
[32] For images of these see 'Patterns of Memorialisation', http://war-memorials.swan.ac.uk/?p=185
[33] Further information on these memorials can be found in my chapter, 'Angels, Tanks and Minerva'.
[34] For a photograph of Thomas Owen Jones, and an image of the Bethlehem memorial, see https://www.greatwarforum.org/topic/257868-bethlehem-chapel-memorial-in-treorchy/. For more information on Thomas Owen Jones see 'Treorchy', *Rhondda Leader*, 15 January 1916, 5.

Canada as *the* Canadian battle of the war. Owen Jones died at Vimy Ridge, while Thomas Davies was killed in action five months later.[35]

On the stone tablet commemorating the fallen from Ebenezer, Llansamlet, there are eight names. One of these, Conway Williams, died serving with the Canadian forces at the Battle of Vimy Ridge and another, Ivor Joshua, died in what is now Tanzania, but was then German East Africa, serving with the South African forces. So what we can see in these cases is that even though the men had emigrated from Wales before the war, they were still included as part of the chapel family – obviously their relatives would mourn their loss and so to have their names included on the chapel attended by the family would perhaps give a little comfort to them. Of course, these soldiers were buried far away on the battlefield – all of them, except for those who died later of their wounds in a British hospital. Ivor Joshua is buried in Dar-es-Salaam; Conway Williams has no known grave but is commemorated on the memorial at Vimy Ridge. Thus these memorials in the local chapel could become a substitute for a grave, a focal point for the family's mourning.

It is possible that gathering together the data on who is included on these memorials will give us a way of measuring pre-war migration patterns from Wales. That is, there are some parts of Wales where there are a significant number of Canadian soldiers, and other parts where Australian soldiers are more prevalent. One future project will be to analyse the data and create a map which I hope will show the different emigration patterns from Wales to the countries of the Empire.

On the point of where the men are buried, some of the memorials name the place where the men fell. This means that some place names became memorialised on a number of chapel walls. Looking at the memorial to the three who died from Capel y Cwm, we see the names 'Mametz Woods', 'Contalmaison' and 'Ypres'. Of course, the latter is well known as one of the key battlegrounds of the First World War, and the date of James Morgan's death (5 August 1917) tells us that he died early in the third battle of Ypres, better known as the Passchendaele campaign. The Battle of Mametz Wood, at the beginning of the Somme campaign, is well known in Wales, being remembered to this day as a *Welsh* battle and a *Welsh* tragedy. David Griffith Williams was killed in the second phase of the battle, three days after it began, on 10 July 1916. Contalmaison is a little to the north of Mametz, so William Ballard died ten days later in the same campaign.

The memorial to the fallen of Hyfrydle and Millbank (Holyhead) lists where the soldiers were serving when they died, and names the ships of the sailors who were killed. As you might expect, with Holyhead being a busy port, there are more who died at sea (eight) than who were killed serving in the Army (six). Three of the sailors were in the Royal Navy, and the others served in the merchant navy, including Miss Hannah Owen, who was a stewardess on RMS Leinster which was torpedoed by a U-boat just outside Dublin on 10 October 1918. Of the six soldiers named here, three died at Gaza and one died at Mametz Wood.

On other memorials, the place of death given is more vague. The memorial to Pte. David Williams in Pumpsaint says that he died 'Rhywle yn Ffrainc' ('Somewhere in France'). Similarly, the three commemorated at Cefn Brith chapel, Corwen, are noted as either having fallen in France or being missing in France.

The memorial in Cefn Brith, like many others in rural Wales, is however specific in giving the home addresses of those who died. This comes from the paucity of surnames in rural Wales (the ones commemorated at Cefn Brith were Williams, Roberts and Jones). In the case of the Hyfrydle memorial, which also gives the deceased's home addresses, this is particularly necessary as there were actually seven men named John Hughes from the congregation at Hyfrydle who served in the

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[35] 'The Late Private Vaughan Jones', *Yr Adsain*, 22 May 1917, 1; 'Pte. Ogwen Davies, *Yr Adsain*, 2 October 1917, 1.

war, and ten John Jones-es. Thus it is important to note that the John Hughes who died and is commemorated here is John Hughes of 2 Queen's Park. This also has the effect of anchoring these men in their community, so that this John Jones is not Lance Corporal 19138 John H Jones of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers (as he is noted on the CWGC's database), but John Henry Jones of Craigle, Moreton Street, Holyhead. So although they are commemorated because they are servicemen, they are remembered here with their civilian identities – their *real* identities, I would suggest.

The memorial in the chapel at Dinmael, not far from Corwen, is another example that gives the home addresses of those who served. In this instance, since most of the men listed had the surname Jones – 12 out of 23 – this was very necessary. So we see here all the names of the farms that supplied sons for the war effort. One of the most interesting facets of this memorial is how it refers to the war as 'brwydr Armagedon' ('the battle of Armageddon'). So far this is the only example I have found of a memorial which uses this Biblical reference to the conflict at the end of the world, but I think it is appropriate.[36] Another feature to note with this memorial is that the first name listed, David Ellis, was a well-known poet, whose story is still remembered today in Welsh-language circles.[37]

The war was understood at the time by chapel congregations as a kind of Armageddon – a titanic struggle between good and evil. Henry Radcliffe, one of the leading benefactors of Salem, Canton, gave a speech at the chapel a week before the Armistice in which he declared 'Dyma'r Armagedon fawr drosodd' ('Thus the great Armageddon is over') as he gave thanks to God for the '[b]uddugoliaethau gogoneddus' ('glorious victories') of the previous few weeks. He used the 'language of 1914' as he looked forward to a bright future of peace and prosperity, now that the Kaiser was on his knees.[38] Thus despite all the pain, hardship and loss, it was possible to be optimistic about the future, to believe that somehow the sacrifice had meant something, and thus this is the mood which underlies many of the memorials which were created in the immediate aftermath of the war.

I am going to finish with three examples which show artistic responses to the war, and which crystallise both the idea that it was appropriate to have a conspicuous commemoration of the contribution of individual chapels to the war, and the observation that the war had triggered a change in cultural practices. Of course, Welsh chapels were not necessarily plain buildings, and many had ornate decorations, but they certainly featured far less visual imagery than could be seen in the Anglican churches. Many of the ancient churches of Wales had stained glass windows, and many more were acquired in Victorian times, but stained glass was not common in Welsh chapels.[39] However, several chapels acquired stained glass memorials after the First World War, such as Twr Gwyn in Bangor. The stained glass window here commemorates the three members who fell in the war and gives thanks for those who returned. It is undoubtedly quite a visually attractive addition to the chapel, and as you can see, the emblem of the Calvinistic Methodist denomination is prominent.[40]

The emblem of the Calvinistic Methodists is also to be seen on this striking and beautiful memorial in Aberystwyth, which stands where Y Tabernacl used to be.[41] This chapel benefited from the generosity of local shipowner T. D. Jenkins, a man with strong connections to Italy who was enamored of Italian sculptors. He recruited Professor Mario Rutelli of Palermo and paid £1000 for

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[36] See 'The Battle of Armageddon', http://war-memorials.swan.ac.uk/?p=226

[37] See Alan Llwyd and Elwyn Edwards, *Y Bardd a Gollwyd: Cofiant David Ellis* (Felindre: Barddas, 1992).

[38] 'Salem, Canton, Caerdydd' *Y Cymro*, 13 November 1918, t.6. See also Gethin Matthews, ''Buddugoliaeth' / Dadrithio / Creithiau' in *Creithiau*, pp. 258-69 (259).

[39] See Harvey, *The art of piety*, pp.17–19.

[40] http://stainedglass.llgc.org.uk/object/883

[41] https://www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/memorial/252746

him to create a memorial which was placed outside the chapel in July 1921. The bronze memorial features a winged boy representing 'Victory', clad in a tunic with a wreath in his hair, carrying a bundle of palms in his arms as he lands on a globe with one foot. The names of fourteen men of the chapel who died in the war are engraved upon the sphere. Although the figure is meant to pronounce the victory of the ideals of peace after the horrors of war, the expression on his face is serious and mournful rather than joyful.[42] There were some sculptures associated with Welsh chapels prior to 1914 – such as the statue of Thomas Charles in Bala, or the statue of Daniel Rowland in Llangeitho, but I don't think that any Welsh chapels had commissioned anything like this.[43]

The final image today is another one which I find surprising in a Welsh chapel. It comes from Salem, Canton, and the central figure is a bronze of a female figure, which was cast by Sir William Goscombe John, a native of Cardiff who is regarded as one of the most important British sculptors of the twentieth century.[44] This memorial had a long gestation, as the chapel's War Memorial Committee, set up in 1919, requested sketches from Goscombe John in 1921, and it was not until April 1923 that the memorial was unveiled. The helmeted figure, who wears flowing robes, is grasping a sword which is entwined with a laurel wreath.[45] It is not explicit whom she is meant to represent. Perhaps she is Britannia, or perhaps Goscombe John had a Roman goddess in mind – Minerva. The idea that a Welsh chapel should have a bronze figure of the Roman goddess of strategic warfare is disconcerting.

Taken as a whole, I think that this collection of memorials in Welsh chapels tells us a lot about how Wales experienced and understood the First World War at the time. While it was being fought, the vast majority of ministers and congregations were able to put aside their objections to war, accepting the narrative that was offered that this was a just war that had to be fought. This happened in an atmosphere where it was deemed important to be seen to be doing your bit, and where local rivalries meant that many individuals chapel felt compelled to demonstrate their loyalty to king and country with a Roll of Honour on public display to boast about their contribution. The language that was used in these Rolls of Honour carried over into the post-war period, so that the memorials created after the Armistice often explicitly or implicitly describe the war as being one that was fought for freedom and justice. Many of the lists of those who served recognise the contribution of women, and also members of the wider family are remembered, such as those who had been raised in the chapel but had subsequently emigrated.

Chapels put a lot of effort and money into commemorating their war effort, and a variety of artistic responses can be seen which were unprecedented in Welsh chapel culture. All in all, the collection of Welsh chapel memorials speaks of an enormous shock to the system. The comparison with Armageddon is not unwarranted – this conflict fundamentally changed Wales and Welsh culture, and had a particularly deleterious effect long-term on the position of the Nonconformist denominations. Some of these memorials talk of 'victory' – the laurel wreath itself, which is commonly seen, is a symbol of victory. It may have felt like that in the immediate aftermath of the war, but I think that the evidence suggests that Welsh Nonconformity lost the First World War.

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[42] Brynley F. Roberts, "Syr John a'r Eidalwr" in Tegwyn Jones and E.B. Fryde (eds) *Ysgrifau a cherddi cyflwynedig i Daniel Huws* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1994), pp.186–7.
[43] See Harvey, *The art of piety*, pp.40–3.
[44] Alan Borg, *War Memorials: From Antiquity to the present* (London: Leo Cooper, 1991), p.78.
[45] See Michael Statham, "Undocumented Sculptures by Sir William Goscombe John", www.churchmonumentssociety.org/Goscombe%20John%20discoveries%20rtf.rtf