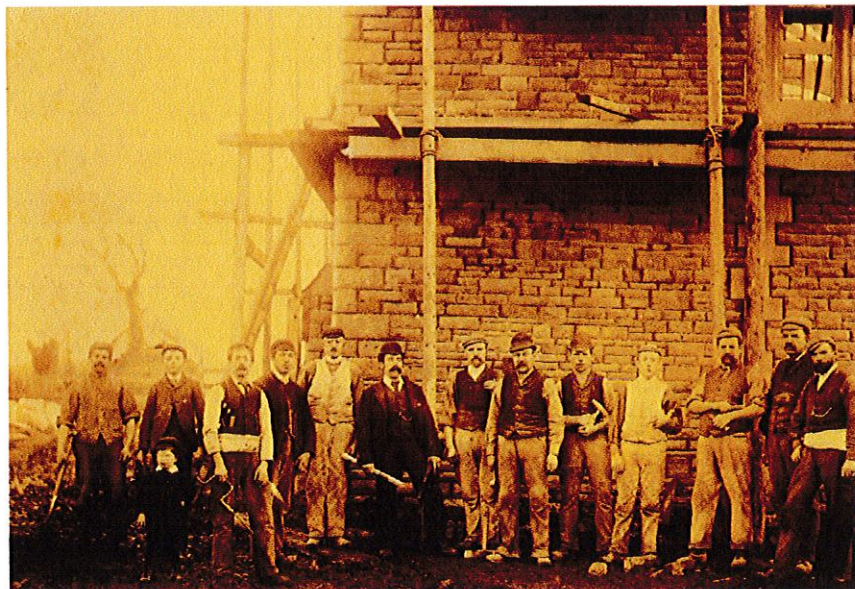


Bygone Days

In the beginning.....

The first section of the South Wales Railway between Chepstow and Swansea opened in 1850, when one of the original stations was *Llantrissant for Cowbridge*. The station was to become the focal point around which the railway village of Pontyclun developed over the next fifty years or so, although it seems that for most of that time it was better known as Llantrissant Station, rather than Pontyclun, as it is today. The population of the village steadily grew as workers from the failed copper mining industry in Cornwall looked for work in the coal mining and iron ore industries, together with low paid agricultural workers seeking higher wages and better living conditions for themselves and their families. Employment possibilities offered by the Ely Tinsplate Works, The Pipe Works and the Steam Joinery Company also attracted people during the 1870's.

The effect of this development meant that towards the end of the 19th century it was felt that there was a need for a church at Pontyclun (Llantrissant Station), and after much fund raising, St Paul's Church was built in 1895 at a cost of £1600. The building work was very successfully undertaken by Mr. John Morgan (Pontyclun) from plans drawn up by the ecclesiastical architect E.M. Bruce Vaughan Esq. At that time St Paul's was of course a "daughter church" in the parish of Llantrissant, with Llantrissant being the Parish Church.



The above photograph, taken in 1894, shows some of the workmen who helped to build St Paul's Church, Llantrissant Station.

The Opening of St Paul's Church Llantrisant Station, June 1895.

The events and stories reported below were taken from the Llantrisant Parish edition of the Church Monthly, for the months of June, July, August and September 1895. The magazine was produced nationally, but with a local supplement. The Parish of Llantrisant was very large and included Gilfach Goch, Llanharry, Tonyrefail, Pencoedcae, Beddau, Dinas Isaf, Llanfair-ar-y-Bryn, Bryneirw, Pontyclun, Miskin and Talygarn. It is assumed therefore that the events recorded in the Magazine were the major events of all the churches, and, within the limited space, only a small proportion of the newsletter would have been devoted to Pontyclun. I have tried to use as much of the original text as possible:

June 1895

The Church of St. Paul's at Llantrisant Station was licenced for Divine Worship by the Lord Bishop of Llandaff, on Thursday June 27th 1895. There were three Services held during the day, a Morning Service at 11.00am, an Afternoon Service at 3.00pm and an Evening Service at 7.00pm., when the Sermons were preached by the Rt.Reverend Richard Lewis, Bishop, the Rev.T.J. Bowen, Rector of Llangattoch and the Rev.W.R.Thomas, M.A., Vicar of Abersychan, respectively. All the Services were well attended, the church in the evening being quite overcrowded. We trust that the earnest work, which has been going on for some time past in this part of the parish, will receive fresh impetus, and that many will gather in the new church, week by week, to hear of the love and mercy of God, who (in the words of the Bishop's text in the morning) "willeth all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." (1Tim. 2:4).

Through the kindness of several ladies, an excellent luncheon was provided in the Schoolroom at 1shilling per head, equivalent to approximately £6 at today's prices, and the Clergy and Visitors were hospitably entertained at tea by many members of the congregation. The sunshine outside the Church was reflected in many hearts, when, for the first time, they joined in the worship of God, in the beautiful little building

July 1895

We have now worshipped in our New Church for a month, and we are glad to state that, so far, there has been no sign of falling off in the number who attend. The congregations, both morning and evening, have been very satisfactory indeed. We wish to take the present opportunity of thanking the whole of the Choir, and especially the Organist and Conductor, for the pains they took prior to the opening in getting up the Service, which was so beautifully rendered on that day.

Gifts to the New Church given by members of the Congregation are as follows:
Altar Cloth, Altar Curtain, Brass Rod etc., for the Curtain, Brass Candlesticks, Brass Vases, Brass Alms Dish, Alms Bags, Two Chairs for Chancel, Big Door Mat, Book Markers, Long Kneeler, Kneelers for Chancel, Water Bottle for Vestry, Brass Cross, Two small Communion Cloths, Hymn Board and Sets of Figures, Brass Altar Stand, Carpet and Rods for Pulpit, Two kneelers for Communion Table, Book Markers, Two Mats, Comb and Brush for Vestry, Glass for Vestry, Eucharistic(?), Chair for Organist, Flower Holders, and Tablecloth for Vestry.

August 1895

The long-looked-for Bazaar in aid of the Building Fund of the Church of St. Paul came off on Wednesday and Thursday, August 21st and 22nd, in the Station Schoolroom, and proved a great success in every way. The weather was everything that could be desired, and everyone seemed to work with a hearty goodwill for the common cause, and the warmest thanks of the Building Committee and the congregation of St. Paul's Church are due to all those ladies and gentlemen who so kindly co-operated with them in bringing about such a happy result. It has not yet been possible to make up the exact details of the accounts, but as far as can be made out at present, the approximate amount realized by the Bazaar was £230, in addition to which Mr.G.T.Clark (who had previously contributed £300 to the Church Building Fund) sent a donation of £100, and another gentleman sent an anonymous contribution of £20 to one of the Stallholders, thus bringing up the total receipts to about £350.

From the above it would appear that Mr G T Clark contributed a total of £400 towards the £1600 that it cost to build St Paul's Church, in addition to having already paid for the building of St Ann's Church at Talygarn.

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John Griffiths