Y Parch/Rev.

Thomas Parry

Bryn Tirion
(1842-1936)

Ganwyd Thomas Parry ym Mryn Tirion, Llangernyw, yr ieuangaf o dri o blant David a Jane Parry. Llafurwr oedd ei dad, a bu ef farw o 'annwyd' pan oedd Thomas yn flwydd oed. Collodd ei fam ddwy flynedd yn ddiweddarach, o achos 'afiechyd manwynnog y fron'. O ganlyniad, magwyd ef gan Gaynor Lloyd, ei nain mewn tlodi enbyd. Yr oedd awydd pregethu ynddo yn fuan iawn, gan y cynilai'r ceiniogau i brynu Beibl.

Roedd Thomas Lloyd (Crych Elen), sef awdur y gân 'Y Bwthyn Bach To Gwellt' yn gefnder iddo. Byddai yn dod yn aml i ymweld â'i nain a'i gefnder Thomas Parry i Fryn Tirion, a phryd hynny to gwellt oedd i'r hen fwthyn, ac felly Bryn Tirion yw'r bwthyn bach to gwellt y cyfeirir ato yn y gân.

Ni chafodd Thomas Parry ddiwrnod o ysgol, a phan oedd yn dair ar ddeg oed, gadawodd Langernyw am Eglwysbach i ddechrau gwaith fel prentis saer coed, ac ymunodd â dosbarth darllen yng Nghapel Bryndaionyn. Ymhen pedair blynedd a hanner symudodd i Landudno ble, pan oedd yn un ar hugain oed, priododd Mary Owen yn 1863.

Aethant i fyw i Bantywennol, ger Craig y Don, ac ymhen amser, daeth Thomas yn bensaer a gweinidog a oedd wedi ei addysgu ei hun. Dywedir mai yn ei weithdy ym Mae Colwyn ym mis Mawrth 1872, y pregethodd ei bregeth gyntaf.

Yn fuan wedyn, ymfudodd i America a bu'n pregethu yn Alliance, Ohio am dair blynedd. Dychwelodd i Gymru yn 1874, gan gyfuno gyrfa fel adeiladwr a phregethwr gydag un o wasanaeth cyhoeddus. Sefydlodd gwmni adeiladu ym Mae Colwyn ac fe gychwynnodd ffatri gwneud brics yng ngorllewin y dref. Yr oedd yn gyfrifol dros wella cyfleusterau'r ardal o ffyrdd i dai, o system ddarpariaeth dŵr i adeiladu'r promenâd. Ef adeiladodd banc cyntaf y dref yn ogystal ag adeiladu nifer o gapeli.

Fel gŵr hynod grefyddol, ordeiniwyd ef yn 1893 ac fe ofynnwyd iddo gymryd gofal am yr Achos yn Llandrillo-yn-Rhos. Yr oedd hefyd yn Ynad Heddwch, yn gadeirydd cyntaf y bwrdd lleol ac yn aelod o gyngor y dref. Yn 1935, ef oedd y cyntaf i dderbyn anrhydedd Rhyddfraint y Fwrdeistref pan oedd yn 93 oed.

Yn 1921, cafodd darlun ohono ei gomisiynu a'i gyflwyno i'r dref. Mae'n hongian oddi fewn i Lyfrgell Bae Colwyn, sef adeilad a gafodd ei sefydlu a'i adeiladu gan Thomas. Caiff ei nodi ei fod yn cofio Bae Colwyn fel pentrefan heb gapel, a bu ganddo ran flaenllaw mewn codi'r cyntaf yn y dref. Ef oedd pensaer ac adeiladydd Capel Hermon, Llandrillo-yn-Rhos, ac ef bregethodd yn yr oedfa gyntaf pan agorwyd y capel yn 1904. Capel y Rhos sydd ar y safle yno heddiw, a cheir maen yno fel coffadwriaeth bywyd Thomas Parry, bywyd a oedd yn cynnwys cyraeddiadau nodedig er gwaethaf y dechreuad trasig ac anaddawol.

Thomas Parry fel gŵr ifanc.
Thomas Parry as a young man.

Bryn Tirion heddiw.
Bryn Tirion today.

Thomas Parry was born at Bryn Tirion, Llangernyw, the youngest of three children of David and Jane Parry. His father, a labourer, died of a 'cold' when Thomas was a year old, and his mother died two years later of 'scrofulous disease of the breast '; consequently he was brought up by his grandmother Gaynor Lloyd in great poverty. He displayed a passion for preaching early, as he saved his pennies to buy a Bible.

Thomas Lloyd (Crych Elen), the author of the song 'The Small Thatched Cottage' was his cousin. He would regularly visit his grandmother and his cousin Thomas Parry at Bryn Tirion, which at that time had a thatched roof, and therefore Bryn Tirion is the small thatched cottage that is referred to in the song.

Thomas Parry was not educated at school, and when he was thirteen years old, he left Llangernyw for Eglwysbach to start work as an apprentice joiner, and joined a reading class at Bryndaionyn Chapel. Four and a half years later he moved to Llandudno, where he met and married Mary Owen in 1863 at the age of 21.

They left Llandudno for Pantywennol near Craig-y-Don, and Thomas eventually became a self-taught architect and minister in Colwyn Bay. It is said that it was in his workshop in the town on March 1872, he preached his first sermon.

Shortly afterwards, he migrated to America, where he preached in Alliance, Ohio for three years. He returned to Wales in 1874, combining a career as a builder and preacher with one of public service. He established his own construction company in Colwyn Bay and started a brick factory in the west of the town. He was constantly concerned with improving the amenities of the area from roads to housing, the provision of water to the construction of the promenade. He started everything from the first Colwyn Bay bank to the building of several chapels.

An outstandingly religious man, he was ordained in 1893 and was invited to take charge of the Cause at Rhos-on-Sea. He was also a Justice of the Peace, the first chairman of the local board and a member of the town council. In 1935, at the age of 93, he was the first recipient of the honorary Freedom of the Borough.

In 1921 his portrait was commissioned and presented to the town. This portrait now hangs within Colwyn Bay library, a building he established and built. It is noted that he remembered Colwyn Bay as a small hamlet, and he had a prominent role in establishing the first chapel. He was the architect and the builder of Hermon Chapel, Rhos-on-Sea, and he delivered the first sermon within the chapel when it opened in 1904. Today, it is Capel y Rhos that stands in its place, and a remembrance plaque can be seen there in memory of Thomas Parry, whose life encompassed extraordinary achievements despite tragic and inauspicious beginnings.