

Learning Activity Key Stage 3

This resource provides learning activities for your students using People's Collection Wales. It is one of a series of nine relating to Patagonia for KS3.

Establishment of the Welsh Settlement in Patagonia

The Voyage of the Mimososa, 1865

The Native Patagonians and the Welsh Settlers

Early days in Patagonia

'Crossing the Patagonian plains': from the Camwy Valley to Cwm Hyfryd

Dark times – Floods and Emigration

Early Schools in the Welsh Settlement - Patagonia

History of the Welsh Language in Patagonia

Chapels and Churches in Patagonia



Chapels and churches in Patagonia



By Culturenet Cymru

Introduction

'Religion is gaining ground here in every respect.' The Reverend D. Lloyd Jones, 1878

Tasks and learning objectives

1. Map of the Camwy Valley
2. Christian faith of the settlers
3. Religion
4. Moriah
5. Churches in Patagonia and Wales

[Download the collection of images and worksheets for this activity from People's Collection Wales.](#)

Chapels and churches in Patagonia

'Religion is gaining ground here in every respect.' The Reverend D. Lloyd Jones, 1878

As soon as they had settled in the Camwy Valley in 1865, the Welsh settlers began to hold formal religious services in the plain wooden storehouse which had been built in the centre of the village of Caer Antur. The Reverends Abraham Matthews and Lewis Humphreys (Congregationalist ministers) took it in turn to lead the Sunday service. In addition, a Sunday school was held in the afternoon and a prayer meeting in the evening. Not all the Nonconformist denominations gathered together for these religious services: Robert Meirion Williams held Baptist services in his home. However, Williams soon left Patagonia due to ill-health, and this division came to an end.

By 1873, a chapel had been constructed at Rawson and, in the 1880s, a second building ('Capel Berwyn') was built nearby. Although this chapel was forced to close for a while, it has now been re-opened and is being used for worship. Denominationalism had returned to Patagonia by the late 1870s. In 1878, the Baptists built a chapel in the district of Treorci, on the land of the Rev. William Casnodyn Rhys. This chapel was destroyed when the Camwy Valley was flooded in 1899, and another Baptist chapel (Bethlehem) had to be built in the district. However, because of its pitiable condition, this building was replaced by another chapel in 1907.

The third chapel to be built in Patagonia was Moriah, near Trelew. It was built in the 1880s under the instigation of the minister, the Rev. Abraham Matthews. A number of the first settlers were buried in the cemetery of this chapel and there also the Abraham Matthews Monument was built. When the chapel was built, most of the worshippers lived on nearby farms but, later, as an increasing number of them moved to the town of Trelew, they decided to build a new chapel in that town. Tabernacl, Trelew, was built in 1889, and this is the oldest building in the town.



Postcard of the chapel, Gaiman, Chubut, sent to Mrs Anne Jones, 1909

Chapels and churches in Patagonia

In a similar fashion, they started to build the first chapel in the Gaiman district ('Capel Cerrig') in the mid 1870s, soon after the settlers came to the area. A second chapel was built in 1884 but, by 1912, this also was considered too small and so a third chapel was built. Another small chapel (Seion) was built in the Bryn Gwyn area in 1883, but the original building was replaced after it was destroyed by a heavy storm.

A number of other chapels were built along the Camwy Valley to meet the needs of the scattered communities. Among them were Nazareth, Drofa Dulog; Capel Bryn Crwn; Capel Glan Alaw; Carmel, Dolafon; Bethel, Tir Halen a Salem, Lle Cul - the only zinc chapel in Patagonia.



Edward Jones Williams's photo album, c. 1910

One must remember that all those who emigrated to Patagonia were Nonconformists and that there was a small number of Anglican church-people in the Settlement. Edwin Cynrig Roberts, one of Settlement's early leaders, belonged to this group, and he strived to secure a priest and a suitable building for his fellow church people. He succeeded in persuading Jonathan Ceredig Davies to come to Patagonia to help him in 1875, and he held services and Sunday schools in Edwin's home. By 1883, the church-people of Patagonia had secured the services of their first priest, the Rev. Hugh Davies (Huw Ddu o Arfon). Services were still being held at Bryn Antur, Edwin's home, until 1891, when Llanddewi Church was built in the Bethesda district, near Dolafon. Later, the Rev. D. G. Davies was appointed chaplain at the Church of St Mark, Trelew.

Sources

R. Bryn Williams, *Y Wladfa* (Cardiff, 1962)

R. Owen Jones, *Yr Efengyl yn y Wladfa* (Bridgend, 1987)

Chapels and churches in Patagonia

Task 1. Map of the Camwy Valley

Place the chapels and churches on a map of the Camwy Valley (worksheet Chapels and Churches) making a note of the date they were opened.

Task 2. Christian faith of the settlers

Discuss how the floods may have affected the Christian faith of the settlers.

Task 3. Religion

Search for evidence that proves how important religion was to the early settlers

Task 4. Moriah Chapel



Moriah Chapel, 2005

When was Moriah Chapel opened and who was the minister of the chapel?

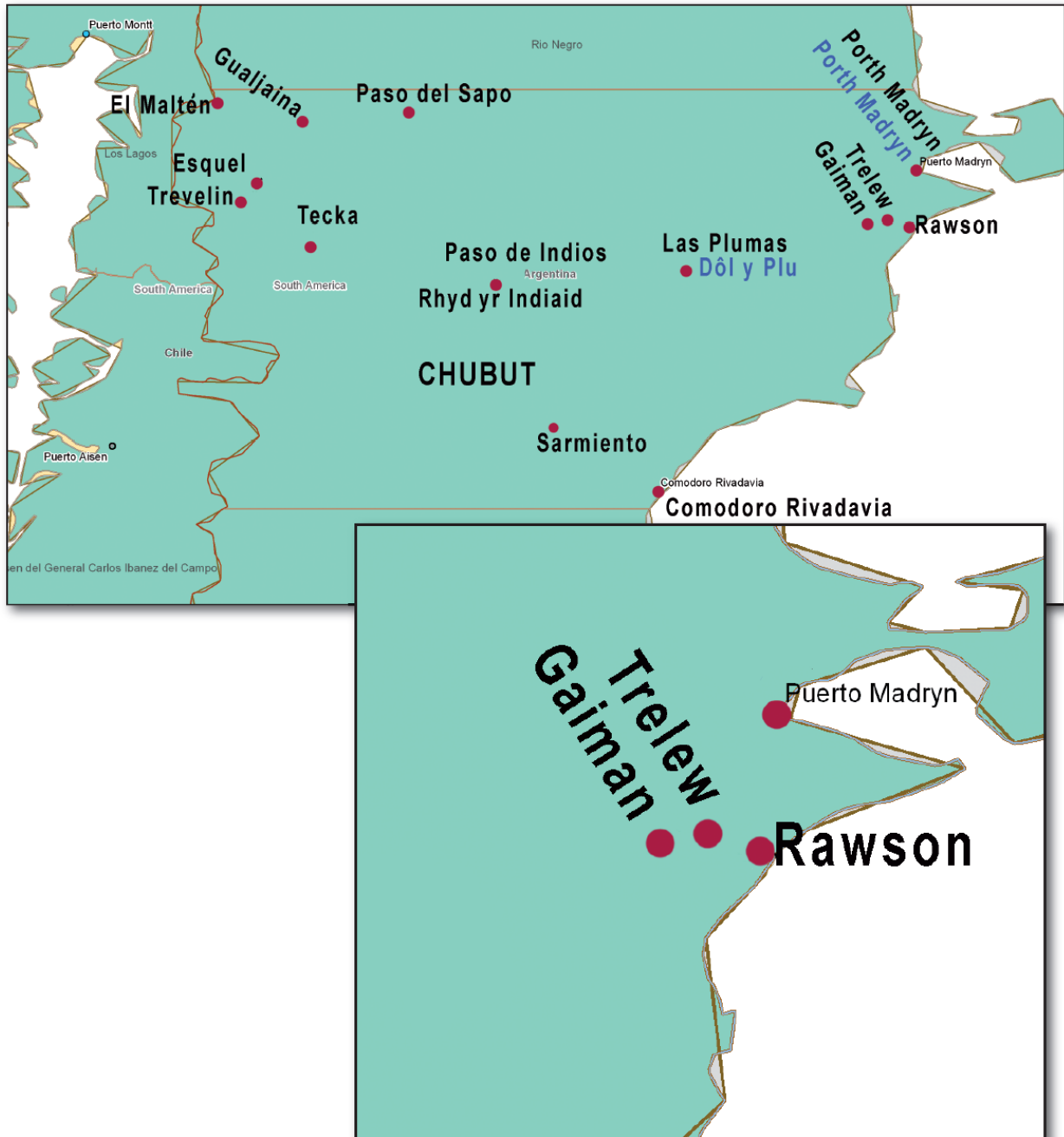
Task 5. Churches in Patagonia and Wales

In what way are the chapels and churches in Patagonia different from those in Wales?

Complete the worksheet – Architectural Features of Chapels in Patagonia and Wales.

Chapels and Churches

Place chapels and churches on a map of Dyffryn Camwy, indicating when they were opened.



Architectural Features of Chapels in Patagonia and Wales



Moriah chapel

A picture of a chapel in Wales

Features

Features