

Historic Place Documentation Worksheet

Church Area:

Europe

Country:

Wales

Historic place name:

Wiselboom /WistleboonBridge, Llanelli

Closest street Address:

Old Castle Road

Llanelli

SA15 2SW

GPS coordinates:

51° 40' 57.09" N

4° 10' 18.52" W

Property Owner

| | |
|---|------------------|
| | Church-owned |
| | Privately-owned |
| X | Government-owned |
| | Other |

Name and contact information of owner:

N / A

Current Use:

Wistleboon or Wiselboom bridge no longer exists ,as the river Lliedi which it spanned has been re-routed, and the bridge dismantled with the demise of local heavy industry.

Physical description:

Described in the *Cambrian* newspaper in 1897 as a 'stone arch bridge,' it was sufficiently substantial to carry a railway line across the river to a nearby colliery.

Have you taken photographs of the place to be included with this form?

| | |
|---|-----|
| | No |
| X | Yes |

Photograph 1: The south end of Old Castle Road, Llanelli (2016) with the river Lliedi flowing under the stone bridge left of centre

Photograph 2: Looking upriver of the Lliedi as it runs alongside the south end of Old Castle Road (2016)

Photograph 3: Old Castle Pond (2017, looking northeast) on the northwest corner of which is the original location of the Wiselboom bridge

Photograph 4: View along the north side of Old Castle Pond (2017) - - the Wiselboom bridge would have been located on the northwest corner of the Pond (the far corner in this photograph)

Photograph 1: The south end of Old Castle Road, Llanelli (2016) with the river Lliedi flowing under the stone bridge left of centre



Photograph: Jill Morgan

Photograph 2: Looking upriver of the Lliedi as it runs alongside the south end of Old Castle Road (2016)



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Photograph 3: Old Castle Pond (2017, looking northeast), on the northwest corner of which is the original location of the Wiselboom bridge



Photograph: Jill Morgan

Photograph 4: View along the north side of Old Castle Pond (2017) - the Wiselboom bridge would have been located on the northwest corner of the Pond (the far corner in this photograph)



Photograph: Jill Morgan

Why is this place important?

In the mid-nineteenth century, baptisms took place under Wiselboom/Wistleboon Bridge in the river Lledi, often at night (no doubt so as to avoid hecklers). Although the river is small, there would have been deep pools under the arches of the bridge, which would have made it a suitable place for baptisms.

Additional Information:

John Innes includes the following information about 'The Mormons' in his 1902 book *Old Llanelly*:

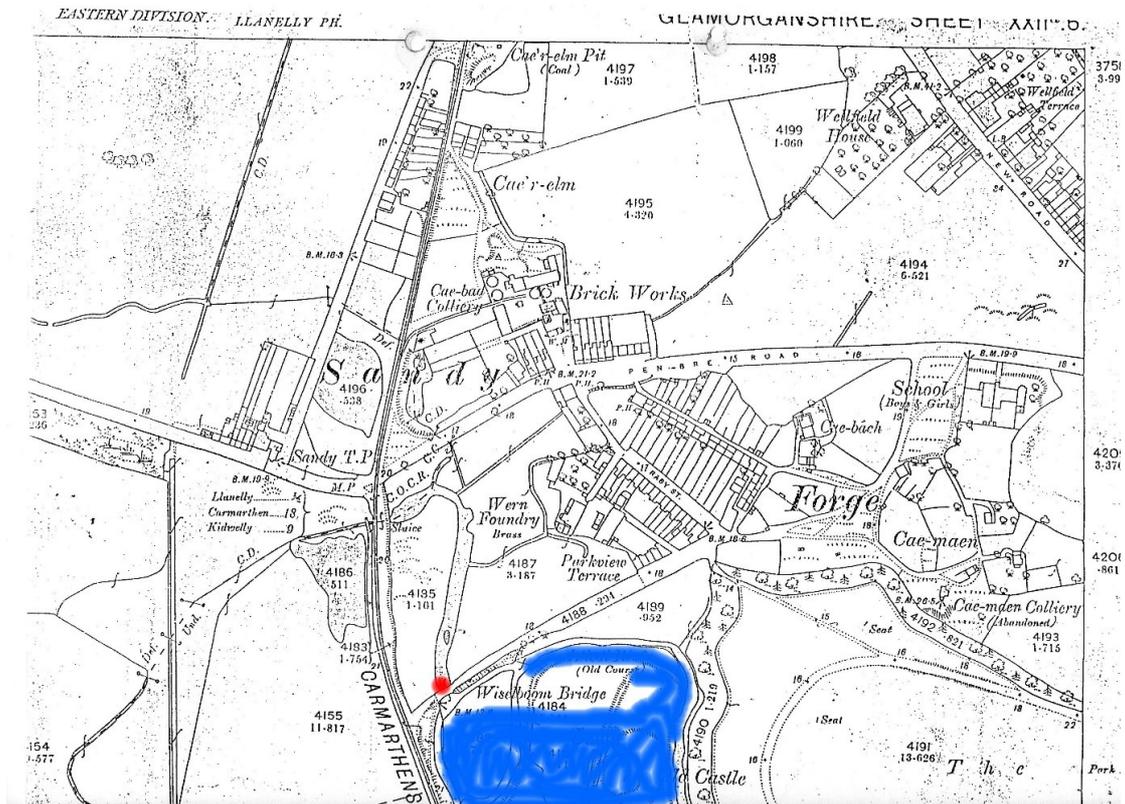
About 1845 Mormonism spread like a wave over South Wales, and Llanelly felt the movement. The colliers of Caemaen and Caebad were converted in large numbers, as were those of the "Box"; many coppermen also became nominally "Saints." Walter Hodge and one Bassett, were the high priests of the new faith at Llanelly, and it is even alleged that they worked miracles! Longhurst of the Furnace was an early convert, and so was David Williams of Sandy Gate. They baptized at night under the Thistleboon or Wistleboon Bridge, near the Old Castle. There was a "Latterday Chapel" in Island Place - afterwards a woolen factory - the wool gathering having assumed a commercial phase. About the time not a few Llanelly families emigrated to Salt Lake to join Brigham Young. The terrors of several simultaneous mothers-in-law were insufficient to deter these ardent converts.

Stephen Hughes in his book *The Archeology of an Early Railway System: The Brecon Forest Tramroads* states that: *The ironmaster Alexander Raby carried his branch railway to Cae-Maen colliery over the old course of the Lledi river 150m upstream of the 'ironbridge' c. 1801. It seems like that this [Wiselboom bridge] was also made of iron... The remains may lie under the site of railway sidings at the end of Parkview Terrace*



Map reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland. A good quality copy can be found at: <http://maps.nls.uk/view/102180122>

This 1880 Ordnance Survey map of the Sandy/Old Castle area of Llanelli shows the approximate position of the Wiselboom Bridge (in red); the position of the present day Old Castle Pond is coloured in blue. Caemaen colliery for which the bridge was built can be seen to the west of the Pond.



The best means of access to the site currently by car would be to enter the car park of 'Ramps Skate Park' at Sandy roundabout and access the site through the side gate.

Important individuals associated with the place:

The 'Longhurst of Furnace' referred to by John Innes above may well be William Longhurst who is listed in the 1851 census living in Furnace, Llanelli, as a lodger age 20 and single in the household of David Manuel and family. This same William is listed as a son of David and Elizabeth Longhurst, living in Furnace, on the 1841 census. His baptism (age 3 years) is recorded in the Llanelli Anglican parish registers for 20th September 1833. He was baptized into the LDS church as an adult in 1853.

The *David Williams of Sandy Gate* referred to by John Innes is undoubtedly the David Williams (1817-1888) whose history was written by his granddaughter, and appears on the familysearch.org website at:

<https://familysearch.org/photos/artifacts/14730977>

In addition to his personal history there are details of the Llanelli branch. His granddaughter says:

"In grandfather's Welsh record book which I had translated... it stated that he was baptized into the Latter Day Saint Church 11 February 1848 by Walter Rhoge (also called Roche and Roach) and confirmed the same day by elders William Hughes and David Charles. Sarah his wife was baptized 30 April 1849 by elder John Williams, brother to grandfather. He had been converted by his brother John, who in turn had been a convert

of Captain Dan Jones, the famous Welshman who had been with the prophet Joseph Smith the last day he lived. When David and John Williams joined the Church their brother Joseph was greatly disturbed and whenever he found them preaching on the streets of Llanelly he would kick the boxes out from under them. Grandfather was the Presiding Elder of the Llanelly Branch at the time of immigration. He helped build the chapel in Island Place and his name is on the old deed.”

Sandy is an area to the west of Llanelli, next to the area known as Forge.

The Walter Hodge referred to by John Innes was then, according to David Williams' history, Walter Roach/Roche. A Walter Roach appears on the 1841 census records for Llanelly in Forge with his father John and siblings. He also appears on the list of Immigrants at: <http://welshmormon.byu.edu> under the spelling *Roach*. He emigrated to Utah territory in 1850 and died in Spanish Fork, Utah.

Stories about this place:

There were a number of branches in the Llanelli conference/district in the mid-nineteenth century. In the 1855 - 1861 Llanelli Branch/Conference minutes the following branches in or near Llanelli are listed: Ffwrnais, Forge, Kidwelly, Lanymor/Glanymor (which is most likely the area now known as *Seaside*), Llanelli Town/Dre, Pembrey, Pontyberem, Pontyeats, Vangalch, and Wainbaglan/ Gwaunbaglan. The Wiselboom/Wistleboon bridge is close to the Forge area of Llanelly, and convenient walking distance from Seaside and Llanelli town.

This historical information has chronological connections with the famous 'Rebecca Riots' which occurred largely in Carmarthenshire between 1839 and 1844. The riots were prompted by generally poor living conditions - high prices of wheat among them, but also the system of toll-gates which required users to pay tolls on goods transported around the area. This was seen to be grossly unfair as a farmer, for example, would have to pay a toll to cart coal to the lime kilns and then another toll to cart the lime to fertilise his fields. Some towns were literally ringed with toll-gates or bars, making it impossible to take goods to market without paying this 'tax.' So on the night of the 7th August 1843 about twenty people, some armed with guns, did 'riotously and tumultuously assemble together to the disturbance of the public peace at a certain toll gate called the Sandy Gate near Llanelly, unlawfully and with force begin to demolish the toll-gate house.. and did also demolish the said toll-gate.' As a result of the riots many tollgates were officially dismantled. This was sometimes because the road for whose maintenance the toll was was collected had been properly improved. However in some cases it was b the tolls hadn't been used by the Turnpike Trust to improve the road, but the farmers themselves had maintained the road, and paid the toll as well!

Sources for this historical information:

Old Llanelly by John Innes. Published by the *Western Mail* in 1902.

Hugh Jones, former member of Llanelli branch / ward (20th century)

Minutes of the Llanelly Conference 1855-1861 - translated from Welsh and available at the Church History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah

History of David Williams, Llanelli branch president in the 19th century and available online at: <http://welshmormon.byu.edu>

Information and Depositions of Jenkin Hugh of Llanelly, Catherine his wife, Edward Chalinder, and William Lewis, as reported by Evan D. Jones in 'A File of "Rebecca" papers, and published in *The Carmarthen Antiquary* 1943/4, Vol. 1, Pts 3 & 4.

www.ancestry.co.uk

www.findmypast.co.uk

Your Name: Jill Morgan