

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
in South-west Wales 1864-1903

Christine Jill Morgan

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Master's Degrees by Examination and Dissertation

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Contents

	page
Abstract	iv
Acknowledgements	v
List of Figures	vi
Introduction	1
Chapter One: Methodology	13
Chapter Two: Membership and Engagement	17
Chapter Three: Missionary Activity	34
Chapter Four: Emigration	50
Conclusions	60
Bibliography	64
Appendices	
Appendix A: Conferences in Wales, 1864-1903	75
Appendix B: Missionaries in south-west Wales, 1864-1903	76
Appendix C: Missionary Profiles	79

Abstract

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints was first introduced into Britain in 1837, and the first branch established in Wales in 1840. For the next two decades, convert baptisms in, and emigration from Wales occurred in substantial numbers; this included south-west Wales. However, to date the decades leading up to the end of the nineteenth century have not been documented as a whole. This dissertation – based on the primary source material of missionary journals of the era, supported by extracts from the *Millennial Star* – provides that overview. Analysis of sources shows that although the number of missionaries assigned to Wales increased across the time period, this does not appear to be true for south-west Wales, although preaching and support of LDS members in a variety of guises are consistently evident. Missionaries experienced some opposition to their work, but this was largely verbal and to a decreasing extent over time. From the late 1860s declining numbers can be seen in both membership and organised branches in south-west Wales. Little evidence has been found of convert baptisms or emigration after the 1870s, although precise numbers for south-west Wales have been difficult to determine. The volume of source material suggests that further studies would be feasible for south-west Wales and beyond.

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I would like to thank all of those who have supported the writing of this dissertation and the research which preceded it. First my Supervisor at UWTSD, Dr Lester Mason, for his advice in the writing phase, and before him Mr Conway Davies for encouraging amateur historians, and for bolstering my knowledge and enthusiasm.

Thanks too to family and friends who have listened to my often muddled thinking and helped in practical ways with time and expertise.

The major contribution which retired Brigham Young University professor Ronald Dennis has made to knowledge in this area is evident in the number of references to his work here, and should be acknowledged for both range and depth. In 2019 he became a bard at the National Eisteddfod in recognition of his contribution to preserving this aspect of the history of Wales. His support has been invaluable and definitive.

List of figures

Fig. 1 LDS Church membership in Britain 1864-1903.

Fig. 2 Number of missionaries assigned to Wales 1864-1903.

Fig. 3 Locations where missionaries visited members 1864-1903.

Fig. 4 Emigration from the Welsh conference 1864-1903

‘From the mid-1860s until the middle of the 20th century, very few Welsh converts would come into the (LDS) Church’¹

‘South-west Wales (was) clearly a noteworthy element of LDS church history, a religion that induced many, but an allure confined to the late 1840’s and early 1850’s.’²

This dissertation seeks to explore the veracity of these statements.

Origins of the LDS Church

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints was founded in New York state (USA) in 1830, under the leadership of Joseph Smith.³ Often referred to as the *Mormon Church*,⁴ (although it will be referred to here as the *LDS Church*) it has been ranked as the fourth largest Christian denomination in the United States,⁵ with worldwide membership now over sixteen million.⁶ With less than two hundred years of history, it clearly ranks as a new religion,⁷ but one with a determined evangelical focus. As early as 1837, when the LDS Church was experiencing considerable financial and social difficulties, with violent opposition in communities from New York to Missouri,⁸ missionaries⁹ were sent to Britain to proselytize. Beginning in Preston (Lancashire), these missionaries experienced remarkable success with membership reaching eleven thousand in England

¹ Ronald D. Dennis. ‘The Welsh and the Gospel’ in *Truth Will Prevail*. ed. by V. Ben Bloxham and others. (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book, 1987).

² Aled Betts. *The Price of Faith: The Mormons and South West Wales Society 1844-1863*. (Unpublished Masters dissertation. Trinity University College Carmarthen, 2010), p. 4.

³ The full title: *Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* was first used in April 1838, and the origins of the LDS Church are well documented. See for example: Joseph Smith, *The History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*. 2nd edn. (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book, 1978).

⁴ The term *Mormon* – or in the nineteenth century also *Mormonite* - was brought into use as a pejorative term based on belief in the *Book of Mormon*, which members of the LDS Church read as a companion book of scripture to the Bible. See Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton. *The Mormon Experience*. (London: Allen and Unwin, 1979). Use of the term also hides the essential Christian nature of the LDS Church.

⁵ Eileen W. Lindner (Ed.) *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches* National Council of Churches in the USA. (New York: Abingdon Press, 2012).

⁶ The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. *2018 Annual Statistical Report*. April 2019. <<https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/facts-and-statistics>> (Accessed 15 March 2020)

⁷ Rodney Stark. ‘The Rise of a New World Faith.’ *Review of Religious Research*, 26.1 (1984), 18-27.

⁸ Joseph Smith. *History of the Church*.

⁹ *Mission* and *missionary* are part of the terminology used by the LDS Church from the beginning of this evangelising effort but would equate with ‘missioners’ of other non-conformist denominations. Missionaries were often referred to as *Travelling Elders* if they were assigned to proselytise a particular area. If they were assigned a leadership role over an area, they would still be given the title *Elder*, denoting one who has been given authority by the church to be its representative. But they would then also be referred to as *President*.

alone in the first eight years, and overall membership doubling between 1840 and 1850,¹⁰ boosted by the influx of converts from Britain and other parts of Europe. LDS Church membership in Britain in 1850 exceeded 32,000 – its nineteenth century peak, when there were more members in Britain than in America,¹¹ prompting Conybeare to describe Britain as the ‘*true theatre of Mormon triumph*’.¹²

The LDS Church reaches Wales

The first Welsh LDS congregation was established in 1840 in Overton (Flintshire), a predominantly English-speaking area, where one hundred and fifty converts were reported in the first four months.¹³ Shortly thereafter, LDS converts were baptised by James Needham in Skenfrith (Monmouthshire), followed by William Henshaw establishing a branch of the church in Merthyr Tydfil in February 1843.¹⁴ These were the ‘hungry forties’ caused by a notable rise in the Welsh population combined with a series of poor harvests. The new Poor Law and Commutation of Tithes in England and Wales were still of recent origin and continuing resentment.¹⁵ Rebecca had ceased to riot over the toll-gates which symbolised more general oppression,¹⁶ and Chartism had enjoyed its brief fame in Carmarthen. But the General Enclosure Act of 1845 would deprive many rural inhabitants of centuries-old rights of grazing and gathering,¹⁷ and the so-called Blue Books would spell treachery for Wales.¹⁸ It was also a strongly non-conformist Wales to which the missionaries came, with ministers representing not only

¹⁰ Rodney Stark. ‘*The Rise of a New World Faith*’ p. 20.

¹¹ Richard O. Cowan ‘Church Growth in England, 1841-1914 in *Truth Will Prevail*, p. 202. Note the mistaken use of the term ‘England’ here to denote Britain, as is often the case with American authors.

¹² W.J. Conybeare. *Essays, Ecclesiastical and Social: Reprinted with additions from the Edinburg Review*. (London: Longman, 1855) p. 366.

¹³ Ronald D. Dennis. ‘The Welsh and the Gospel’ in *Truth Will Prevail*. p. 239. Like many of the early branches, Overton had ceased to exist within about 5 years as the majority of its members had emigrated, and some become disaffected.

¹⁴ Andrew Jenson. ‘Welsh Mission’ in *Encyclopedic History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*. < <https://archive.org/stream/in.ernet.dli.2015.178083/2015.178083.Encyclopedic-History-Of-The-Church-Of-Jesus-Christ-Of-Latter-Day-Saints#page/n5/mode/2up>> (Accessed 16 March 2020]. Note that *branch* is the typical term used for a local congregation.

¹⁵ D. Gareth Evans. *A History of Wales 1815-1906*. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1989).

¹⁶ Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry on the Rebecca Riots in Wales. *The Pembroke Herald and General Advertiser* 12th April 1844, p. 2.

¹⁷ John Chapman. ‘The Later Parliamentary Enclosures of South Wales’. *Agricultural History Review* 39.2 (1991), 116-125.

¹⁸ *Reports of the commissioners of enquiry into the state of education in Wales*. Great Britain. Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales. Published 1848.

religious but also more general authority. However the country was also beginning to open up to wider influence with the establishment of national passenger railways, and Jones notes the 'tremendous social change' that would occur as Wales was 'transformed...to becoming a region of highly specialized, wealth-creating industries and commercial enterprises.'¹⁹

The population of industrial Merthyr was already multi-national,²⁰ but many residents spoke only Welsh. Thus progress was slow for Cornishman Henshaw and conversions relatively few. However, by 1851 there were some 5,200 members of the LDS church in Wales, 1,200 in the Merthyr area.²¹ A variety of factors have been credited with this early success. Heaton suggests the LDS church was, 'able to combine a religious message of salvation... with the opportunity for improvement in economic circumstances.'²² LDS missionaries not only preached for conversion but were also advocating gathering: spiritually leaving Babylon or worldliness behind, but also locationally heading to Zion in the American West.²³ Economics was a common enough motive for emigration in the mid-nineteenth century.²⁴ But Davies contrasts non-conformism - a 'centripetal religion with a pull towards the chapel, to its hymnody [and] preaching' - with Mormonism's 'centrifugal dynamic catapult[ing] members from their home base to the American arena where Zion would be built.'²⁵ Heaven did not have to wait; Zion represented both religious and financial salvation in this life.²⁶

¹⁹ Ieuan Gwynedd Jones. *Mid Victorian Wales. The Observers and the Observed.* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1992). p. 104.

²⁰ Bill Jones. 'Inspecting the 'extraordinary drain': Emigration and the urban experience in Merthyr Tydfil in the 1860s.' *Urban History* 32.1 (May 2005), 100-113.

²¹ Dennis 'The Welsh and the Gospel.'

²² Tim B. Heaton and others. 'The Making of British Saints in Historical Perspective.' *BYU Studies Quarterly*, 27.2 (Apr. 1987) p. 133.

²³ The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints defines *Zion* as 'the pure in heart' (See: *Doctrine & Covenants 97:21*) and now encourages new converts to remain in their own countries to build up Zion or the Kingdom of God across the whole world. In the nineteenth century however for LDS Church members Zion was understood to be in America – a place where the Kingdom of God could be established in peace and free from constraints of culture or government. Before the death of Joseph Smith in 1844 converts gathered to Nauvoo, Illinois, a new city built by members of the LDS Church. By 1846 it became clear that sights had to be set further west if church members were to attain the desired peace. Hence Zion became synonymous with Utah Territory.

²⁴ Dudley Baines. 'The Economics of Migration. Nineteenth-Century Britain. *Refresh* 27 (Autumn 1998) 5-9.

²⁵ Douglas James Davies, *Mormon Spirituality*, p. 17.

²⁶ Ronald D. Dennis. *Indefatigable Veteran: History and Biography of Abel Evans, A Welsh Mormon Elder.* (Provo, Utah: Rhydybont Press, 1994) p. 25.

In order to promulgate this message, from 1840 church leaders in Britain began publication of the *Millennial Star*.²⁷ For Wales the *Star* had limited attraction, despite relatively high levels of literacy, because of the language barrier. Even as late as 1863, Jeremy would report:

Saints in Wales are laboring under a disadvantage... English Saints can read and understand English,... their minds are weekly lit up by the radiant light of a very bright and beautiful *Star*. ...The brethren [in Wales] have to translate the valuable instructions contained in the *Star*... I have been teaching [the Welsh Saints] to endeavor to learn the English language... to learn it as fast as they could.'²⁸

Until Dan Jones began producing Welsh language publications in 1845, only one small pamphlet was available in Welsh.²⁹ Jones' output during his first, four-year mission to Wales was prodigious.³⁰ Thus the arrival in 1845 of this Welshman as a missionary from America has also been credited for early proselytizing success in Wales.³¹ Jones had been called to the work by Joseph Smith in Illinois, shortly before Smith was killed by a mob. He was assigned to preside over missionary work across Wales from December 1845, being uniquely fitted for the role, as: 'the only person we had in this country who could speak, read, write, and publish in the Welsh language.'³²

Jones' publication drive was partly to counter opposition to the LDS church from local non-conformist ministers, in periodicals such as *Seren Gomer* and *Yr Haul*.³³ As almost no press would publish his responses, he established the periodical *Prophwyd y Jubili* in 1846,³⁴ which included the following:

²⁷ The *Latter-day Saints Millennial Star*. Hereafter referred to as the *Star*. First a monthly, then twice-monthly publication, the *Star* appeared weekly from the early 1850s. Parley P. Pratt, first editor of the *Star* stated: 'the purpose of the periodical was to spread the truth, gather Israel, and be as a star of light for the faithful to prepare for the second coming of Jesus Christ.' (p. 69 in Woods, Fred E. 'The Tide of Mormon Migration Flowing through the Port of Liverpool, England.' *International Journal of Mormon Studies* 1 (Spring 2008), 60-86). It continued to be published in the UK until 1970.

²⁸ *Star* 25, 49 p. 782.

²⁹ Ronald D. Dennis, *Welsh Mormon Writings from 1844 to 1862: A Historical Bibliography* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1988), 221–22, for a discussion of this non-extant pamphlet.

³⁰ This included numerous pamphlets, a 580-page periodical *Prophwyd y Jubili* (*Prophet of the Jubilee*), a 288-page scriptural commentary, a 104-page history of the church, and a small hymnal.

³¹ Rex LeRoy Christensen. *The Life and Contributions of Dan Jones*. (Unpublished Masters thesis. Utah State University, Logan, Utah, 1977).

³² *Star* 7, 1, p. 7.

³³ Ronald D. Dennis (in preparation) considers more than 500 items of anti-Mormon literature which were in circulation in Wales prior to 1850. Space does not allow for further discussion here.

³⁴ Available online in translation. <<http://welshmormon.byu.edu/Resources/pdf/24377.pdf>> (Accessed 13 April 2020]

We are accused of every evil, deceit, yes, and every stupidity. We sent, with utmost mildness,... letters convincing of our innocence. But, were they published? No! Every poor excuse was given instead. What should we do? Is the press locked against us? Is that freedom in Wales in the nineteenth century? We will open our own magazine, then... defending ourselves.³⁵

By late 1846, with Welsh membership reaching 900,³⁶ Jones wrote to the *Star*: the 'great car of Mormonism is traversing over the Cambrian Hills with astonishingly (sic) rapidity - crushing all who oppose its mighty impetus.'³⁷

When Jones left Wales in 1849, responsibility for Welsh publications fell to John S. Davis, a recent convert from Carmarthen.³⁸ He began a translation of the *Book of Mormon* in September 1851, which appeared in instalments sent out to subscribers with *Udgorn Seion* – the successor to *Prophwyd*.³⁹ The final instalment appeared in April 1852.⁴⁰ The completion of *Llyfr Mormon*⁴¹ was a landmark event as the book is considered by the LDS Church to be a companion volume of scripture to the *Bible*. Davis had already translated and distributed the *Doctrine and Covenants*⁴² in the same fashion – an accomplishment which must be recognised as 'nothing short of remarkable, considering the narrow time frames and the labor-intensive conditions'⁴³ Thus although missionaries preached for a decade without the benefit of *Llyfr Mormon*,⁴⁴ the full canon of LDS scripture was available in Welsh within twelve years of the arrival of missionaries in Wales. Indeed Davies refers to a 'saturation of Mormon literature' which was 'very influential in forming religious identity.'⁴⁵

³⁵ [In translation]. Huw Walters. [The Prophet and the Trumpet]. *Y Traethodydd* 154. (1999) 177-184.

³⁶ *Prophwyd y Jiwibili*, Nov. 1846, p. 138.

³⁷ Letter by Dan Jones to the *Star*, 19 Dec. 1846, p. 138.

³⁸ Davis worked as an assistant to Dan Jones' brother, on whose press the Welsh LDS publications were produced, giving him ample opportunity to become acquainted with LDS beliefs, which led to his baptism.

³⁹ Davis had highlighted the need for more subscribers to the translation in August 1851 – to make the project more financially viable, and promised a discount should the number exceed 2,000. (See *Udgorn Seion, September 20 1851, p.308*)

⁴⁰ Ronald D. Dennis, 'Llyfr Mormon: The Translation of the Book of Mormon into Welsh.' *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 11.1 (2002), p. 48.

⁴¹ *Llyfr Mormon. Testament Arall am Iesu Grist*. (Merthyr Tydfil: John S. Davis, 1852)

⁴² Published as *Llyfr Athrawiaeth a Chyfammmodau*, the *Doctrine and Covenants* consists of revelations to Joseph Smith, and is therefore considered modern scripture by members of the LDS Church. Welsh was the first foreign-language translation of the *Doctrine and Covenants*, and the second foreign language translation of the *Book of Mormon*, emphasizing the importance of Wales as a field of missionary endeavour in the early years of the LDS Church.

⁴³ Ronald D. Dennis. *Llyfr Mormon* p. 49.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 49.

⁴⁵ Douglas James Davies. *Mormon Spirituality* p. 15. In addition, in 1854 alone some 50,000 Welsh tracts were distributed.

Growth in Wales

The first convert baptism in south-west Wales is credited to Mary Ormond in Dale, Pembrokeshire, in May 1843.⁴⁶ Among the earliest converts in Carmarthenshire was Thomas Jeremy, who was baptised by Dan Jones in March 1846. South-west Wales in the mid-nineteenth century was predominantly rural: Carmarthenshire occupations were largely those associated with small farms and rural crafts, with Llanelli the largest urban community and concentration of industry; Cardiganshire and north Pembrokeshire were very dependent on agriculture but with much poor upland terrain.⁴⁷ South Pembrokeshire with its large natural harbours was more predominantly English-speaking. Isolated examples of small scale industry included lead mining in Cardiganshire, slate in south Pembrokeshire, and the woollen mills of Felindre.⁴⁸ Despite the sparsely populated nature of the region, by July of 1847 there were more than a hundred LDS converts in Carmarthenshire,⁴⁹ where membership would peak in 1851 at over six hundred. Brechfa branch alone recorded 122 convert baptisms between 1846 and 1856.⁵⁰ Cardiganshire, with its strong Methodist base,⁵¹ could also claim converts by 1847 and would peak in membership around the same time, but never beyond 150. Pembrokeshire membership would peak later (1855-56) but maintain well over one hundred members through the 1850s.

According to the returns of the religious census of 1851,⁵² 30,000 members of the LDS church were meeting in 222 locations across England and Wales. This included six

⁴⁶ *Mary Ormond (Morris, George) journal*. She begins thus: 'I, Mary George, Daughter of John and Elizabeth Ormond was born on Friday night and half past 10 o'clock on the 2 Feb 1821 in the Parish of Dale, County of Pembroke, South Wales, Old England, was baptized into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints on Wednesday night of the last day of May 1843.'

http://welshmormon.byu.edu/Resource_Info.aspx?id=730 (Accessed 1 March 2020)

⁴⁷ David Jenkins. *The Agricultural Community in South-West Wales at the turn of the Twentieth Century*. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1971).

⁴⁸ See for example: W.J. Lewis. 'Lead mining in Cardiganshire.' In: *Cardiganshire County History Vol. 3*. G.H. Jenkins & I.G. Jones (Eds.) (Cardiff. University of Wales Press, 1998).

⁴⁹ Betts, *The Price of Faith*, p. 5

⁵⁰ E. Lewis Evans. 1959. 'Mormon Baptisms at the Brechfa Branch (1846-1856). *Carmarthen Antiquary* 1.1, (1959) p. 39

⁵¹ Betts. *The Price of Faith*, p. 5

⁵² Census of Great Britain, 1851, Report and Tables on Religious Worship in England and Wales, vol. 10, Irish University Press Series of British Parliamentary Papers, Population (Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press, 1970). It should be noted that the purpose of this census was two-fold: not only to estimate attendance at religious services, but also to measure whether accommodation at places of religious worship was sufficient to meet the demands of a growing population.

branches in south-west Wales: four in Carmarthenshire and two in Pembrokeshire.⁵³ Williams notes that by 1851, 'the Latter Day Saints were already established at Cenarth... and in the parish of Llanfihangel Rhos-y-corn, but the Mormon gospel had not yet succeeded in crossing the Teifi.'⁵⁴ Doxey⁵⁵ notes that the LDS church had only two purpose built chapels⁵⁶ and otherwise met in obscure private homes or rented halls, obscuring their full presence, and the census methodology was also recognised as problematic at the time.⁵⁷ For leaders of LDS branches record-keeping was required and membership records were kept in specially printed books. While some of these have certainly not survived, the LDS Church holds membership records for 386 branches known to have existed across England and Wales in 1851.⁵⁸ The *Star* of June 1851⁵⁹ reports 572 branches. Hintze's⁶⁰ analysis of Welsh branches at the time of the 1851 census suggests that Carmarthenshire had seventeen, Cardiganshire eight, and Pembrokeshire eleven branches, for a total of thirty-six across south-west Wales – more than four times the presence recorded in the census – with a total membership of 859.

The LDS Church was divided for administrative purposes into Conferences,⁶¹ each under the leadership of a President. Conference boundaries were fluid, as 'testimony to Mormonism's capacity for adaptation to changing circumstances'⁶² in response to changes in membership due to baptisms, excommunications, emigration or death.⁶³

⁵³ Brechfa, Llandybie, Llansawel and Llanelli in Carmarthenshire; Cuffern Mountain and Haverfordwest in Pembrokeshire.

⁵⁴ David Williams. 'The Censuses of religious worship of 1851 in Cardiganshire.' *Ceredigion: Journal of the Cardiganshire Antiquarian Society* 4.2 (1961) p. 127.

⁵⁵ Cynthia Doxey. 'The Church in Britain and the 1851 Religious Census.' *Mormon Historical Studies*, (Spring 2003) p. 108.

⁵⁶ In 1849 two chapels were built by the LDS Church in Wales: *Capel y Saint* in Island Place, Llanelli, and a small building adjoining the Bull Hotel in Abergele.

⁵⁷ Seaborne, M. V. J. (1990) 'The Religious Census of 1851 and Early Chapel Building in North Wales: A Sample Survey.' *The National Library of Wales Journal*, 16.3 (Summer 1990).

⁵⁸ At the Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah. See: <https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/>

⁵⁹ 'Statistical Report of the Church in the British Islands, for the Half-Year Ending June 1st, 1851.' *Star*, 13, 27, p. 207.

⁶⁰ Sharon Hintze. 'Mormon Congregations in Wales in 1851' (Unpublished paper submitted to Brigham Young University June 2001 for the requirements of Course F66C03: *Genealogy*). <<http://welshmormon.byu.edu/Resources/pdf/16450.pdf>> [Accessed 14 November 2019].

⁶¹ The exception to this was Utah Territory where, due to the very high concentration of LDS Church membership, members were organised into Stakes and Wards – roughly the equivalent of the Diocese and individual congregations of the modern Church of Wales.

⁶² Davies, *Mormon Spirituality*, p. 22.

⁶³ This is largely still true, but in the nineteenth century emigration could wipe out whole congregations, so changes in membership numbers could be quite abrupt and significant. This is less so in the modern era when emigration to the USA is no longer advocated.

Three main conferences were initially established in south-west Wales: Pembrokeshire in 1848 (later briefly divided into North and South) and Cardiganshire in 1850. The Llanelly conference was formed in 1852, given the large number of branches in the area,⁶⁴ and was re-named as Carmarthenshire conference in 1863. (For more detail on the conferences see Appendix A). By 1864 Wales was divided into eight conferences, but this had reduced to four by 1872 and from 1874 the Principality would be made up of a single Welsh Conference.

Emigration

During the nineteenth century almost 90,000 converts to the LDS Church passed through the port of Liverpool,⁶⁵ in 'one of the most successful colonizing endeavors in the history of the United States,'⁶⁶ and Britain considered to be 'the richest recruiting grounds which the Mormons enjoyed in the world.'⁶⁷ Gathering was a mandate delivered by Joseph Smith.⁶⁸ During the first two decades of LDS missionary work in Britain, opposition was often fierce, so gathering offered a means of escape and protection (although until 1847 when *Zion* re-located to Utah Territory, emigrants could expect no immediate relief because of the intensity of persecution in America).⁶⁹ The first group of forty converts left Liverpool aboard the *Britannia* in June 1840; by 1890 more than 400 ships would carry further converts, many especially chartered by the LDS Church.⁷⁰ Such was the volume of LDS emigrants, and so orderly their departure and demeanour during the voyages, Samuel W. Richards, emigration agent for the church, was called before a government committee of enquiry into emigrant ships in 1854.

⁶⁴ Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. *Llanelly Branch General Minutes 1855-1861*. Ref: LR 11757 11. <<https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/search>> [Accessed 14 April 2020]. The branches were: Cwmaman, Llandybie, Llanelly/Dre, Llangadog, Llansaint, Mynyddcerrig, Pembrey, Pontyberem, Pontnewydd, Pontyeats, Seaside/Glanymor, Vangalch, Wainbaglan.

⁶⁵ Fred E. Woods. 'The Tide of Mormon Migration Flowing Through the Port of Liverpool, England.' *International Journal of Mormon Studies*. 1 (2008)60-86.

⁶⁶ William Warren Sweet. *The Story of Religion in America*. (New York: Harper & Row, 1930).

⁶⁷ W.H.G. Armytage. 'Liverpool, Gateway to Zion' *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, 4.2, (Apr., 1957) 39-44.

⁶⁸ *Doctrine and Covenants* 29:7 (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981). 'And ye are called to bring to pass the gathering of mine elect; for mine elect hear my voice and harden not their hearts. Wherefore the decree hath gone forth from the Father that they shall be gathered in unto one place upon the face of this land, to prepare their hearts and be prepared in all things against the day when tribulation and desolation are sent forth upon the wicked.'

⁶⁹ Malcolm Thorp. 'Sectarian Violence in Victorian Britain: The Mormon Experience 1837-1860.' *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library* 70 (Autumn 1988) 135-47.

⁷⁰ *Mormon Immigration Index*. <<http://mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu>> (Accessed 1 December 2019)

Dennis⁷¹ documents the first large scale emigration of 316 Welsh converts aboard the *Buena Vista* and *Hartley* in February 1849. Of almost two hundred individuals for whom he provides biographical detail, eighty-nine (28%) were known natives of south-west Wales. He also notes that ‘nearly every issue of *Prophwyd y Jubili* and *Udgorn Seion* contained continual exhortations for the faithful to set their affairs in order so they could emigrate.’⁷² So although *Udgorn* ceased publication in 1862, this message had been delivered consistently for almost two decades. He also notes that ‘The bulk of converts to Mormonism in Wales came from the laboring class and were in no financial position to emigrate.’⁷³ Costs included not only passage by ship but also the purchase of an outfit to make the 1,000-mile land crossing. This was first accomplished by wagon train, then between 1856 and 1860 with handcarts, and subsequently 1861 to 1868 with ‘church trains,’ which involved experienced teamsters meeting emigrants at the furthest point west of the railroad and taking responsibility for the company.⁷⁴ As Cannon explains, ‘these trains were run for the benefit of the deserving poor. Those who had sufficient means came independently, although many traveled with the others for the sake of fellowship and the advantage of going with experienced plainsmen.’⁷⁵ Thereafter the intercontinental railroad⁷⁶ was used, reducing travel time from Britain to Utah Territory to weeks instead of many months, particularly as steamships had begun to replace sail: by 1867 passage from Liverpool to New York took only twelve days.⁷⁷ Transportation links in Wales had also improved with railways across Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire by 1863,⁷⁸ although costs did not necessarily tempt emigrants to abandon the coastal routes to Liverpool.⁷⁹

⁷¹ Ronald D. Dennis. *The Call of Zion. The Story of the First Welsh Mormon Emigration*. (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1987).

⁷² Ronald D. Dennis. ‘The Welsh Mormon Exodus.’ *Planet* (Feb/Mar 1989) p. 41.

⁷³ *Ibid*, p.41.

⁷⁴ Totals for the 8-year period include 1,913 wagons with 2,389 men, who crossed the plains to bring the immigrants safely to Salt Lake City. Some 6,600 more emigrants took advantage of this type of assistance than the straight-through rail route in the following eight years.

⁷⁵ M. Hamlin Cannon. ‘Migration of English Mormons to America.’ *American Historical Review* 52.3 (April 1947) p. 455.

⁷⁶ Completed in 1869 at Promontory Summit, to the north of the Great Salt Lake in Utah.

⁷⁷ *Star* 29, 26 p. 409.

⁷⁸ By this date the following towns in south-west Wales had rail links: Carmarthen, Haverfordwest, Llandeilo, Tenby and Pembroke. Cardiganshire is noticeably absent from the list. The lines to Pencader and Aberystwyth would not be completed until 1867.

⁷⁹ Timothy Leunig. ‘Time Is Money: A Re-Assessment of the Passenger Social Savings from Victorian British Railways.’ *The Journal of Economic History*, 66.3 (Sep. 2006), 635-673.

To assist those unable to raise such funds, in 1850 the LDS Church established the Perpetual Emigration Fund – a system of loans re-payable as and when the beneficiary could afford it. Larsen described it as a ‘covenant of cooperation,’⁸⁰ as the debts repaid were made available for further loans. The system was not without challenge, the *Star* noting in 1864 the ‘large amount of indebtedness’⁸¹ which had accumulated as repayments were not always promptly made.

Beginnings of a decline

Van Orden⁸² notes a general decline in both emigration and convert baptisms for Britain from 1870, when numbers fall consistently below 1,000 per year in both cases. The decline is somewhat uneven,⁸³ but after 34,000 baptisms recorded in Britain across the 1840s, by the 1860s this figure only reaches 16,000 and drops to 6,000 per decade for the 1870s and ‘80s. A further drop in the 1890s is followed by something of a resurgence in the first decade of the twentieth century. Emigration figures peak at 12,300 in the 1850s and thereafter show a decline, with the exception of the 1880s. Van Orden attributes these falling numbers to a general and growing apathy in Britain towards religion, including among the LDS. Arrington and Bitton⁸⁴ note that the LDS Church desperately needed to boost its strength in America; it could later return in strength to the wider world, in order to re-establish there. Emigration was the vehicle through which the Saints gathered to draw strength from each other in the West, but which left the LDS Church in Britain sadly depleted. Stark suggests,

The success of Mormon foreign missions has long been overlooked outside the Mormon community because until well into the 20th century Mormon converts gained abroad were aided in coming to the United States. That prevented the build up of local congregations.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ Gustive O. Larsen. ‘The Story of the Perpetual Emigration Fund.’ *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol. 18.2 (Sep., 1931), p. 185.

⁸¹ *Star* 26,38 p. 601.

⁸² Bruce Van Orden. ‘The Decline in Convert Baptisms and Member Emigration from the British Mission after 1870’ *BYU Studies Quarterly* 27.2 (Apr. 1987) 97-105.

⁸³ Richard L. Evans. *A Century of “Mormonism” in Great Britain*. (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1937).

⁸⁴ Leonard J. Arrington and Davies Bitton. *The Mormon experience: a History of the Latter-Day Saints*. (London: Allen and Unwin, 1979).

⁸⁵ Stark. *The Rise of a New World Faith*. p. 20.

A missing history

Ratcliffe claims that ‘Welsh Mormons have apparently escaped the attention of both scholars and students alike.’⁸⁶ He cites Williams’ work as the only studies of the Welsh LDS between 1927 and Lewis’ 1956 *Y Mormoniaid*⁸⁷ – both of which were written in Welsh and therefore not widely accessible. The exception is Evans’⁸⁸ history of the first century of the LDS Church in Britain, where two chapters on Wales largely trace only Dan Jones’ personal history and contribution. Heaton⁸⁹ outlines the early development of the British Mission and discuss patterns of conversion and LDS Church growth. But while his discussion provides a useful consideration of social influences on the fortunes of the LDS movement – purportedly across Britain – the data are entirely anglo-centric.⁹⁰ Aaron attributes lack of interest in the history of the LDS Church in Wales to the hostility of non-conformist ministers to ‘Yankee evangelists’ who were poaching their congregations. He speculates that ‘When Mormon missionaries returned to Utah, taking their converts with them, the Welsh Non-conformists heaved a sigh of relief. Out of sight they were soon out of mind.’⁹¹ And Conway notes that even LDS historian Arrington’s account of the economic development of the Mormons ‘strangely enough, barely mentions the Welsh.’ (p. 310)⁹²

This situation changed markedly in the late 1980s with the work of Dr Ron Dennis,⁹³ which has been substantial and is now an essential reference for the history of the LDS Church in Wales. Increased interest in the topic also undoubtedly stemmed from the 1987 sesquicentennial celebrations of the establishment of the LDS Church in Britain.

⁸⁶ Michael Ratcliffe *The Growth and Distribution of the Latter Day Saint Church in Wales, 1840-1860*. (Unpublished Masters thesis, University of Oxford, 1989) p. 4.

⁸⁷ T.H. Lewis. *Y Mormoniaid yng Nghymru*. (Cardiff: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1956).

⁸⁸ Evans. *A Century of "Mormonism."*

⁸⁹ Heaton and others. ‘The Making of British Saints in Historical Perspective.’ *BYU Studies Quarterly*, 27.2 (Apr. 1987) 119-135.

⁹⁰ When remarking on the geographic location of early converts they note that ‘*proselytizing efforts were more successful in certain industrialized sections of the Midlands than in London, Scotland or Ireland,*’ but make no reference to the industrial areas of South Wales; and, although remarking that ‘*converts were also more likely to come from revivalist organizations than from the well established and increasingly middle class oriented mainline churches,*’ they make no reference to the non-conformist stronghold of Wales, which provided such fertile ground for early missionaries.

⁹¹ Wil Aaron. *Welsh Saints on the Mormon Trail. The Story of the Welsh Emigration to Salt Lake City during the Nineteenth Century*. (Talybont, Ceredigion: Y Lolfa, 2019)

⁹² Alan Conway (Ed.). *The Welsh in America. Letters from the Immigrants*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1961), p. 310

⁹³ Retired Professor of Portuguese at Brigham Young University, Dr Dennis is a direct descendant of Dan Jones and learned Welsh in order to be able to read and translate the works of Dan Jones and other early members of the LDS church. Founder of the <http://welshmormon.byu.edu> website.

Dennis' *Call of Zion*,⁹⁴ provides an overview of the development of the LDS Church in Wales up to 1845, with an emphasis on the role of Dan Jones. Both Betts'⁹⁵ and Ratcliffe's⁹⁶ studies of the LDS Church in Wales focus on the period 1840-1860. Likewise the chapter on Wales in Bloxham⁹⁷ ends at 1860. Thus although the history of the LDS church in its first two decades is relatively well documented, little has been published on the remainder of the nineteenth century. (This phenomenon is not restricted to Wales: Harris' study⁹⁸ of Manchester Mormons ends at 1860, as does Foster's analysis⁹⁹ of the British press coverage of the nineteenth century LDS Church; Morris' study¹⁰⁰ of Staffordshire Mormons ends at 1870.) Studies of those first two decades allocate suitable space to south-west Wales as the LDS Church maintained a healthy presence there, with a wealth of primary source material. However for the remainder of the nineteenth century there is a notable absence of reference to the LDS in south-west Wales. Davies'¹⁰¹ discussion of Mormon spirituality in Wales includes an overview of the LDS Church during the nineteenth and into the twentieth century, but makes little specific reference to the three counties of the southwest.¹⁰²

⁹⁴ Ronald D. Dennis. *The Call of Zion. The Story of the First Welsh Emigration*. (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1987).

⁹⁵ Betts. *The Price of Faith*.

⁹⁶ Michael Ratcliffe. *The Growth and Distribution of the Latter Day Saint Church in Wales, 1840-1860*. (Unpublished Masters thesis. University of Oxford, 1989).

⁹⁷ V. Ben Bloxham and others. *Truth Will Prevail*.

⁹⁸ Jan Harris. *Mormons in Victorian England*. (Unpublished Masters thesis. Brigham Young University, 1987).

⁹⁹ Craig L. Foster. *Anti-Mormon Pamphleteering in Great Britain 1837-1860*. (Unpublished Masters thesis. Brigham Young University, 1989).

¹⁰⁰ David M. Morris. *The Emergence and Development of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Staffordshire, 1839-1870*. (Unpublished PhD thesis. University of Chichester, 2010).

¹⁰¹ Davies, *Mormon Spirituality*.

¹⁰² As a rather crude indicator, a brief glance at the index shows only three references each to Carmarthen and Cardiganshire, six to Llanelli and one to Pembrokeshire, compared with twenty-three references to Merthyr Tydfil, eight to Swansea, five to Monmouthshire, thirteen each to Pontypool and Cardiff.

Chapter One: Methodology

The claim of originality for this research derives from the demonstrated lack of a published overview of the history of the LDS Church in south-west Wales from the 1860s until the close of the century. This dissertation provides that overview, based on the primary source material of missionary journals.¹⁰³ Originality is strengthened by the lack of known published academic studies¹⁰⁴ based on these journals, one of which only became publicly available in December 2019. Davies' overview of the LDS Church in Wales¹⁰⁵ includes the last four decades of the nineteenth century. However his primary reference is the *Millennial Star*, and as will be shown below, south-west Wales appears with increasingly rarity in the *Star* as the century advances.

The specific **research questions** for this study are:

1. What was the state of the LDS Church in south-west Wales between 1864 and 1903,¹⁰⁶ as denoted by membership and member levels of engagement?
2. What missionary efforts occurred in south-west Wales 1864-1903 to evangelise and spread the 'restored gospel,' as presented by the LDS Church?
3. To what extent did LDS missionaries encounter opposition to the practice and dissemination of their faith?
4. To what extent did emigration of LDS converts occur from south-west Wales between 1864 and 1903?

This is an exploratory study, in that the state of the LDS Church across the four decades of interest has never been laid out; nor has the primary source material been extracted as a body for study.

¹⁰³ It should be noted that this is not intended as a theological discussion. LDS doctrine will only be considered as it has a bearing on the history of the LDS church in south-west Wales, or for contextual clarification. It might also be noted, that I am a life-long member of the LDS Church, but have sought to present data objectively.

¹⁰⁴ Some few of the journals (e.g. those of Barry Wride and Timothy B. Davis) have been used as the basis of a family history but these have been published or printed privately and for distribution largely among the subject's descendants.

¹⁰⁵ Douglas James Davies. *Mormon Spirituality. Latter Day Saints in Wales and Zion. (Nottingham: University of Nottingham, 1987).*

¹⁰⁶ The starting point of 1864 has been chosen because Betts ends his study of the LDS in south-west Wales at 1863.

Structure of the dissertation

The remainder of the dissertation is structured as follows: this brief methodology is followed by Chapter Two which presents and discusses data on the status of the LDS Church in south-west Wales, in terms of member numbers and engagement. Chapter Three discusses missionary activity in south-west Wales, and Chapter Four emigration from south-west Wales between 1864 and 1903. The Conclusion summarises findings in relation to the research questions overall, and makes recommendations for future research.

Data collection

The first source consulted for this research was the *Millennial Star*¹⁰⁷, as it was published continuously in Britain from 1840 to 1970. It contains doctrinal discourses, information about the expanding Church, and items specific to the British Isles. This latter category includes: the arrival and assignment of missionaries; correspondence from Church leaders; reports of conferences; and, statistics for membership and emigration. As a weekly publication it offered the most consistent potential source of information for beginning to address the research questions.

A list of **254 missionaries** who were assigned to Wales between 1864 and 1903 was generated from announcements in the *Star*.¹⁰⁸ Their names were individually cross-referenced against the 1830-1930 *Missionary Database*¹⁰⁹ and the *Welsh Mormon History* website¹¹⁰ for the existence of personal writings. Both sites link to *Family*

¹⁰⁷ Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. *Latter Day Saints' Millennial Star, 1840-1900*. <<https://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/digital/search/collection/MStar>> [Accessed 14 April 2020]. The 40-year period covered by this dissertation included over 2,000 issues of the *Star*, with 52 or 53 issues each year. Hereafter the *Star*.

¹⁰⁸ Chapter 9 [In translation: *The Missionaries from Utah 1865-77*] of Geraint Bowen's *Ar Drywydd Y Mormoniaid* also provided information on some fourteen missionaries who served in Wales between 1865 and 1877, all of whom were listed in the *Star*.

¹⁰⁹ Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. *Missionary Database. 1830-1930*. <<https://history.churchofjesuschrist.org/missionary/?lang=eng>> [Accessed 14 April 2020]

¹¹⁰ Welsh Mormon History. <<http://welshmormon.byu.edu>> [Accessed 14 April 2020]. Some five thousand individuals who converted to the LDS church in Wales and emigrated to the USA – largely in the nineteenth century - are included in the *Immigrants* database on this site. In addition to basic biographical information and photographs, the database provides links to biographies and other writings related to each individual (where available).

Search,¹¹¹ which was also checked for relevant material. The personal writings of missionaries were seen as potentially rich primary source material, to flesh out the general framework extracted from the *Star* with local detail and personal perspectives.

Other sources consulted included:

- The *British Mission History*,¹¹² which includes manuscript histories of many nineteenth century LDS branches
- Branch records for LDS congregations in Southwest Wales,¹¹³ where available
- The National Library of Wales *Welsh Newspapers Online*¹¹⁴
- the online catalogues of County Archives across Wales.

The Brigham Young University (BYU)¹¹⁵ dissertation database¹¹⁶ and the UWTSD library catalogue were also consulted, for relevant prior research and background material.

This trawl of potential sources revealed **twenty-two missionary journals**, of which twenty were accessible.¹¹⁷ Very few of the missionaries worked exclusively in southwest Wales; thus relevant material ranged from one or two pages of transcription per journal to almost one hundred. This far exceeded expectation. The possibility of using just one missionary journal per decade was rejected, as the wealth of information derives from the combined material. It was also difficult to select a single journal as either more than one in the decade was very detailed, or there were none such. Journals

¹¹¹ Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. *Family Search*. www.familysearch.org [Accessed 14 April 2020]

The family history website of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, this is a wiki site with public access. Hundreds of thousands of individual records are contained in the database.

¹¹² Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. *British Mission history 1841-1971*.

<<https://eadview.lds.org/findingaid/001072964/>> [Accessed 14 April 2020]

¹¹³ Manuscript histories for some of these branches are available as digital images, as part of the *British Mission History 1841-1971*.

¹¹⁴ Online at: <https://newspapers.library.wales/>

¹¹⁵ BYU in Provo, Utah, is one of the universities in the USA which is owned and run by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints; it has a large department of History.

¹¹⁶ Brigham Young University. Scholars Archive. *Theses and Dissertations*.

<<https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/etd>> [Accessed 14 April 2020].

¹¹⁷ Two journals were identified as extant but not publicly available – one due to technological difficulties. Contact was made with the owner of the other journal, requesting access, with a positive response. However, at the time of writing the material was still not available. All journals were accessed as transcriptions, rather than the original handwritten versions, even when digital images of the handwritten pages were available online. In two cases I transcribed the journals. This was for purely practical reasons. In electronic format they are easier to read and mine for relevant information. The issues which this approach raises are considered in the *Conclusions* chapter.

were fairly evenly distributed across the time period, although no journals covered the period 1897-1903. Appendix B lists the missionaries known to have served in south-west Wales 1864-1903 and indicates those whose journals have been accessed.

It must be acknowledged that other relevant primary source material undoubtedly exists, which was not explored. Among the records on the *Welshmormon* website, for example, there are many personal writings other than missionary journals. Bitton's guide to LDS biographies¹¹⁸ also references Welsh sources. However space restrictions would not allow for inclusion of such additional material. A further consideration was access. In 1993 Pretty would lament that 'no local records have survived this [Welsh] side of the Atlantic.'¹¹⁹ The archives of the LDS Church History Library in Utah certainly hold additional material relevant to the research questions, but in non-digital format. Where access would have required international travel, for practical reasons it could not be considered. Fortunately with the development of technology, almost all of the journals were directly accessible in digital format.

The end date for this research was determined by the absorption of the Welsh Conference into the Bristol Conference in 1903, after which date it is impossible to disaggregate Welsh statistics, let alone those for south-west Wales.¹²⁰ Davies¹²¹ also notes that as of this time period, emigration to Utah began to be discouraged, signalling a new era in the wider LDS Church, and therefore a natural stopping point for this study.

¹¹⁸ Davis Bitton. *Guide to Mormon Diaries & Autobiographies*. (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1977).

¹¹⁹ David A. Pretty. 'A Mormon Testimony -The Journal of Edward Roberts, 1845-1865.' *Montgomeryshire Collections* 81, (1993) 111-120.

¹²⁰ It would be 1921 before Wales was reorganized as an administrative unit in the LDS church.

¹²¹ Davies. *Mormon Spirituality*. p. 56.

Chapter Two: Membership and engagement

This chapter will consider the evidence for LDS Church membership in south-west Wales from 1864 to 1903, relying heavily on the missionary journals for detail.

First, in the broader context, as late as 1860, the Llanelli conference still consisted of eleven branches with some 200 members,¹²² and between October 1864¹²³ and March 1865 more than forty individuals had been baptised in the area, suggesting a continuing and lively presence for the LDS Church there. An 1868 meeting of the conference had to be held in the Athanaeum,¹²⁴ as the LDS *Capel y Saint* in Island Place was too small to accommodate the numbers attending.¹²⁵ In 1869 the branch was reported¹²⁶ ‘in good condition.’

There were still six conferences in the Welsh District, until 1870,¹²⁷ and conference meetings were held across south Wales. However by early 1874¹²⁸ amalgamation had produced a single Welsh Conference,¹²⁹ and thereafter no conference meetings were held even as far west as Swansea.¹³⁰ Indeed only three brief references are made to south-west Wales in conference reports published in the *Star* for this decade. This minimal reference to south-west Wales is noteworthy, and even diminishes, with references eventually relating only to missionaries assigned to the area. The *Star*

¹²² Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. *Llanelli Branch General Minutes 1855-1861*. Ref: LR 11757
11. <<https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/search>> [Accessed 14 April 2020] p. 233.

¹²³ *Star* 26, 46, p. 767.

¹²⁴ Now part of Llanelli central library.

¹²⁵ *Star*, 30, 39, p. 700.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.* 31, 19, p. 294.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.* 26, 37, p. 583. The six conferences included in this report were Carmarthen, Glamorgan, Monmouthshire, North Wales, Pembrokeshire and Swansea. The term *District* is sometimes used to mean a collection of branches (within a Conference), to which an Elder might be assigned for his missionary labours. Here it is used to denote a collection of conferences within the British Mission.

¹²⁸ Andrew Jenson. ‘Welsh Conference.’ in *Encyclopedic History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*. (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1941). Jenson states that this amalgamation occurred in December 1873. However the Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire conference continue to be reported in the *Star* as separate entities until 1877.

¹²⁹ Although by August 1864 the Hawarden branch had been included in the Liverpool conference, as evidenced by a letter from Septimus Sears, president of that conference published in the *Star*, 26, 3, p. 573.

¹³⁰ During the 1870s Conference meetings were held variously in Aberdare, Pontypridd and Merthyr Tydfil. From 1880 to 1891, with just two exceptions (when meetings take place in Pontypridd) Welsh Conference meetings were held in Merthyr Tydfil, and from 1891 onwards conference meetings are held exclusively in Cardiff. This information is based on Conference Minutes reported in the *Star*. In Merthyr Tydfil meetings were held at the Railway Inn; in Cardiff conference meetings were almost all held in Cathays Terrace where the headquarters of the Welsh conference was located.

occasionally includes an apology for having to edit conference reports due to space restrictions, so reference may have been made during conferences, or in reports submitted, but excluded during the editorial process.

Church membership in Wales

Figure 1. LDS Church membership in Britain 1864-1903.¹³¹

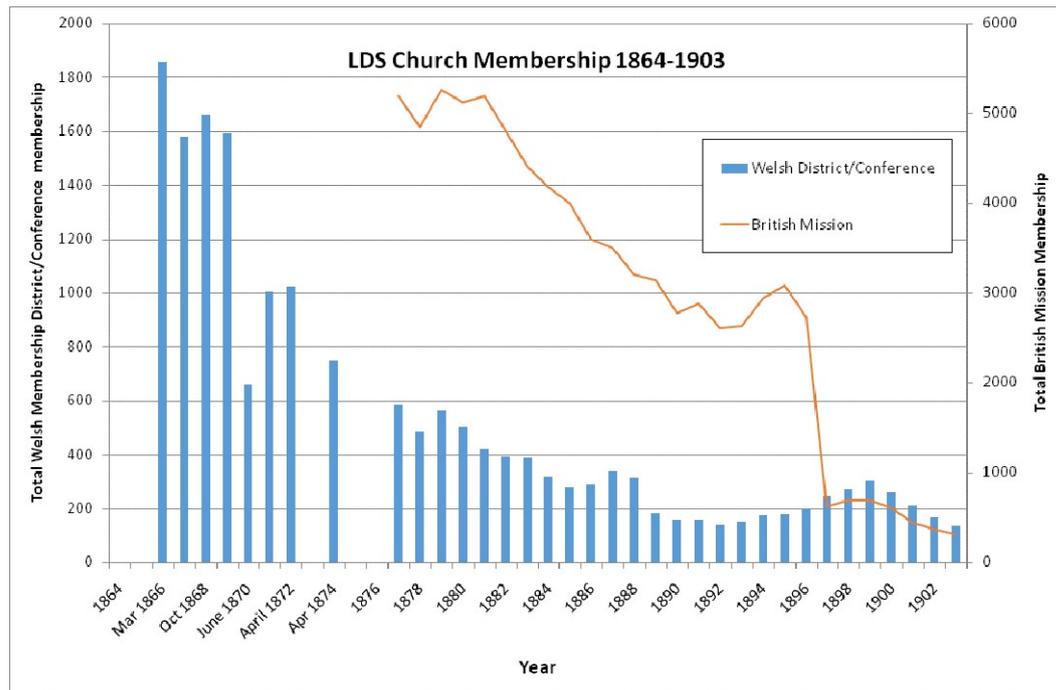


Figure 1 shows membership for the Welsh District/Conference(s) for the time period of interest. Numbers remained above one thousand until at least 1872, but had dropped below 500 by 1881. The declining trend largely continued until the early 1890s when a small surge can be seen, followed by another decline from 1900, very closely mirroring patterns of membership for the whole of the British Mission. In conjunction with this decline in membership, the number of Welsh branches naturally dropped. From forty-eight in 1867, fewer than twenty remained by 1878. The 1882 religious census¹³² listed

¹³¹ Unless otherwise stated, statistics were reported at year end. The missing data is due to the *Star* not publishing statistics for those years. Indeed a standardised proforma for reporting was only developed in the mid 1870s.

¹³² *Return of the Churches, Chapels and Buildings Registered for Religious Worship in the Registration Districts of Great Britain, showing the Religious Denomination to which Such Churches, Chapels and Buildings Belong.* July 1882.

only three LDS congregations in Wales and these were all in Monmouthshire.¹³³ Although this was again an underestimation, by 1900 the *Star* reported only three.

Conferences and branches

Of the Carmarthen conference Wride¹³⁴ reminisces in 1865: 'This Conference used, in years gone by, to comprise three Conferences,'¹³⁵ and Davies, in 1867 also reflects:¹³⁶ 'many had joined the church in that part... but most had emigrated... and the few who were left were very much scattered. Some had to walk twenty miles to meeting.' Wride refers to the 'remnant' as being 'mostly of old standing in the Church, and old in years also,'¹³⁷ and indeed the population of rural Wales was generally aging due to migration and emigration.¹³⁸ By 1881 Harmon would describe Carmarthenshire members as being 'in a scattered condition,' with some local leaders 'dilatatory in their duties,' suggesting that over the course of about fifteen years there was a serious decline in both numbers and engagement in the area.

Membership statistics are not provided in the *Star* for south-west Wales specifically and branch membership records for the area have generally not survived for the second half of the nineteenth century. Details do emerge from the missionary journals, however, indicating where formal branches continued to operate, or members were still to be found. Place names in bold signify locations where branches of the church are known to have existed prior to 1864.

In the 1860s a large number of locations are referenced in the journals, although it is not always clear whether these are formal branches. In 1866 Parry, visiting south-west Wales in his capacity of president of the Welsh conferences,¹³⁹ refers specifically to the

¹³³ Two premises in Tredegar and one in Chepstow.

¹³⁴ Barry Wride journal p. 34. *The Barry Wride Journals*.

<<http://welshmormon.byu.edu/Resources/pdf/12049.pdf>> [Accessed 14 April 2020]

Wride served as president of the Monmouthshire conference from 1866. See Appendix C for a brief life sketch. Note that page numbers will not be used for missionary journals. The authors did not always number their pages, and transcriptions obtained online are often continuous script. The most consistent means of referencing extracts from the journals is therefore to use the date of each entry.

¹³⁵ *Star*, 27, 43, p. 683.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.* 29, 26, p. 406.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.* 27, 43, p. 683.

¹³⁸ David Williams. *A History of Modern Wales* 2nd edn. (London: John Murray, 1977) p. 260.

¹³⁹ *John Parry: Pioneer, Missionary, Builder. From John Parry's Journal (1866-1868)*.

<http://welshmormon.byu.edu/Resource_Info.aspx?id=2924> [Accessed 14 April 2020] See Appendix C for a

following branches: in Pembrokeshire, **Freystrop**; and in Carmarthenshire, **Wainbaglan** and **Llanelly**. He also preaches at **Pencader**, **Carmarthen**, **Kidwelly** and **Vangalch**, visits members in **Haverfordwest**, and holds a conference at **Sutton**. Wride returns to south-west Wales in 1867 where he visits members at **Vangalch**, **Wainbaglan**, **Kidwelly**, **Haverfordwest**, and **Freystrop**. Morris'¹⁴⁰ brief visits to south-west Wales include: meetings with members in **Kidwelly**; and in **Llanelli**, prayer meetings in member homes, and Council¹⁴¹ and general Saints meetings. He also attends meetings in **Vangalch**, although whether these are Saints meetings or preaching meetings is unclear, and refers to the 'scattered Saints' at **Wainbaglan**,¹⁴² the 'few saints' in **Pencader**,¹⁴³ and the 'few scattered saints' in **Carmarthen**.¹⁴⁴ Morris also visits members in **Brechfa** and **Llanybydder**, **Lampeter** and **Clwtffwrn**.¹⁴⁵ Here he meets 'in Council with the scattered saints who had come from a distance of 12 miles.'¹⁴⁶ Although this picture suggests some fairly isolated members, it does also denote the presence of local priesthood holders, without which Councils were not held. In Pembrokeshire Morris refers to members in New Milford, **Haverfordwest**, **Sutton Mountain**, **Narbeth**, Tenby and Whitland. By this point in the mid-1860s Carmarthenshire conference was reported as having 195 members,¹⁴⁷ and Pembrokeshire eighty.¹⁴⁸ Although these figures are much lower than previous

brief life sketch. The conferences were: Glamorganshire, Monmouthshire, Swansea, Carmarthen, Pembrokeshire, and North Wales.

140 Elias Morris. *Elias Morris Journal*, Parts I & II. (1850-1869).

<http://welshmormon.byu.edu/Resource_Info.aspx?id=199> [Accessed 14 April 2020]. See Appendix C for brief life sketch.

¹⁴¹ Council meetings were generally attended by local leaders and holders of the priesthood (Elders, Priests, Teachers, Deacons) and were, as the name suggests, meetings where the affairs of the local branch were considered.

142 Morris journal, 10 October 1865

143 *Ibid.* 21 July 1866.

144 *Ibid.* 23 July 1866.

145 *Ibid.* 22 July 1866. Clwtffwrn is presumed to be part of Drefach (Llanwenog) as a place of this name can be seen on Cardiganshire Ordnance Survey map reference XLI.NW (Surveyed: 1887), and this matches journal entries in terms of nearby locations visited prior or subsequent to visits to Clwtffwrn. For example, John Evans records [June 20 1880]: 'my self and John Evans went to Clwt fwrn to meating...then in the after noon I laft to go to Lanpetear distans five mils.' This is the exact distance between Lampeter and Drefach (Llanwenog).

146 Morris journal, 9 August 1868

¹⁴⁷ *Star* 27, 33 p. 543. By contrast, Glamorgan conference had 828 members, Swansea 286, Monmouthshire 338 and North Wales 132 members.

¹⁴⁸ *Star*, 28, 18, p. 273.

decades,¹⁴⁹ it is worth noting that individual branches were often not large. Gibbs, for example, recorded of Haverfordwest in the 1850s: ‘our little branch never numbered more than twenty or thirty at a time.’¹⁵⁰

Lewis¹⁵¹ was president of Swansea conference, but made regular, brief visits west. He too visited **Vangalch**, preaching to members and the public, and also met with individual members, including. ‘Brother Fisher of Morfa Farm’ [south of Kidwelly], who features in earlier and later journals. John in 1871 reports preaching in **Llanelli** ‘to a small assembly’¹⁵² and appointing a new branch president there, indicating the continuing existence of a formal branch. In February 1872 he visits individual members in **Llanelli** but also reports of a meeting in **Haverfordwest**: ‘17 saints were present, mostly my old friends whom I had not seen for 15 years,’¹⁵³ The annual statistics for 1874¹⁵⁴ show one branch in Pembrokeshire conference, with William White as president and twenty-eight members. John returns to Llanelli in May 1872, visiting members ‘from house to house,’¹⁵⁵ including a family in **Waunbaglan**.¹⁵⁶ Martell¹⁵⁷ in the mid-1870s makes direct reference to three branches: **Carmarthen**,¹⁵⁸ **Clwtfwrn**,¹⁵⁹ and **Llanelli**,¹⁶⁰ which latter at the time had only twelve members. Lewis refers to various members in **Llanelli** and to both Council and Saints meetings there at the home

¹⁴⁹ In June 1851 Cardiganshire conference was reported with 126 members and Pembrokeshire 215; in 1852 Llanelli conference was reported with 398 members. Contemporaneous figures for Carmarthenshire conference are not available.

¹⁵⁰ *Autobiography of George Francis Gibbs*, p. 1

<<https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/memories/KWZT-8QX>> [Accessed 1 Mar 2020].

¹⁵¹ John S. Lewis. *Missionary Journal of John Saunders Lewis – missionary to Britain 1868-1870*. (Courtesy of Mrs M. Neimann. One volume only) Not currently in the public domain; used with permission. See Appendix C for brief life sketch.

¹⁵² David John journal, 5 July 1871. John, David. *David John Diaries 1856-1908*. Brigham Young University Library Special Collections. <<https://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/digital/collection/SCMisc/id/9982>> [Accessed 14 April 2020]. See Appendix C for a brief life sketch.

¹⁵³ David John journal, 18 October 1871.

¹⁵⁴ *Star* 37, 18, p. 122.

¹⁵⁵ D. John journal, 2 May 1872.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 5 June 1872.

¹⁵⁷ Thomas Charles Martell. *Journal of Thomas Charles Martell (1875-1876)*.

<http://welshmormon.byu.edu/Resource_Info.aspx?id=2602> [Accessed 14 April 2020]. See Appendix C for a brief life sketch.

¹⁵⁸ Martell journal, 17 July 1875

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 24 September 1875.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 21 November 1875. Entry reads: ‘Attended saints meeting at the residence of John Jones... After the meeting I called a Counsel of the brethren... By enquiring into the affairs of the branch [emphasis added] I ascertained the number of members to be as follows...’ Unfortunately the transcript does not provide this figure.

of John John.¹⁶¹ He also visits individuals: Ralph Fisher,¹⁶² the Jones at Llwynyfilltirfach,¹⁶³ the Thomas family in **Lampeter**;¹⁶⁴ the Hughes and Williams at **Waunbaglan**.¹⁶⁵ Of the two hundred individuals named in Martell's journal, about half appear to be church members in south-west Wales.¹⁶⁶ Martell also visits a number of disaffected members,¹⁶⁷ and tries to obtain records from a former branch president only to be told, sadly, they had been destroyed in a fire. Both Martell and Lewis make occasional forays deeper into Cardiganshire, but make reference to only one member: 'We left for Aberystwyth ... and on our way stoped at **Llanrhystid** and called on Sister Davis.¹⁶⁸ Evans would likewise visit her in 1880.¹⁶⁹

By the 1880s, journal entries appear to only reference individual members rather than formally organised branches. Indeed in 1883 Mantle, reporting on two months in south-west Wales, states: 'There were no branches of our church in any of those counties.'¹⁷⁰ He adds: 'We found a few old people who at one time were 'Mormons' but had lost the spirit of their religion.' Evans reported of Carmarthenshire:¹⁷¹ 'the saints were very much scattered, extending over a radius of 50 miles.' Likewise in 1881, Harmon reported¹⁷² that he had found 'but few saints....[although] A number of the prodigal

¹⁶¹ Walter J. Lewis journal, 17 February 1878. *Walter J. Lewis Mission Journal*. Brigham Young University Library Special Collections. <http://archives.lib.byu.edu/repositories/14/digital_objects/4665> [Accessed 14 April 2020]. See Appendix C for brief life sketch.

¹⁶² T.D. Evans likewise visits Ralph Fisher. He also visits William White in Neyland, and spends most of his time in Pembrokeshire. However his journal entries are somewhat scant and he more than once writes '*Went to Wales*' when he is already in Pembrokeshire, so the exact place he is referring to is difficult to determine.

¹⁶³ Near Trimsaran.

¹⁶⁴ W.J. Lewis journal, 18-21 February 1878.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid*, July 1878

¹⁶⁶ Martell appears to have a pattern of referring to those who are not members of the church as *Mr.*, *Mrs.*, *Rev.*, etc. However it is not always obvious whether the remaining individuals referred to are members of the church as he sometimes gives them the title *Brother* or *Sister*, but sometimes simply refers to them by christian name and surname. With so many common Welsh names in use, it is also not always possible to decide for certain whether he is referring to the same person or two different individuals, e.g. whether Thomas Davies is the same person as T. Davies or Brother Thos. Davies, even if he is writing from the same town.

¹⁶⁷ Martell journal, Saturday July 17th 1875: '*I made it my business to visit and talk to David Evans who once was a President of the Carmarthen branch. I found that he had lost the spirit of the Gospel, and tried to reclaim him*' and December 25th 1875: '*I visited the house of Abednego Jones who had in times past been presiding over a conference but now out of the church.*'

¹⁶⁸ W.J. Lewis journal, 31 July 1878.

¹⁶⁹ John Evans journal, June 23 1880. *John Evans Journal*, parts I & II.

<http://welshmormon.byu.edu/Resource_Info.aspx?id=2008> [Accessed 14 April 2020]. See Appendix C for a brief life sketch.

¹⁷⁰ *Star*, 47, 11 p. 171.

¹⁷¹ *Star* 42, 36 p 570.

¹⁷² *Star* 43, 9, p. 137.

were returning to the fold.' The wider context for this situation was one of agricultural depression, with south-west Wales accounting for more than one-third of agricultural land in Wales, but only 23% of the population, indicating how sparsely populated much of the region was.¹⁷³ In 1880 Evans had recorded that in Llanelli he 'held a meting of 5 membears and one outesidear.¹⁷⁴ By 1886 however Thomas would remark,¹⁷⁵ 'I went to See John John and his Family... he is the Only Later Day Saint in **Llanelly**.' Of a meeting at **Mynyddygarreg** near Kidwelly, Thomas writes,¹⁷⁶ 'very few presant ... Only One Man presant exept My Self. with five Sisters .'¹⁷⁷ Lewis refers to member Griffith Williams in **Mynyddygarreg**, a Brother Stephens in Llanddarog, and Brother Thomas in Pantyfer near **Brechfa**, all of whom he visits more than once. Thomas writes optimistically of **Vangalch** however:¹⁷⁸

Expecting to Paptise three persons... we waited a few hours then the Boys Came... I went to the watter & Baptised James Williams a Boy Ten years of age. and also Edwin Thomas a young Man 18 years Old & Eliazer Williams aged 20 years.

In **Lampeter** Reese finds 'Bro. Thomas'es family all pleased to see me,'¹⁷⁹ However in his references to Pembrokeshire it is unclear whether any of the individuals he refers to are church members. Richards¹⁸⁰ likewise refers to no one specifically as *Brother* or *Sister* but visits Llwynyfilltirfach, Pantyfer, and John Thomas in **Lampeter**.

Clwtffwrn in Cardiganshire is a location which continues to feature in journal entries. A branch is known to have existed there from the 1850s.¹⁸¹ In 1880 Evans records: 'went to Clwtffwrn to meating prasant in the meting six.'¹⁸² However in 1886 Lewis

¹⁷³ BPP (1882), Royal Commission on the Depressed Conditions of Agricultural Interests, Report from Her Majesty's Commissioners on Agriculture, London, Queen's Stationary Office.

¹⁷⁴ J. Evans journal, June 14 1880.

¹⁷⁵ J. Thomas journal, 24 October 1886.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 15 May 1887.

¹⁷⁷ It is worth noting that John Thomas' extensive journals refer to a large number of individuals as *Brother* or *Sister* but analysis of all of their locations would be beyond the scope of this study.

¹⁷⁸ J. Thomas journal, 23 May 1887.

¹⁷⁹ William G. Reese journal, 29 Jan 1883. *William Griffiths Reese Diaries, 1882-1883*. Brigham Young University Library Special Collections. <http://archives.lib.byu.edu/repositories/14/archival_objects/154257> [Accessed 14 April 2020] See Appendix C for a brief life sketch.

¹⁸⁰ David Richards. *Journal of David Richards*. <http://welshmormon.byu.edu/Resource_Info.aspx?id=3654> [Accessed 14 April 2020]. See Appendix C for a brief life sketch.

¹⁸¹ David John visited there in 1858 on his first mission in Wales, after his conversion to the LDS faith.

¹⁸² J. Evans journal, June 20 1880.

reported:¹⁸³ ‘Bro Thomas drove us downyn to [Clwtffwrn] but... there was no Saints come to gather.’ In 1887 Williams¹⁸⁴ visits and tries unsuccessfully to determine the standing of the eleven remaining members.¹⁸⁵ Early in following year he reported the branch was ‘not in a good condition... they had suspended their meetings until more favourable weather,’¹⁸⁶ having held none for two months.¹⁸⁷ This issue of meetings would arise in Llanelli where Martell felt the need to exhort local leaders ‘to hold meetings more often – weekly – and preach the gospel.’¹⁸⁸ Meetings not only offered opportunities for members to gather, but also to be taught and strengthened in their faith. Likewise in 1887 Thomas would report of Brechfa:¹⁸⁹ ‘they dont keep Meetings but Every two weeks,’ and in 1896 Griffiths would note of Waenbaglan,¹⁹⁰ ‘they had no meetings for about two years.’¹⁹¹ But by May 1888 Thomas was able to record of Clwtffwrn: ‘Members were manifesting a desire to make a start for the better [and] wished to learn more concerning the principles of the Gospel,’¹⁹² suggesting a lack of confidence in their own knowledge as well as a desire to move forward. This mirrors earlier comment from Richards:

The saints in [Carmarthen] conference have not the advantage that many of our brethren and sisters have because many of them are scattered... from twenty to thirty miles from where there is a branch. They need teaching.¹⁹³

Morse was soon able to report that Clwtffwrn ‘seem[ed] to be on the improve.’¹⁹⁴ The president of the branch being in poor health, another Elder was appointed to preside temporarily, suggesting a formally organised unit. Davis visits Clwtffwrn fairly regularly on Sundays to meet with members, with varying degrees of success. On a Sunday in 1889 however he notes, ‘we proceded to Clwtffwm, to hold meeting... Three of

¹⁸³ D. Lewis journal, 21 February 1886.

¹⁸⁴ William D. Williams. A journal is known to exist but was not available at the time of writing.

¹⁸⁵ *MS history of Clwtffwrn branch*. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. *British Mission history 1841-1971* [Ref: LR 1140 2] <<https://eadview.lds.org/findingaid/001072964/>> [Accessed 14 April 2020].

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.* p. 49.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.* p. 54.

¹⁸⁸ This is confirmed in the minutes of the Llanelli branch: *Elder Martell advised the Saints that lived in Llanelly to hold meetings... every Sunday, and if it was convenient to hold Prayer Meetings during the week. He also advised the Saints that lived far from town to hold meetings on Sunday, where it was most convenient, and for the members to strive to meet with each other one Sunday each month.*

¹⁸⁹ John Thomas journal, 21 March 1887.

¹⁹⁰ Variously spelled as Wainbaglan, Waunbaglan, Wainbogland, Waenbaglan in missionary journals. Wainbaglan Woods are just to the north of Pembrey.

¹⁹¹ W.T. Griffiths journal, 2 June 1896.

¹⁹² J. Thomas journal, May 1888.

¹⁹³ *Star* 26, 3, p. 44..

¹⁹⁴ Richard J. Morse.

the local Brethren and two Sisters were together, we had very good time, the Lord was with us.¹⁹⁵ Apart from **Clwtffwrn** and **Lampeter**, however, very little reference is subsequently made to members in Cardiganshire.

Brechfa is another location which continues to feature in journals. Lewis records in 1886 that he attended the funeral of Evan Morgan's wife Ann, both long-time members. He reports there was a¹⁹⁶ 'larg congregation of people,' but these are likely to have been from the community as the Morgan family had lived there for many years. Later that year D.F. Thomas reported of the area¹⁹⁷ that 'he had succeeded in reviving an old branch of the church and entertained strong hopes of being able finally to baptize some.' John Thomas records the following year that in Brechfa 'we were Eight persons present and got a Saints Meeting had the Sacrament¹⁹⁸ administered.' Later that year the Brechfa branch was reported as having only five members, as 'there had been very much opposition.'¹⁹⁹ However an LDS meeting was held in the nearby Felingwm school in 1889,²⁰⁰ suggesting the need for premises larger than a house. Thomas also records repeated visits and overnight stays at the house of 'Sister Ann Evans Horeb Near Brechfa'²⁰¹ and her daughter.

Other locations referenced in the 1880s include Davis visiting members at Llwynylltirtfach, **Vangalch**, **Mynyddygarreg**, and **Furnace** [Llanelli] in 1888. Evans records attending a meeting at a member's home in **Llanelli** where the Sacrament was administered. And Morse refers to **Kidwelly** as a branch in 1889: 'Meetings were being

¹⁹⁵ Timothy B. Davis. *Missionary journal of Timothy Bowen Davies. Wales. 21 February 1888 through 12 May 1890*. <<http://welshmormon.byu.edu/Resources/pdf/18798.pdf>> [Accessed 14 April 2020]. See Appendix C for a brief life sketch.

¹⁹⁶ D. Lewis journal, 25 February 1886

¹⁹⁷ *Star* 48, 38 p. 605.

¹⁹⁸ J. Thomas journal, 19 June 1887. The term *Sacrament* is used in the LDS church for the equivalent of Holy Communion in the Church of England or Catholic church. In modern times it consists of bread and water; in the nineteenth century wine was sometimes used. Partaking of the Sacrament is considered an opportunity for members to renew their commitment to God.

¹⁹⁹ MS history of the Brechfa branch p.28. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. *British Mission history 1841-1971* [Ref: LR 1140 2] <<https://eadview.lds.org/findingaid/001072964/>> [Accessed 14 April 2020].

²⁰⁰ T.H. Lewis. 1959 'The Mormons in Brechfa.' *Carmarthen Antiquary* 3.1, p. 28.

²⁰¹ J. Thomas journal, 22 May 1888.

held at different places through the branch.... A good influence prevails,²⁰² suggesting that there were several engaged LDS households in the vicinity, although no branch records exist for this time period.

In the early 1890s, Jones²⁰³ makes reference to only eight members by name in his journal,²⁰⁴ although he also records visits to former members, and others whose family members have emigrated. He also visits the Whites in **Neyland** (Pembrokeshire), but these are the adult children of William and Ann who emigrated in 1876 and featured regularly in earlier journals. While friendly to the missionaries, they attend a local non-conformist chapel. Jones makes no mention of specific branches, nor does he give anyone the title of *President*, supporting the idea that there are no longer any formally organised congregations. At a meeting of the Welsh conference in Cardiff in 1896 Treharne²⁰⁵ and Griffiths²⁰⁶ were assigned to Carmarthen district, which then included Pembrokeshire. The Statistical Report for that year shows only three branches in the Welsh conference, but with a membership of 177, many members would be living in areas with no local organisational structure. Indeed Treharne notes from **Llanelli**, 'if we wish to meet with Brothers and Sisters we have to take a tramp over the Penbre Mountain to the house of Bro [Isaiah] & Sister Hughes,²⁰⁷ in **Wainbaglan**, where 'the Saints use to meet often before they Emigrated out.'²⁰⁸ He refers to only three other individuals as 'Brother ' or 'Sister:' Ralph Fisher near **Pembrey**, and the Joneses of Llwynyfilltirfach. He too refers to others in the area who were formerly members of the church, and many who had relatives who had emigrated. During his 1895-97 mission,

²⁰² MS History of the Kidwelly Branch. p.65. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. *British Mission history 1841-1971* [Ref: LR 1140 2] <<https://eadview.lds.org/findingaid/001072964/>> [Accessed 14 April 2020].

²⁰³ Evan Jones. *Evan Jones (1839-1935) LDS Missionary Diary South Wales 1893-1895*. Joseph Soderborg (Ed.). [West Glamorgan Archive Service](#) Reference: GB 216 D/D Z 931/1. See Appendix C for brief life sketch.

²⁰⁴ Brother and Sister Jones at Llwynyfilltirfach near Trimsaran, Evan Morgan near Brechfa, Ralph Fisher near Kidwelly, Brother Stephens, Llanddarog; Brother Thomas near Llangyndeirne; Brother and Sister Hughes in Trimsaran.

²⁰⁵ William Treharne. *Missionary Journal of William Treharne*. <<https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/memories/LVPD-W54>> [Accessed 14 April 2020]. See Appendix C for a brief life sketch.

²⁰⁶ William T. Griffiths. *William Thomas Griffiths.[Abridgement of Appointments]*. <<https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/memories/KW8J-27N>> [Accessed 14 April 2020]. See Appendix C for a brief life sketch.

²⁰⁷ Treharne journal, 22 March 1896.

²⁰⁸ W.T. Griffiths journal, 5 June 1895.

Price²⁰⁹ spends only a short time in south-west Wales, where he visits his own relatives as well as relatives of LDS emigrants. He refers to only one person as ‘*Brother*’ in **Pembrey** and three in **Llanelli**,²¹⁰ suggesting no other engaged members in the vicinity. It is worth noting that of the approximately 370 adult baptisms²¹¹ recorded for the Welsh Conference from 1864 to 1901²¹² only one is recorded for south-west Wales: a John Mason of Saundersfoot in 1899.²¹³

Davis notes the effects of the scattered nature of the members, in terms of further recruitment. In 1890 in Llanwnnen he

turned in to see Mr. Evan Davis. I talked to him for long time he being very favorable, and was about to be Babtized but was little affraid of being allone.’²¹⁴

Just two days later he visits a Mrs Evans between Dehewid and Mydroilin: ‘she said that She believed us, and would be glad if there was a Branch of the Church there, that She would be babtized.’²¹⁵ The following day near **Clwtffwrn**: ‘I called at a House where there was a Lady very favorable to us. She said that she would come into the church if there were eny place to meet together with the Saints.’ We might question whether this is the true reason given for reluctance to commit to baptism, but the comments do highlight the meagre nature of membership at the time, and the lack of organised branches.

Member engagement

In February 1864 Davies reported of Carmarthenshire Conference that members were:

²⁰⁹ Daniel E. Price. *Diary of Daniel E. Price, Missionary to Wales 1895-1897*. Parts 1-3. <http://welshmormon.byu.edu/Resource_Info.aspx?id=2720> [Accessed 14 April 2020]. See Appendix C for a brief life sketch.

²¹⁰ D.E. Price journal, 16 June 1896 and 14 August 1895 respectively. Thomas Williams in Pembrey; William Treharne, Brother James and wife in Llanelli.

²¹¹ This number is approximate because baptisms are occasionally marked as ‘re-baptism’ or ‘*ail*’ – a common enough practice when members had ceased to attend for some time and wished to re-commit to church membership. These have not been included in the total but do make a definitive count difficult.

²¹² Welsh Conference Membership Records, Early to 1913.

²¹³ Otherwise baptisms are confined to the Merthyr Tydfil and Cardiff areas, and the Rhondda and Monmouthshire valleys. Although still relatively few, there are more baptisms recorded in North Wales than in the south-west.

²¹⁴ T.B. Davis journal, 7 April 1890.

²¹⁵ *Ibid*, 9 April 1890.

‘manifesting a disposition to ... live up to their religion and to contribute a portion of their means towards the building up of the latter day kingdom.. The priesthood are united in all things.’²¹⁶

Later that year ten baptisms were recorded.²¹⁷ However it was also reported that, ‘in some instances a decided improvement might be effected especially in the financial affairs.’²¹⁸ Of Pembrokeshire conference it was said that some members ‘were slow in performing [their] duties... neglected their meetings and refused to pay their tithing or assist the work by their contributions. Others however were faithful.’²¹⁹

The payment of tithes was one of the expectations of LDS Church members as a sign of their commitment.²²⁰ These monies were forwarded to British Mission headquarters in Liverpool, often by missionaries. When Parry was called to preside over Wales in 1866, his letter of appointment²²¹ advised:

make yourself familiar with the condition and circumstances of the Saints ... see that they are not oppressed by the collection of tithing or donation... counsel all who have means,... to pay tithing.²²²

In 1867 he would report: ‘The Saints in this district are mostly of the working class, and poor... [but] neither do they neglect other funds, such as Poor and Mission Funds and Tithing.’²²³

Missionary journals offer only scant detail with regard to tithing, many making no reference at all. Lewis ²²⁴ preaches the law of tithing - in south-west Wales and elsewhere - but makes no reference to receiving any. In the mid-1870s Martell records four instances of collecting tithes, in amounts ranging from 6*d.* to 10*s* 6*d.* with at least half of the donations from one family. However neither his contemporary Evans, nor Lewis who succeeds them, report collecting tithes. Evans in 1880 records visiting a

²¹⁶ *Star* 26, 14, p. 220.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.* 26, 4, p. 768.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.* 26, 20, p. 315.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 315.

²²⁰ The practice of paying tithes was first established in the LDS Church in 1838.

²²¹ During this period the LDS church headquarters for the British Isles was at 42 Islington in Liverpool. See Ronald G. Watt and Kenneth W. Godfrey. ‘“Old 42”: The British and European Mission Headquarters in Liverpool, England, 1855–1904.’ *Mormon Historical Studies*, 10.1 (Spring 2009) 87-99.

²²² Letter dated 7 December 1866, transcribed into J. Parry journal, 31 December 1866.

²²³ Letter dated August 13, 1867. Published in the *Star* 29, 38, p. 574.

²²⁴ J.S. Lewis journal, 22 May 1870.

sister in Llanelli who 'paid five shilins tithing.'²²⁵ This is the only reference he makes to tithing while in south-west Wales although he preaches on this topic elsewhere during his mission. In 1887 Thomas records:²²⁶'I did talk a good deal about Tithing to [...] & to his Father ... but it his Hard to get them to Understand that it his their duty to pay it hear.' Otherwise Thomas makes no reference to tithing in south-west Wales, although he too speaks of it elsewhere.

In addition to tithes paid into central funds, members were expected to support the missionaries locally. An entry from Thomas' journal shows that the financial circumstances of missionaries could differ substantially:

Elias²²⁷ and me got words becaws I Called the Oatmeal bread truck... Said I Should be very thankfull for any thing I get. I told him I was as thankfull as he ever done be... he Can Easeyly talk has he has Means that he Can get any thing to Eat... and that I Cannot do.²²⁸

Many journal entries witness that members give financial support to the missionaries, generally in small amounts. Some families seem to make more generous and frequent donations, presumably based on their means. Evans records small donations from members in Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire, 'for which I was very thankful as I was out of money.'²²⁹ However he also records receiving donations from the general public. After preaching outdoors in Marloes (Pembrokeshire) to a large group, 'people came forward to shake hands... and gave me money, some two pence, some three pence, and one person gave me a shilling.'²³⁰ This was evidently common practice, and as Evans also records paying '6 pance for supar and sixpance for bed'²³¹ at the *Bull* in Carmarthen, these types of donations were not insignificant. Harmon reported of his work in south-west Wales²³² that 'In some places they met with kindness, food and lodging being supplied them, but in others they could get neither of those comforts.' The scattered condition of the members could partly account for this lack of support. But

²²⁵ Evans journal, May 31 1880.

²²⁶ J. Thomas journal, 28 August 1887.

²²⁷ This would appear to be a local member Elias Davies from Swansea, frequently referred to in Thomas' journal, who sometimes accompanies him in his missionary work. Davies was what might be referred to as a 'member missionary' – that is, he was not called to the work full-time.

²²⁸ J. Thomas journal, 16 February 1888.

²²⁹ T.D. Evans journal, 20 July 1875.

²³⁰ *Ibid*, 22 July 1875.

²³¹ *Ibid*. June 9 1880.

²³² *Star* 33, 43, p. 680.

Treharne would note in Llanelli in the mid 1890s: ‘the majority complain of dull times that is a scarcity of money because there so many without regular employment.’²³³

Non-monetary support was also important to missionaries, who most often stayed at member homes. Of the White family in Neyland, Evans records, ‘they gave us supper and a good bed’²³⁴ – a kindness often repeated according to his journal and Martell’s, and of other members across the counties. Missionaries might also occasionally be offered a lift in a member’s cart, thus saving shoe-leather or train fares. Given the distances the missionaries covered, this type of support was also far from insignificant.²³⁵ Parry in 1878, notes that many members in south Wales were ‘very poor’ and ‘often in need of the necessaries of life, but they felt to do all the good they could to build up the kingdom.’ Supporting the missionaries in these practical ways was surely among the good he had in mind.

Members also opened their homes for meetings to be held. Evans refers to holding ‘*cottage meetings*,’ particularly when he was unable to obtain a hall or other meeting place. Martell also notes that members would sometimes accompany him to public meetings and preaching visits, and this is in keeping with advice from the *Star*²³⁶ that missionaries should encourage local elders to play their part. The *Star* subsequently acknowledges member support: ‘As a rule the Saints do the very best they can under the circumstances for the comfort of the brethren and their goodness and hospitality are appreciated.’²³⁷

Recurrent references to church members being ‘*poor*’ raises the question of socio-economic status. Evans and others refer to various member occupations, including butcher, tailor, farmer, collier, and stone mason. With the exception of collier, these would be considered non-industrial skilled occupations - unsurprisingly given the rural nature of south-west Wales, although the absence of the type of occupations generated by the tinsplate industry in Llanelli is perhaps surprising. While a more in-depth analysis

²³³ Treharne journal, 30 Jan 1896.

²³⁴ Evans journal, 28 June 1875.

²³⁵ As an example, during one week Martell travelled 100 miles, mostly on foot; during another week he travelled about 64 miles. W.J. Lewis records in his journal for 25 February 1878 that he spent the day walking from Lampeter to Carmarthen – a distance of 25 miles.

²³⁶ *Star* 39, 33, p. 520.

²³⁷ *Ibid.* 42, 13, p. 201.

of member demographics is beyond our scope here,²³⁸ it is worth noting that these occupations mirror Betts' findings²³⁹ for south-west Wales between 1840 and 1863. The journals make little reference to wider social circumstances of the time. However, Treharne notes in January 1896, 'the majority complain of dull times that is a scarcity of money because there so many without regular emplymend,'²⁴⁰ and indeed this coincides with the minor crisis in the tinsplate industry²⁴¹ of Llanelli, where Treharne was based.

Publications. The *Star* was the official vehicle of the LDS church in Britain. It was²⁴² 'an expounder of doctrine,.. a teacher of lofty precepts, a bearer of timely news, a minister of comfort and cheer, a messenger of good will.'" Whittaker notes that where members neglected church literature, their acculturation into the LDS faith would have been lacking.²⁴³ Church publications could educate early converts in the finer points of doctrine and instruct them in their duties, particularly when they were often asked to assume leadership responsibilities soon after baptism. This would be very relevant to members living where no branch was organised, and those who did not have the means to attend conference meetings held at a distance.²⁴⁴ Some indication of whether members in south-west Wales were subscribers to the *Star* may be gleaned from the *Star* itself, which from 1864 to 1876, published the debts of the various conferences for 'Books, Stars, etc.'²⁴⁵ The *Star* cost 1d. per week, and the *Book of Mormon* two shillings in 1888. Pembrokeshire conference shows a debt for only one of the thirteen years of reporting (£1. 6s. 1d in 1872) and otherwise shows credits of between a few pennies and nine shillings.²⁴⁶ Carmarthenshire conference showed a debt for four of the

²³⁸ In addition, branch records (which list convert occupations among to other demographics) are generally not available for the period of interest here, where they are generally available for the period 1840-1863. Alternative means of ascertaining occupations of members would be the census records, but this would be a very lengthy process.

²³⁹ Betts. *The Price of Faith* p. 16.

²⁴⁰ Treharne journal, 30 January 1896.

²⁴¹ David Williams, *A History of Modern Wales*, p. 224.

²⁴² Richard L. Evans. *A Century of "Mormonism,"* p. 149.

²⁴³ Whittaker 'The Web of Print.' p. 9.

²⁴⁴ The few absences of missionaries such as Timothy B. Davis from his assigned field of labour in south-west Wales are explained entirely by his attendance at conferences in Merthyr Tydfil.

²⁴⁵ The figures used here are from the December quarter of each of the years, with the exception of 1864 when the only quarter for which figures are published in the *Star* is June. 'Books' might include copies of the *Book of Mormon/Llyfr Mormon* or larger tracts such as *A Voice of Warning*.

²⁴⁶ T.B. Davis journal, 7 February 1889.

reported years,²⁴⁷ ranging from 14s. to £3. 3s. 9d, the largest debts being early on (1864-65). This suggests that church publications were being requested, although requests could be made by missionaries and members. The lower debts in the 1870s could indicate greater promptness of payment, or lack of interest in church publications and therefore fewer orders. It could simply be due to the decline in local membership, coupled with the expense, certainly in relation to the *Book of Mormon*, relative to income. An 1878 editorial²⁴⁸referred to the *Star* as

an absolute necessity for intelligent saints and every one should be encouraged to read it young and old, rich and poor,... those must be very poor indeed who cannot afford one penny per week.

The editorial also stresses the joint responsibility for this situation: ‘brethren and sisters who are more blessed should see that none lack for a STAR.’²⁴⁹ Jeremy as president of the Welsh mission exhorted Welsh members to learn English in order to benefit from church publications.²⁵⁰ Setting the example, he began his first journal in 1852:

I am laboring under some disadvantage to keep my journal in the english language,... but I will do the best I can... foreseeing that my posterity will read and write the english language.²⁵¹

Missionary journals make very few references to the *Star*. Thomas reads the *Star* at different members’ homes, suggesting that subscriptions were held locally. Likewise Richards records that at a member’s home in Lampeter he ‘received a good welcome’ and spent time ‘reading the Star and the Sermon of John Taylor from the Jornal.’²⁵² Jones notes that when he visits Brother Stephens in Llanddarog in 1894 he ‘paid me 10/1 for the Stars’²⁵³ – which at a penny per issue suggests a long overdue payment, and perhaps a long time since Stephens had an opportunity to hand money over to a travelling elder. Price, reporting on his month’s work in June 1896 includes among other items:²⁵⁴‘books given away 1 and loaned 2,’ but whether these are to members or not is unclear.

²⁴⁷ Debts of less than 1s. have not been included here.

²⁴⁸ *Star* 40, 4, p. 59.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.* p. 59.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 25, 49 p. 782.

²⁵¹ Thomas Jeremy journal, [no day given] September 1852.

²⁵² D. Richards journal, 24 January 1882.

²⁵³ E. Jones journal, 26 January 1894.

²⁵⁴ D.E. Price journal, 30 June 1896.

Interestingly, references to the *Book of Mormon*, in either Welsh or English, are not numerous in the journals.

Summary

While specific statistics are not available for south-west Wales, evidence from the missionary journals clearly shows a reduction in the number of formally organised branches and an increasingly scattered membership – a pattern seen across Wales generally. Nevertheless there is evidence that some members continued to keep the commitment to pay tithing and contribute to the maintenance of the church locally, by supporting the missionaries and hosting meetings. There is also some evidence that church publications were subscribed to, despite frequent reference to the limited resources of members. The *Star* in 1891 predicted: ‘if the saints in the paucity of their numbers were to remain scattered and their interests separate, their strength would be divided and they be weakened.’²⁵⁵

This does appear to have occurred in pockets over the years, strength of the faith of individual members, but given the repeated references across the decades to particular individuals and families, it is clear that some members were keeping the faith and welcoming missionaries into their homes.

²⁵⁵ *Star* 53, 17 p. 264.

Chapter Three: Missionary activity

Missionaries were an essential element of the establishment and growth of the LDS Church. Figure 2 shows the number of missionaries assigned to Wales from 1864 to 1903.

Figure 2. Number of missionaries assigned to Wales 1864-1903.



The numbers shown as assigned to south-west Wales may be underestimated, as they have been derived from the missionary journals and references in the *Star*. The two noted between 1901 and 1903 appeared in the 1901 census²⁵⁶ of Carmarthen, their occupations given as *Minister Latter Day Saints*. As the figure shows, the total number of missionaries increased steadily across the three full decades, but for south-west Wales the number appears to drop proportionately during the 1870s, increase in the 1880s and decrease again in the 1890s. With civil war breaking out in America in 1861, only six missionaries were sent to Britain,²⁵⁷ so the total for the 1860s and '70s may be approximately equal. The relatively low number shown for 1901-1903 is likely to be a function of the small number of years represented, however Owen as president of the Welsh Conference noted in 1899,

²⁵⁶ None of the other missionaries listed here appear in Welsh census returns.

²⁵⁷ Cowan. 'Church Growth in England 1841-1914.' p. 214.

We have but twelve Elders for the entire conference, which extends from Llandudno in the north to Cardiff in the south, and from St David's on the west to Abergavenny on the east²⁵⁸

suggesting a general lack of assignment to Wales and by extension south-west Wales.

Preaching the word

Morris in 1865 recorded:

'a feeling ... prevails among many in this county [Carmarthenshire], that all the honest-in-heart have been gathered into the Church... that it is of no use to preach I do not believe in such doctrine as this.'²⁵⁹

In 1864 Teasdale (president of the European Mission) had also noted this tendency, among missionaries and members.²⁶⁰ The challenge of public preaching was recognised: 'Some men experience an instinctive shrinking from this kind of work; ... meeting the contemptuous sneers of a darkened world in a manner so conspicuously public.' Nevertheless the *Star* clearly stated: 'To preach the gospel is the calling of an Elder... not particularly to preach splendid sermons... but to enlighten the minds of the people.'²⁶¹

In 1866 Parry, as president of the Welsh conferences, visited southwest Wales, travelling and preaching with local leaders. In Waunbaglan he preached 'to a house full,' and in Llanelly at the 'Saints meeting room.'²⁶² Although at Pencader he preached 'in the open air to lot of the sectarians, who gave some account of our meetings in the newspaper afterwards, but not favorable,'²⁶³ he preached on the street in Carmarthen and Kidwelly 'to very civil hearers.'

Lewis in the summer of 1878 expressed his intention of: 'preaching wherever we get opportunity ... and in districts where the Gospel has not been preached for many years,'²⁶⁴ suggesting there was ample scope for re-visiting certain areas. At the end of that summer Parry spoke of 'extensive work' having been done during the summer in

²⁵⁸ *Star* 61, 24 p. 383.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 27, 43, p. 683.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 26, 16, p. 248.

²⁶¹ *Ibid*, 32, 32, p. 505.

²⁶² J. Parry journal, May 1-7 1867.

²⁶³ *Ibid*, 16 June 1867.

²⁶⁴ W.J. Lewis journal, 12 July 1878.

‘obscure parts of South Wales,’ with ‘much outdoor preaching.’²⁶⁵ In 1880 Evans reported from Carmarthenshire²⁶⁶ that he had ‘traveled for weeks among strangers holding open air meetings and having good audiences and attention.’ And at an 1881 conference in Merthyr Tydfil,²⁶⁷ Harmon reported that in south-west Wales he ‘had during the past 2 months been assiduously engaged in preaching the gospel, distributing tracts and bearing testimony to the latter day work.’ Preaching often took place outdoors, to accommodate large groups and avoid the cost of renting halls. This was necessarily seasonal, but there is ample evidence that missionaries made use of this method, and that local residents could be responsive.

The missionary journals from the 1860s include only two references to preaching outdoors. As each of these missionaries had wider leadership responsibilities, and made only short visits to south-west Wales, this is perhaps unsurprising. But Lewis preached in Vangalch ‘to about a dozen people on Utah and the Mormons, showing the contrast between us and societies in other places;’²⁶⁸ and Morris in Carmarthen where he ‘had very good attention [and] some promised to be baptized.’²⁶⁹ In 1875 however, Evans preached to a crowd of three hundred²⁷⁰ in Marloes (Pembrokeshire) – a notable feat (or perhaps an over-estimation by Evans) given the size of this fishing village.²⁷¹ He records: ‘the people listened with the greatest of pleasure, although it rained.’²⁷² The local Baptist choir sang during the meeting, and ten days later, by invitation, he preached there again to a crowd of the same size, and likewise serenaded.

D.F. Thomas served almost exclusively in Brechfa and vicinity in the late 1880s, where ‘he had done much private and some public speaking & he found people very willing to listen but slow in believing.’²⁷³ His contemporary and sometime companion Daniel Lewis, recorded:²⁷⁴

²⁶⁵ *Star* 40, 39, p. 621.

²⁶⁶ *Star* 42, 36, p. 570.

²⁶⁷ *Star* 44, 9, p. 140.

²⁶⁸ J.S. Lewis journal, 8 September 1869.

²⁶⁹ E. Morris journal, 6 August 1868.

²⁷⁰ It is worth noting that the figures used here are estimates taken from individual missionary journals and must therefore be considered as approximate.

²⁷¹ *A Topographical Dictionary of Wales* (S. Lewis, 1833) gives the population of Marloes as 427 in 1833 .

The Welsh Church Year Book for 1929 lists Marloes parish with a population of 423.

²⁷² T.D. Evans journal, 22 July 1875.

²⁷³ *Star* 38, 38 p. 597.

²⁷⁴ D. Lewis journal, 20 June 1886.

Bro Thomas and myself went up to the tope of this mountain and here we had plaser of talking to about for hundred of people.... Sadsifid and anxsius to hear us aggin.

The people of the Brechfa area appear to have been particularly attracted to preaching meetings. Thomas records a meeting at 'funnan Garedid' near Brechfa in 1887: 'we think we will have Hundreds of People to listen to us from Llandbythar and mayb from Lampeter and all the Country around.'²⁷⁵ Two days later of another meeting held nearby he estimates attendance at 'Over 100 persons.' And two weeks later he also records: 'we held a Meeting... Near "Llan y bythar" we had about 200 or More very fine people to listen to us.'²⁷⁶ That same summer he records of a meeting near New Inn, north of Brechfa: 'when we got their there was about One Hundred persons Come but before Comencing Meeting their were three Hundred.'²⁷⁷ He notes an apparent change of attitude locally²⁷⁸: 'prejudice has been very great against us but now we are asked to Call with them.' Likewise that summer, again near Brechfa:

One Man Came forward and Offered us a good Place to Preach... he was an Enimie Once but has Come Around and Offered us his Houses So we will be able to find places all the time.²⁷⁹

Ten years later an entry in Davis' journal suggests that good feeling towards the LDS missionaries continued: 'we went to a place when a meeting was apointed,... there were prasant large crowd of People, they ware very well pleased with the Meting.'²⁸⁰ According to Lewis,²⁸¹ in the mid twentieth century local residents still recalled a number of places where LDS missionaries preached: Craig yr Allt north of Brechfa, and Crugmelyn Hill; with baptisms taking place in a pool near Marlais Mill and at Cwm-cerrig-nadd.

During the winter months, preaching meetings were generally held in rented halls, although the cost was sometimes beyond the missionary's purse. Evans records trying to secure Solva Town Hall 'but the price was two pounds. We had no money.'²⁸² The price cited may have been a deliberate deterrent and indicative of local attitude to the

²⁷⁵ J. Thomas journal, 27 May 1887.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 12 June 1887.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 19 June 1887.

²⁷⁸ J. Thomas journal, 25 June 1887.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 17 July 1887.

²⁸⁰ T.B. Davis journal, 1 July 1888.

²⁸¹ T.H. Lewis. 1959 'The Mormons in Brechfa.' *Carmarthen Antiquary* 3.1, p .29.

²⁸² T.D. Evans, journal, 29 November 1875.

LDS missionaries, as Davis reports paying only five shillings for the use of a hall in Llanybydder,²⁸³ and Martell records on several occasions that they were allowed use of a hall free of charge. Davis records mixed responses over the course of just a few days:

started over to Llandyar to ask for the House,... said that he would not let the old Saints to hold meting in it.

Then I tried to get the Bd School of **Llanybyther** ... the Charman Said that he would not give his concent.

Then I started to Pencareg, saw a Mr. Rees . Said that he thought I could get the 3 Houses that the Bd had charge of ..., He would let me know,...

I sent to Llampeter,... called to See Mr. Hughs Noyadd asked him for the priveladge to hold meting in the School House at Llanwnen said yes eny time'²⁸⁴

The official response was not always in line with popular opinion. Later that month in Cwrt Newydd Davis records:²⁸⁵

Had little time in finding the Key of the Chapel, it appeard that the Preacher had tried to put a stop to it, but I succeeded, ... the House became crowded to an overflow.

In October of the same year he reports from Llanybydder, where the presence of a sick woman seemed to preclude holding a meeting: 'The people were disapointed, so we went round and engage the Town Hall, cost us 5s, but the People donated 4s... had very large congregation and good time and made frainds.'²⁸⁶

Jones in the early 1890s makes no reference to holding outdoor meetings, but rather spends his time visiting local members, family and old acquaintances, as well as non-member connections to those who have emigrated. This is also true of Price, Treharne and Griffiths, who make extensive reference to 'chats' and 'gospel conversations,' which is the language then being used by the *Star*. By 1896 the annual statistical reports in the *Star* include the number of gospel conversations held across the conferences, as well as the number of meetings. For the whole Welsh conference only thirty-five outdoor meetings were held during 1896, suggesting a significant drop in this approach to missionary work overall. The number of outdoor and indoor meetings reported remains

²⁸³ T.B. Davis journal, 7 October 1888.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 9 July 1888.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 26 May 1888.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 7 October 1888.

relatively low for 1900²⁸⁷ (185 and 315 respectively), and this appears to be supported by journal entries.

Supporting the Saints

An editorial in the *Star*²⁸⁸ suggests a wider pastoral role for missionaries, beyond that of preaching: teaching in member homes to smaller groups so that individual questions and challenges can be addressed, and so that the missionary can provide more general support. Several missionaries record writing letters for members, most often to family in America. Many entries refer to helping with hay-making, taking livestock to market, threshing, or chopping wood, reflecting the practical realities of the rural lives of the people among whom they served. Martell also records: 'Brother Ralf Fisher having lately buried his brother... who died suddenly, wished me to stay with him... for a few days.' While no doubt also offering sympathy and condolences, Martell spends his time there helping on the farm. Morris while in Llanelly records:

I stayed at Bro Jo Thomas the Tailor untill the 4th of November As his daughter was very sick I stayed up 5 night besides attending the meeting of the branch... she expired after much suffering.²⁸⁹

Likewise Lewis records:²⁹⁰'I administered the sacrament to Sister Thomas and her son Evan, the sick man. also I lide Hands on Sister Thomas for her Health..' Thomas even exercises his trade of tailor for the benefit of his non-LDS landlady: 'got breakfast With Mrs Price did Cut two Pairs of drawres out for her to Make.'²⁹¹ This 'unpretentious style of missionaries from laboring families' may well have helped draw them to 'a similarly situated audience.'²⁹² Many of the missionaries collected genealogical information from family members and local clergy or acquaintance – for themselves and sometimes at the request of friends in Utah. As many of them were emigrants, they also occasionally had family business to attend to. Thus, while preaching was a major responsibility, a practical approach was clearly taken, for both LDS members and non-LDS family

²⁸⁷ *Star* 63, 6, p. 93.

²⁸⁸ *Star* 26, 35, p. 560.

²⁸⁹ Morris journal, 24 October 1865.

²⁹⁰ D. E. Lewis journal, 24 October 1886.

²⁹¹ J. Thomas journal, 16 March 1888.

²⁹² Heaton. 'The Making of British Saints.' p. 121.

members. Figure 3 shows the approximate distribution of locations in south-west Wales where missionaries visited members of the LDS Church.

Figure 3. Locations where missionaries visited members 1864-1903.



Distribution of tracts and other publications

A number of publications were available to LDS church members, and therefore also to the missionaries to help spread the word, in addition to the *Star*. Feather notes that tracts were ‘a common feature of Victorian working class life,’²⁹³ undoubtedly boosted by the reduction in taxes on periodicals early in the century.²⁹⁴ The LDS Church had certainly made extensive use of such while proselytising in America²⁹⁵ and continued to do so in Britain. The missionaries in south-west Wales in the 1860s however, make no reference in their journals to distributing tracts, although again, given the short amount of time spent there and their leadership responsibilities, this type of work would not necessarily fall to them.

²⁹³ John Feather. *A History of British Publishing*. (New York: Croom Helm, 1988), p. 162.

²⁹⁴ Williams, *History of Modern Wales*.

²⁹⁵ David J. Whittaker. ‘Early Mormon Pamphleteering’ *Journal of Mormon History* 4.1 (1977) p. 25.

In the 1870s, Martell makes little mention of tracts, and no reference to the *Star*. Evans records on one occasion that he 'went out tracting' and also had two hundred handbills printed to the effect that:

Mr. Thomas D. Evans of Great Salt Lake City, will deliver a lecture on the falling away and the restoration of the Gospel, to be given at Haverfordwest on the 20th.²⁹⁶

However he makes no specific reference to the *Star*. The minimal reference to tracts could be due to their being such an integral part of missionary work that they need no special mention. In 1871 however, a reminder had appeared in the *Star*:

'distribution of the printed word... is one of the best means of bringing the principles of the gospel to the attention of men and women... this is a reading age and many will read even the works of the church.'²⁹⁷

By 1880, the *Star* refers to the systematic delivery of tracts as 'the renewed powerful weapon now being wielded for spreading the truth,' and reports²⁹⁸ a substantial increase in the number of tracts being ordered and distributed.²⁹⁹

Thomas in 1887-88 makes several references to distributing tracts in south-west Wales – although in small numbers compared to Swansea where on one occasion he and others distributed about 200 tracts – in Welsh and English - during one preaching meeting.³⁰⁰ Teasdale suggests³⁰¹ that Swansea president David Williams order thousands of re-prints of newspapers accounts favourable to the church, for missionaries to distribute to the public.³⁰² Davis makes frequent use of published material. Over the course of three days in October 1888 he records:

Mon 29 Received the Book of Mormon by mail, went round some of the Nabors and got three subscribers.

²⁹⁶ T.D. Evans journal, 16 March 1876.

²⁹⁷ *Star* 33, 21, p. 328.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 42, 6, p. 88.

²⁹⁹ Almost 13,000 between the conferences of the British Mission in less than a month.

³⁰⁰ J. Thomas journal, 1 August 1887. Orson Pratt was one of the early members and leaders of the church in America. In 1856-57 he produced eight tracts on a variety of gospel principles. Previously, while presiding over the church in Europe (1848-1851) he had produced sixteen pamphlets, among them *Divine Authority* and *Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon*.

³⁰¹ 16 November 1887. Letter from George Teasdale in Liverpool to Pres. David Williams in Swansea.

³⁰² Letter from George Teasdale in Liverpool to Pres. David Williams in Swansea. 17 May 1888. Teasdale, George. *British Mission Letters 1887-1888*. Ref: LR 1140 71.

<<https://catalog.churchofjesuschrist.org/assets?id=0e4e7b71-edd1-4004-afaf-60622a5de9a2&crate=0&index=0>> [Accessed 14 April 2020]

Tus 30 I took the Book of Mor and went the Nabors, got few subscribers, gave some Tracks...

Wenstay 31 I again went round with the Book, traveled all Day,... sold two books.

And at the end of his mission, he summarises his work:

I travelled... and held many meetings alone, and during the time I was alone, I sold 55 Books of Mormon, And many (9) voice of Warning, Gave away Thousands of tracks.³⁰³

As the majority of his time was spent in the area between Brechfa, Lampeter and Mydroilyn, this suggests fairly intense coverage of a limited area of south Cardiganshire and north Carmarthenshire.

By 1890 the *Star*³⁰⁴ refers to tracts as 'an auxiliary factor in the missionary labour' and advises: 'too much importance is attached to the number distributed.' Treharne records:

My friends ask if we intend doing any preaching in the Town of Llanelly I said that weather was not very suitable for out door preaching... that our plan is to distribute tracks and get all the conversations we can.³⁰⁵

Tracting largely does not figure in his subsequent accounts of his missionary work, however; his daily entries focus far more on '*pleasant chats*' held with extended family members of his own or of those who had previously left the area for Utah. Stark however, commenting on missionary 'recruitment strategies' notes that 'much more sustained and rapid growth is possible as conversion spreads through pre-existing social bonds'³⁰⁶ And indeed all of the missionaries visit family and former acquaintances in their assigned area, not only to re-new family ties, but also capitalising on the opportunities it gives to speak to an extended audience. Several missionaries also record attending church with their relatives or non-LDS friends for the same purpose.

Price evidently does still believe in the efficacy of tract distribution. Recording just one month of work in 1896 he reports:³⁰⁷ tracts distributed 655, houses visited

³⁰³ T.B. Davis journal, May 1890.

³⁰⁴ *Star* 52, 48, p. 761.

³⁰⁵ Treharne journal, 6 February 1896.

³⁰⁶ Stark, *The Rise of a New World Faith*, p. 26.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 30 June 1896.

255; gospel conversations 23; meetings attended 11.’ This average of more than twenty tracts and at least eight house visits per day suggests concentrated activity. It was apparently not exceptional however. T.T. Evans³⁰⁸ in 1891 records the number of tracts he distributed just to the north: in Newtown 962, and in Builth 700 over the course of two months. Given the population of these towns (approximately 4,000 and 8,000 respectively) this surely comes close to saturation.

From 1896 statistical reports in the *Star* include the number of ‘strangers’ or non-member houses visited. That year more than 209,000 homes were reportedly visited across Wales, with a further two thousand visited by invitation, and more than 97,000 tracts distributed.³⁰⁹ These figures are impressive, but may be questioned in light of Price, as president of the Welsh Conference, recording in his journal for the first six months of 1896: ‘Tracts distributed 48,925,... houses visited 13,472.’³¹⁰ By 1903³¹¹ the *Star* reports that these figures decline to less than 13,000 and less than 400 respectively.

Convert Baptisms

In all this bustle of activity, we may ask whether missionaries referred to making converts to the LDS Church.

Morris reports from Wainbaglan in 1865: ‘John Evans and myself made a pond in a little creek and Baptized Wm and Mary Lewis Ceidryn Flarm confirmed the same at the saints meeting.’³¹² This suggests there were enough members locally to hold a meeting, and that there was local interest. His contemporary Wride makes no reference to baptising in south-west Wales and nor does Lewis who succeeds them, although they baptise more than twenty and a dozen individuals respectively elsewhere.³¹³ Thomas makes

³⁰⁸ Taliesin Thomas Evans.

³⁰⁹ *Star* 59, 6, p. 89.

³¹⁰ D.E. Price journal, 12 July 1896.

³¹¹ *Star* 62, 12 p. 190.

³¹² Morris journal, 11 October 1865.

³¹³ Note that only one year of Lewis’ missionary journal was available although it is obviously part of a larger record.

reference to several individuals who were 'ready' to be baptised but only records baptising three young men while in south-west Wales.

In the mid-1870s, Martell records in his journal only re-baptisms of members who wished to re-commit to their faith. However in a letter to the *Star* he also refers to nine baptisms performed in the month after his journal ends, including one which 'incurred the displeasure of several of my friends the Baptists for robbing their church of one of its most highly respected and faithful members.' He adds: 'There are good prospects for baptizing at Pencader, Lampeter and Llanybydder.'³¹⁴ His contemporary Evans makes no reference to baptism. Lewis in 1878 would record from Lampeter: 'Took a walk for a couple of miles with a young man that had been lately baptized into the church.'³¹⁵ This was Ellis Ellis, who would later feature in Evans' journal as a sometime missionary companion, and whose appointment was listed in the *Star*. None of the journals from the 1890s make reference to performing baptisms in south-west Wales, although the one baptism recorded in Saundersfoot in 1899 does coincide with a reference in the *Star* to Elder J.W. Peters' presence there. Overall, although the necessity of baptism was widely preached, success stories in terms of converts baptisms were few. The *Star* is reassuring however:

The mission of our Elders is to preach the gospel whether it is accepted or rejected. The success of a 'Mormon' missionary is not to be gauged by the number of persons he baptized into the church.³¹⁶

Opposition

Members and missionaries alike are reminded in the *Star* that: 'Truth has always been despised by the majority,'³¹⁷ but missionaries were advised to avoid confrontation.³¹⁸ The extent to which this occurred varied, despite their efforts.

Parry in 1867 notes the contrast with his own previous experience as a missionary in south Wales: 'When I was here before, previous to emigrating, we used to be stoned and

³¹⁴ *Star* 38, 28 p. 444.

³¹⁵ W.J. Lewis journal, 22 February 1878.

³¹⁶ *Star*, 69, 31, p. 614.

³¹⁷ *Ibid*, 26, 40, p. 629.

³¹⁸ *Ibid*, 62, 40, p. 629.

mobbed from one town to another.³¹⁹ Evans had also served a prior mission, in Pembrokeshire in the early 1850s. Of that earlier service he recorded:

a mob got after us and marched us out of town to the music of pans, horns, and bad eggs. They stood on the bridge and held me by the hair of the head over the water.

Betts³²⁰ refers to this type of popular protest as ‘applying a Ceffyl Pren custom to the discontent, providing a ‘degree of legitimacy’ to proceedings.’ And Thorp notes that although some of the most extreme early hostility was experienced in Pembrokeshire, ‘the aim of the persecutors was public humiliation not bodily harm.’³²¹ During his first mission Evans characterised the residents of Cardigan as ‘so rebellious against Mormonism that they frightened the elders and drove them out.’³²² However there were also objections from the authorities. Evans had been arrested for preaching outdoors in the 1850s, and in the mid-1870s, he found that attitudes had not entirely changed: ‘The police told us if we preached on the street that night, he would lock us up.’³²³ Evans’ journal entry from Narbeth in 1875 suggests some continuing opposition to the missionaries there:³²⁴

‘we held a meeting in an old independent chapel. The people would not listen, but asked questions regarding the plurality of wives. I told them I would answer any questions they desired.... we were here to preach... not to quarrel with them, but they whooped and yelled like hell had broken loose and dragged us out by our coats.’

By contrast an 1879 letter from Matthews reports an open air meeting in Llanelli which attracted between 300 and 400 people ‘who treated us with civility and consideration.’ A mild disturbance was easily stilled: ‘the feelings of the people were manifest against the intruder, he was quieted and the meeting proceeded peaceably, the assembly listening to our remarks with interest.’³²⁵

Davis experienced a number of instances of this mild type of opposition. The worst example according to this entry was in Llandyar where the meeting: ‘was

³¹⁹ *Ibid*, 29, 38, p. 574.

³²⁰ Betts. *The Price of Faith*, p. 34.

³²¹ Malcolm Thorp. ‘Sectarian Violence in Victorian Britain: The Mormon Experience 1837-1860.’ *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library* 70 (Autumn 1988) p. 138.

³²² T.D. Evans journal, no date noted.

³²³ *Ibid*, 29 December 1875.

³²⁴ *Ibid*, 9 July 1875.

³²⁵ *Star* 41, 31, p. 495.

followed with lots of Boys [who] capet up their raccate, and was very anoing to all present.... We were trubled continually.'³²⁶

In Aberystwyth, when Evans approached the Mayor with his license to preach he was told 'they had planty of preachers and they did not want eny mor and seaid he all that i have agins you that you are not Satisfied with one wife.' Evans' response is not entirely conciliatory: 'i toulde him that some men was bettear abel to keepe half a dausn wifes than som men to keepe one.'³²⁷ Nevertheless he preached there three times the following Sunday. Within the week he had preached another three times to groups ranging from fifty to one hundred, many of whom 'listened very atentev.' Then in Aberaeron he preached to about one hundred people who 'lisend veary good.' However when after the meeting a man approached and asked about his beliefs, and Evans said he belonged to the Latter Day Saints, he 'went off as saiden as tho he was shot.'³²⁸

Davis reports of a meeting at Dihewid, near Lampeter:

there was one Drunk person there, came there purpose to disturb (one of the leding members of the chapel)... I paid no tantion to him and the People lesend very good, was disgusted with the conduct of this their own member.'³²⁹

He also noted that at a two-hour meeting,

it apear that the Old Man that had charge of the House got tired of us, told the People that they better go home,... that he was going to lock them all in if they did not go right out, but his children toock him off and everything went of smooth.'³³⁰

Some towns appear to be particularly unresponsive to the missionaries' message.

D. Lewis reports of Llandovery in 1886: 'hard place to preach. the people very carless and in diffrant.'³³¹ Likewise Davis reports of Mydroilin, 'The People ar very Religous and ar dull in comprehension, Spiritually dead, had talk with many, they look and lisen, but can't understand.'³³² He asked the schoolmaster to advertise a meeting via the children, but the reply was:

he thought we had been there long ennough, that no one wanted us there; ... And that our religon, and Doctrins was not eccepted with the People, and

³²⁶ T.B. Davis journal, 23 October 1889.

³²⁷ J. Evans journal, 26 June 1880.

³²⁸ *Ibid*, 30 June 1880.

³²⁹ T.B. Davis journal, 8 June 1888.

³³⁰ *Ibid*, 18 November 1888.

³³¹ D. Lewis journal, 1 July 1886.

³³² T.B. Davis journal, 15 April 1888.

that it was en inposession [an imposition] upon the People...We left him in disgust.’³³³

When he tried to sell a book (presumably the *Book of Mormon*) to one of the local clergy: ‘lo! he was highly insulted, said that our doctrin was Herretic, and that he would not look at eny book, nor eny Tract and shut the doore against us.’ Similarly when he offered some tracts to an old man at the coffee tavern,

he burst forth into the fearful pasion, and expresion of the bitterest kind, said He thanked God the Mobs had Killed Joseph Smith.’³³⁴

Thomas makes no reference to opposition in south-west Wales despite his experience of Jarman’s anti-Mormon lectures in Swansea in 1888.³³⁵ Eight years later however Treharne notes the continuing influence of these lectures on attitudes in Llanelli. His landlady’s family visit and despite a pleasant evening, ‘they were disapointed in some things about our people as they had been to hear Jarman or had listend to those who had heard him.’ He is fairly philosophical however: ‘ we can not help having a Jarman now and then that will steal from their employers and when found out run away ... and lie about their betters’.³³⁶

In 1887 Teasdale had written to Swansea branch president David Williams about the church being ‘so wickedly misrepresented’³³⁷ by Jarman. However he also reassured him: ‘a great deal of good will be the result... They have ... advertised us far and wide.’³³⁸

There is some sense in the later journals that local residents have claimed ownership in the LDS Church, as part of their local history. In the 1890s Jones visits members in the more remote areas and three times in as many weeks is

³³³ *Ibid*, 18 November 1889.

³³⁴ *Ibid*, 18 January 1890.

³³⁵ William Jarman (1837-1919), a British convert to the LDS church who emigrated to America, became disaffected, and returned to Britain to set himself up as an anti-Mormon lecturer. In 1888 he was hired to give lectures at the Albert Hall in Swansea. His presentation style was very theatrical, his appearance rather outlandish, and his claims often unfounded. He appeared before magistrates in many of the towns where he preached in both Wales and England and was regularly bound over to keep the peace. In Swansea after at least one of his lectures, a large group from his audience went to the nearby home of LDS Pres. David Williams and threw bricks and threats through the windows. See Susan W. Howard ‘William Jarman: “That Anti-Mormon Apostle of the British Isles”’ *Journal of Mormon History* Vol. 43.1 (January 2017), 59-86, and John R. Sillito, “‘The Goliath of Their Cause’: The B. H. Roberts and William Jarman Debates in England, 1887–1888’ *Journal of Mormon History*, 43.1 (January 2017), 87-110.

³³⁶ Treharne journal, 1 February 1896.

³³⁷ 15 September 1887. Letter from George Teasdale in Liverpool to David Williams.

³³⁸ 21 September 1887. Letter from George Teasdale in Liverpool to David Williams.

shown locations where the LDS met.³³⁹ There is a hint of nostalgia in his entry: 'Two women... showed us the place where the saints use to hold their meetings under a large tree. They said they would like for us to preach there again.'³⁴⁰

In the broader context, by 1891 LDS scholar James Talmage would be asked to give a lecture to the Microscopical Society in London on Utah and the 'Mormons.' This was well received, and Talmage noted the significance of the event: 'Not because I have gained recognition..., but because a representative of the Latter-Day Saints' Church – one of the despised Mormons – has been so received.'³⁴¹ And Davies notes that 'by the close of the nineteenth century the more vituperative form of apologetic was in decline.'³⁴²

Summary

In 1871 the *Star* asks:

Shall we publish the Gospel by in-door preaching? Yes. By out-door preaching? Yes. By conversation in the chimney corner and in the highways and byways? Yes. By conversation in the workshop? Not to the hindrance of daily duties. By distributing tracts and books? Yes. By every legitimate and judicious means.³⁴³

By century's end the report is published:

never in the history of the British Mission have there been so many meetings held. A million and a quarter tracts were distributed last year,... regions that have been systematically tracted ... for the last half century are from time to time adding their quota to the followers of the Gospel.³⁴⁴

Bartholomew³⁴⁵ notes that many LDS missionaries in the 1850s were new converts who were called to proselytise in their home area, and that this partly accounted for their success. Many of these later missionaries were also local converts, the difference being

³³⁹ Once near Llanllawddog, where the missionaries had preached fifty years before and twice near Felingwm, south of Brechfa.

³⁴⁰ E. Jones journal, 25 July 1894.

³⁴¹ Cowan. 'Church Growth in England 1841-114.' p. 228.

³⁴² Davies, *Mormon Spirituality*, p. 52.

³⁴³ *Star* 33, 19, p. 298.

³⁴⁴ *Star* 60, 30, p. 474.

³⁴⁵ Ronald E. Bartholomew. '19th Century Missiology of the LDS Bedfordshire Conference and its Interrelationship with other Christian Denominations.' *International Journal of Mormon Studies* 2. (2009) 108-127.

that they had not only experienced conversion, but also emigration to Zion, and could thus bear witness to the fullness of the LDS faith and life.

Evans notes the failure of the 1904 Welsh religious revival to prevent the decline of religious conviction: 'The greatest need of that hour of God's visitation had been the exercise of the God-ordained agency of preaching the Word of God.'³⁴⁶ Missionary journal entries, supported by reports in the *Star*, evidence that preaching was occurring throughout the time period. But missionaries were doing more – they were also exercising their pastoral role and demonstrating practical Mormonism, by providing support to the broader life of LDS Church members and non-LDS family members.

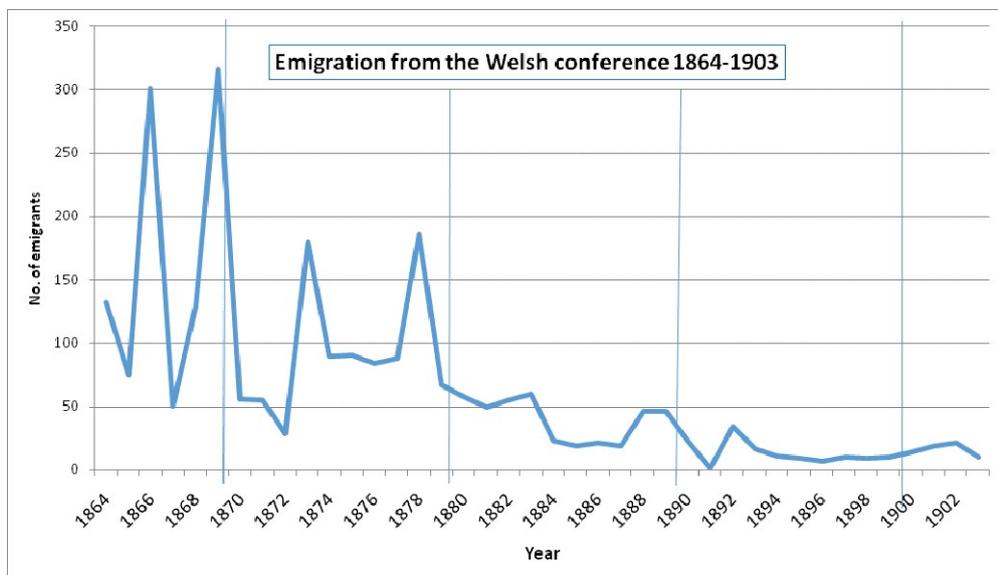
³⁴⁶ Eifion Evans. *The Welsh Revival of 1904*. (Bridgend: Bryntirion Press, 1969), p. 177.

Chapter Four: Emigration

I do not attribute the success of Mormonism solely or even mainly to its... well organized system of emigration, but I do believe that any sect which offered the same or similar inducements would find no want of proselytes.³⁴⁷

Expressed in numbers, emigration was certainly a success in the first decades of the LDS Church in Britain, with Wales no exception. However, 'in the sixties, the pattern changed... cessation of Church aid now resulted in a sharp reduction'.³⁴⁸ Converts were 'too poor to leave their homes unless fully subsidized.' Larsen³⁴⁹ notes the contradiction in this trend: 'the number of immigrants did not increase with the improved facilities for travel' – namely, the use of steamships and the completion of the transcontinental railway in 1869. So although Jeremy wrote from Wales in 1863 of 'never witnessing so much anxiety in the Saints to gather,'³⁵⁰ and White would report of Pembrokeshire that members 'had a great desire to go to the Valleys of the Mountains,'³⁵¹ whether this continued to translate into passenger numbers is questionable.

Figure 4. Emigration from the Welsh conference 1864-1903.³⁵²



³⁴⁷ *Star* 30, 23, p. 365.

³⁴⁸ P.A.M. Taylor and Leonard J. Arrington. 'Religion and Planning in the Far West: The First Generation of Mormons in Utah.' *The Economic History Review*, 11.1 (1958) p. 71.

³⁴⁹ Gustive O. Larson. 'The Story of the Perpetual Emigration Fund' p. 192.

³⁵⁰ *Star* 25, 14, p. 221.

³⁵¹ *Ibid*, 28, 18, p. 273.

³⁵² These statistics were published in the *Star*, with the exception of the following years when they have been derived from ships passenger lists, and must be considered approximate: 1869, 1872-74, 1876.

Figure 4 shows emigration statistics for the Welsh conference. When Abel Evans was appointed president of the conference in 1865 one of his first priorities appears to have been to promote emigration. The *John Bright* sailed from Liverpool in April 1866 with 747 LDS converts, a third of whom were Welsh.³⁵³ However, after this 1866 peak of 301, and another in 1869 of 316, emigration shows a general trend of decline, with numbers falling below 200 per year by 1873, and consistently under fifty per year from 1884. After 1892 there were fewer than twenty each year. The question for this chapter is the extent to which emigration was occurring from south-west Wales, and what was being done to promote gathering.

The *Star*³⁵⁴ in 1864 reminds readers that emigration was ‘for the purpose of fulfilling the commands of God and of becoming fully identified with his people.’ Bowen notes that when John D. Rees and Thomas Ricks were called as missionaries in Britain in 1865, they were specifically enjoined to ‘persuade more Welsh to emigrate.’³⁵⁵ However, missionaries were advised to simply warn and support:³⁵⁶ ‘If a man or a woman ... does not feel it to be his or her duty to gather... no persuasion should be used to induce them to do so.’ Parry, writing in 1867, notes:

The Saints in this district are mostly of the working class, and poor, consequently not able to comply with the call of the Lord to come out of Babylon; but the Lord ... always provides a way ... even by abstaining from forbidden drinks and other Gentile habits.³⁵⁷

By his calculation, giving up these ‘Gentile habits’ would allow members to save as much as ten guineas in eight years - quite enough to emigrate."³⁵⁸

Inducements

Brigham Young³⁵⁹ was keen to stress the practical benefits of emigration: in Britain sickness and fluctuations in trade could easily result in loss of employment, and from there to poverty and starvation. However, ‘in America this is less the case as the country

³⁵³ Geraint Bowen. *Ar Drywydd y Mormoniaid - Golwg ar Hanes y Mormoniaid Cymreig 1840-80*. (Llandysul: Gwasg Gomer, 1999).

³⁵⁴ *Star*, 26, 4, p. 59.

³⁵⁵ Bowen. *Ar Drywydd y Mormoniaid*.

³⁵⁶ *Star*, 26, 4, p. 58.

³⁵⁷ J. Parry journal, 13 August 1867.

³⁵⁸ *Star*, 29, 38, p. 574.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 27, 3, p. 40.

affords greater facilities... for acquiring by industry the necessaries of life.' The 'friends and relatives effect'³⁶⁰ also contributed, as family members who had emigrated were generally eager to encourage those they had left behind.³⁶¹ Benjamin Isaac, writing³⁶² to his parents in Carmarthenshire from Utah Territory, in 1863, relates, 'John [brother] and I are working at our trade... We are earning about 15/- per day... more when we take on a job.' This was a time when the average weekly wage for an agricultural worker in Britain was on average eleven shillings.³⁶³ Even twenty years later, a tinsmith worker in Llanelli would earn only thirty shillings per week.³⁶⁴ John³⁶⁵ likewise wrote,³⁶⁶

I am getting on well here. I now have a house and garden (paid for), I also possess two cows, 10 heifers, 10 sheep and 2 pigs. We have everything for our comfort.

Just six years later he could lay claim to twelve acres of good land, a wagon and two horses, an increase in his dairy stock, and an apple orchard³⁶⁷ This was well beyond subsistence, and spoke to the acknowledged 'land hunger' which prompted a 'constant stream of emigrants' to leave Wales throughout the century.³⁶⁸ Jenkins³⁶⁹ notes the significance of a 'two-horse' household (*lle par o geffyle*) in nineteenth century south-west Wales, which allowed for supplementing one's income through haulage; the additional cow would also have allowed for a cash crop – references which would not have been lost on the older Isaacs.

³⁶⁰ George R. Boyer and Timothy J. Hatton. 'Migration and labour market integration in late nineteenth-century England and Wales. *Economic History Review* 50.4 (1997) p. 701.

³⁶¹ One or more family members would often precede the others, sometimes over the course of many years, until the whole family were re-united. Sadly in this case, the elderly parents died before they were able to emigrate.

³⁶² Letter dated 27 August 1863 from B. Isaac of Spanish Fork City. Isaac, Benjamin. Letters. <http://welshmormon.byu.edu/Resource_Info.aspx?id=3219> [Accessed 14 April 2020]. See also: George Eaton. 'Letters from Latter Day Saints.' *Neath Antiquarian Society Transactions*. 1979) 113-119. Benjamin Isaac (1823-1886) was a native of Whitland (Carmarthenshire) who was baptised into the LDS church in 1848 and emigrated in 1860, settling in Spanish Fork, Utah Territory.

³⁶³ *British Labour Statistics: Historical Abstract 1886-1968*. Department of Employment and Productivity, 1971.

³⁶⁴ 'Wages Disputes.' *Llanelly and County Guardian*, 28 August 1890.

³⁶⁵ John Philip Isaac (1833-1895), wife Rachel Williams (1835-1921). Further details can be found on www.familysearch.org under their respective records – ID LC28-85J and ID KWJJ-TKM.

³⁶⁶ Letter dated 1 September 1863 from Rachel and John Isaac.

³⁶⁷ Letter dated 21 November 1869 from John and Rachel Isaac, Salt Lake City.

³⁶⁸ David Williams. *A History of Modern Wales*, p. 259.

³⁶⁹ David Jenkins. *The Agricultural Community in South-West Wales at the turn of the Twentieth Century*. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1971).

The level of prosperity enjoyed by the Isaac brothers is clear in their offer³⁷⁰ to return to Wales and accompany their elderly parents back to Utah Territory. Their letter includes various inducements: 'it will only take four weeks... you will be wanting in nothing... you will live like a lady.' In an 1873 letter³⁷¹ to their brother who had remained in Wales, however, Benjamin reinforces their purpose in leaving: 'We are living much happier... but we came here because God has disclosed his gospel these latter days.'

The *Star* advised missionaries to exhort members to thrift in order to gather the resources necessary to emigration: 'Instruct [them] to dispense with their hearty costly Sunday dinners, to dispense with beer, ale, strong drinks, tobacco and all unnecessary luxuries.'³⁷² These 'unnecessary luxuries' were part of the Word of Wisdom, given as a health code to LDS Church members, but serving a dual purpose here. From the early 1860s an Individual Emigration Account could be set up in Liverpool, and the *Star*³⁷³ advised women to take charge of family finances and encourage their children to save. Even if they were unable to emigrate that year, they were discouraged from withdrawing funds, but rather to consider them sacred and solely for gathering.³⁷⁴

Emigration from south-west Wales

The missionary journals offer some insight into emigration from south-west Wales. Wride makes no reference to emigration in his admittedly short visits to south-west Wales. However Jeremy in 1863 makes frequent mention, and stresses the need for members to support each other in this endeavour. For example he refers to members contributing to a new suit of clothes for the conference president who is soon to emigrate.³⁷⁵ In 1868 Parry reported:

the president of the branch tells me that he could baptize many hundreds if we could promise to take them to Utah... many outsiders are inquiring

³⁷⁰ Letter dated 5 February 1869 from Ben and John Isaac, Salt Lake City. A letter of 21 November 1869 from John and Rachel Isaac specifies: '*Benjamin is very well off, he has recently put up a sawmill for making lumber, he has saved about three to four hundred pounds, he has many cattle and horses as well.*'

³⁷¹ Letter dated 14 April 1873 from Benjamin Isaac, Spanish Fork.

³⁷² *Star* 28, 29, p. 457.

³⁷³ *Ibid*, 30, 33, p. 521.

³⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 40, 49, p. 776.

³⁷⁵ T. Jeremy journal, 26 January 1863.

whether they may go.'³⁷⁶

This clearly shows that emigration was a topic addressed in meetings, and that it was part of the appeal of the missionaries' message. Various missionaries also record advising or supporting specific individuals in their desire to emigrate. In 1869 Morris records:³⁷⁷

Whitland... stayed over night with Sister Isaac... the old Lady promised that she was going to her Sons in Salt L City the same time as me if her health would continue good

28 [Jan] Walked about 7 miles ... to see John Isaac Nephew As he and his wife was talking of emigratng with the old Mother Isaac.'

These were the Isaacs who had received such glowing written reports from Utah. He also records:

Feb 1 visited... a Widow Lady of the name of Jones who was not in the church but very anxious to emigrate to Utah she promised to be Baptized '³⁷⁸

'17 [March] visited Mr. Christmas and family who have been selling their property for to go to Utah.'³⁷⁹

Ships manifests show that the Hitchins family from Pembrokeshire emigrated via Liverpool later that year,³⁸⁰ but it is also worth noting that other families from south-west Wales are known to have first migrated to the industrial areas of Glamorganshire and then emigrated to Utah Territory in the 1860s.³⁸¹ Migration from rural to industrial areas is a well documented feature of the 1850s.³⁸²

Although Lewis records going to Llanelli on emigration business³⁸³ and hearing gathering preached, neither he nor John make reference to emigration while in south-west Wales. In 1873-74 members from Llanelli and Pembrokeshire appear on ships

³⁷⁶ *Star* 30, 16. p. 250.

³⁷⁷ Morris journal, 27 January 1869.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 1 February 1869.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 17 March 1869.

³⁸⁰ September 1869, Thomas and Hannah Hitchins with their four children, aboard the *Manhattan*.

³⁸¹ Personal research has shown, for example, that Evan John Jones (1820-1881) and his wife Catherine , (nee Griffiths, 1825-1893) who were both from Cardiganshire, met and married in 1843 in Dowlais, and were baptized there in 1846, but it would be 20 years before they were able to accumulate the necessary resources to emigrate.

³⁸² Jones, *Mid-Victorian Wales*, p. 95.

³⁸³ J.S. Lewis journal, 4 July 1870.

manifests leaving Liverpool.³⁸⁴ Martell refers to four members emigrating from south-west Wales, and to receiving emigration funds from a further member in Llanelli branch.³⁸⁵ The *Daughters of the Utah Pioneers*³⁸⁶ would later claim that Martell and Evans, were ‘Among the first Welsh Missionaries from Spanish Fork to go back to Wales ..[and] instrumental in bringing many Welsh saints to Utah.’ Given the few references in Martell’s journal, and the absence of reference by Evans, this is presumably based on the fifty-three Welsh who accompanied them when they returned to America on the *Idaho* in June 1876. This included William White’s family of ten and six others from Pembroke conference.³⁸⁷

Y Drych commented from America in 1877,

It is judged by many that the Mormon Religion is quickly disappearing, but if it is judged by the number of emigrants coming over, that is far from the truth. 186 newcomers, mostly Scots and Welsh left New York at the beginning of last week for Salt Lake.³⁸⁸

The following year³⁸⁹ Parry reported that a ‘large number’ were intending to emigrate from the conference, but this may not have included members from south-west Wales. In the late 1870s Lewis makes no reference to emigration in south-west Wales, although he does refer to it while in other parts of the Welsh conference.

The *Star* in 1880 refers to gathering as ‘among the most potent signs of vitality’ of the church.³⁹⁰ This is an interesting perspective given the decreasing numbers of members and emigrants shown in Figures 2 and 4. Neither Richards, Reese nor D. Lewis make reference to emigration or gathering while in south-west Wales in the early to mid-1880s, although Reese does address the topic while preaching elsewhere. Similarly Evans references gathering or emigration only twice in his journal, the one instance in relation to a former member who he found to be ‘full of un Belefe... he hese no Desiar to

³⁸⁴ From Llanelli, five in June 1873 and two in May 1874, both aboard the *Nevada*. From Pembrokeshire, two in October aboard the *Idaho*, although nine from there were originally listed as intending to sail.

³⁸⁵ Emigration funds are received in the amounts of 3/6 + 25/6 in total the equivalent of 2 adult fares.

³⁸⁶ *Daughters of Utah Pioneers* magazine (Autumn 1949, P 12.) See Bowen, Chapter 9.

³⁸⁷ Total passengers on this voyage: 119, plus nine returning missionaries. See: <https://saintsbysea.lib.byu.edu/mii/voyage/177> White apparently paid for all of the Pembroke conference members listed; his name appears in other ships manifests as paying fares for other Pembrokeshire members.

³⁸⁸ Bowen: *Gwladgarwyr* (Countrylovers) (17th August 1877). “The Destiny of Mormonism “ *Y Drych*

³⁸⁹ *Star* 40, 39 p. 620.

³⁹⁰ *Star* 42, 40, p. 632.

gather with the saints to Zion.³⁹¹ Towards the end of the decade Thomas' journal entries show however, that emigration continued to appeal to both members and non-members.

Sister Evans [of Horeb near Brechfa] is very Ancious to Emigrate & would if her Old Father will help her of about 20. Pounds³⁹²

the Oldest Son is very ancious for going to Utah although he is not in the Church... they have promised me to Save all they Can.'³⁹³

Likewise Davis records from Lampeter:

Mr. Jones toald me he would go to Utah when I would go. I toald him he better be Babtised first. He said probably that he had, but did not say positive.'³⁹⁴

Otherwise, Davis makes very little reference to emigration, and never declares it as a topic of his preaching. Thomas however does record a continued push for gathering: "Spent the Rest of the day Counciling them to Emigrate to Zion and to live their Holy Relegion.'³⁹⁵

The US Congress had passed the Edmunds Act in 1882, which made 'co-habitation' illegal, followed by the Edmunds-Tucker Act in 1887,³⁹⁶ which dissolved the LDS church as a legal entity and seized its assets, including the PEF.³⁹⁷ For emigrants this not only meant loss of financial support, but potentially also detention on arrival in America. Many were classed as paupers because they carried little cash, having pre-paid through passage to Utah Territory where they would not represent a charge on the public purse.³⁹⁸ This continued into 1890 when a U.S. Treasury commission ascertained from the Guion Line³⁹⁹ that LDS immigrants posed no financial threat. The *Star* protested: 'Why this opposition to emigration? Some even go so far as to request parliament to put

³⁹¹ J. Evans journal, 25 November 1881.

³⁹² J. Thomas journal, 20 Feb 1887.

³⁹³ *ibid*, 20 February 1887.

³⁹⁴ T.B. Davis journal, 3 February 1890.

³⁹⁵ J. Thomas journal, 24 March 1887.

³⁹⁶ Conway B. Sonne. *Saints on the Seas. A Maritime History of Mormon Migration 1830-1890*. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1983) p. 143.

³⁹⁷ By this time acquisition of the PEF only meant acquisition of promissory notes as the PEF was in debt.

³⁹⁸ Fred E. Woods 'Norfolk and the Mormon Folk: Latter Day Saint Immigration through Old Dominion (1887-1890)' *Mormon Historical Studies* 1.1 (Spring 2000) 72-92.

³⁹⁹ The Guion Line had a long lasting relationship with the LDS church. It was the company most often used for emigrating Saints, shipping more than 40,000 between Liverpool and New York between 1867 and 1890. See Woods. 'The Tide of Mormon Migration.'

a stop to the Latter Day Saints emigration.⁴⁰⁰ The purported reason was that ‘young girls were induced to emigrate to Utah for immoral purposes,’ but statistics show that ‘fewer young women emigrated than any other class of people.’ A further accusation was that ‘missionaries hold out the inducement to the poor and ignorant that they will better their circumstances by going to Utah’ and although this was clearly a potential outcome, the *Star* was firm in stating:

The elders leave their homes for the express purpose of preaching the gospel and not as emigration agents... they do not come as emissaries of sparsely settled countries holding out inducements to people to... settle up their waste places.⁴⁰¹

1890 was the year the LDS Church published the *Manifesto*, officially ending the practice of polygamy, but Sonne⁴⁰² sees this year as a real downturn for emigration, as the difficulties between the Church and the US government could not be immediately resolved. The dissolution of the PEF restricted access to financial aid for emigration, and perhaps more importantly as Arrington and Bitton note, emigration had decimated member numbers in Britain, generally leaving the ‘*sick, the poor, and the lukewarm*’⁴⁰³ behind. In 1890 George Q. Cannon of the presidency of the LDS Church wrote,

instead of inducing [converts] to come to this country, we really urge our missionaries to dissuade them... It is not to our advantage to have any come who are not thoroughly grounded in the faith.⁴⁰⁴

Davies likewise suggests that we should not stress ‘*deprivation theory*’ too much in relation to emigration: ‘That kind of reductionism strips away too quickly the very human yearning for a quality of experience and fulfilment which is best described as spiritual.’⁴⁰⁵ There appears to be a sense that this yearning had waned in the British Mission as a whole, however the *Star* continues to offer advice on emigration through the 1890s, and missionaries to make some reference to it in south-west Wales.

Jones in 1893⁴⁰⁶ stays overnight at Bank Farm and speaks to Ralph Fisher about emigration, although Fisher never does emigrate. In 1895 Jones also advised the non-

⁴⁰⁰ *Star* 52, 9, p. 136.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid*, p. 136.

⁴⁰² Sonne, *Saints on the Seas*, p. 144.

⁴⁰³ Arrington and Bitton. *The Mormon Experience*, p. 130.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid*, p. 140.

⁴⁰⁵ Davies *Mormon Spirituality* p. 17.

⁴⁰⁶ E. Jones journal, 21 July 1893.

member cousin of John Thomas in Lampeter, to sell up the business, get baptised and emigrate, 'in as much her sister was giving her all the encouragement to come off. She told me that she believe the gospel.'⁴⁰⁷ Treharne in 1895 makes repeated reference to reminiscing with locals about families who had emigrated, but otherwise records neither preaching nor promoting gathering. He does get into conversation with two gentlemen who ask whether obedience to the Gospel necessarily includes emigration: 'we could obey the principles of the doctrine of Christ here... but in order to go on to perfection there was other things that we think usefull.'⁴⁰⁸ Not only was this a reference to temple worship, but the *Star* noted how much more difficult it would be for church members 'to live according to the requirements of their religion if they remained scattered among the nations of the earth.'⁴⁰⁹ There are no references to emigration or gathering in the journal of Treharne's contemporary and oft-time companion Griffiths, and Price only records one conversation about emigration, and that not in south-west Wales. Clearly, emigration is fading as a topic of conversation and focus of missionary work in the 1890s according to these journals. But it is also worth noting that, with mass migration to industrial areas at an end, wages had steadied to about 14s. per week for an agricultural labourer, who could typically now afford a more varied diet, schooling for his children, and a generally better quality of life.⁴¹⁰ Thus the economic drive for emigration had declined.

Summary

A *Star* editorial of March 1893 stated:

In the early days ... as soon as a person received the gospel by being baptized he had a desire to gather with the saints. ... All this is changed. Emigration is now looked forward to by some as a deliverance from poverty and distress... by others to join friends and relatives who have gone to Utah. These matters.... should not be the controlling ideas with emigrating saints.⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 1 March 1895.

⁴⁰⁸ Treharne journal, 11 February 1896. He is referring here to the LDS temples. One of the tenets of the LDS faith is that the highest levels of worship can only take place in temples – of which there were none in Britain until 1958.

⁴⁰⁹ *Star* 60, 22, p. 350.

⁴¹⁰ David W. Howell. 'The impact of railways on agricultural development in Nineteenth-Century Wales.' *Welsh History Review* 7.1 (June 1974) p. 59.

⁴¹¹ *Star* 55, 11, p. 180.

It is clear from journal entries however that emigration was seen as a route to greater prosperity and therefore appealed to both members and non-LDS. However emigration does not appear to account for much of the missionaries' time or efforts, even in the 1860s and '70s. Davies suggests that the 'hostility of orthodoxy to Mormonism was most intense when the movement was most in the public eye through emigration.'⁴¹² However it would be difficult identify cause from this correlation: whether the declining number of emigrants helped to reduce hostility, or the reduction in hostility at least partly accounted for the apparent lack of drive to emigrate.

⁴¹² Davies. *Mormon Spirituality*, p. 52.

Conclusion

This dissertation has provided an overview of the LDS Church in south-west Wales over a forty-year time period. The specific research questions addressed were:

1. What was the state of the LDS Church in south-west Wales between 1864 and 1903, as denoted by membership and member levels of engagement?
2. What missionary efforts occurred in south-west Wales 1864-1903 to evangelise and spread the 'restored gospel,' as presented by the LDS Church?
3. To what extent did LDS missionaries encounter opposition to the practice and dissemination of their faith?
4. To what extent did emigration of LDS converts occur from south-west Wales between 1864 and 1903?

The membership. By the end of the nineteenth century fewer than three thousand members remained in Britain,⁴¹³ one hundred and sixty of whom were in the Welsh conference.⁴¹⁴ It is difficult to even estimate how many remained in south-west Wales, although it is clear from the journals that they were increasingly few, scattered, and largely living in Carmarthenshire, with organised branches disappearing after about 1880. Member engagement most often took the form of support for the missionaries, with reference to certain individuals recurring across multiple journals as local mainstays of the faith. For example, Evan Thomas (*butcher bach*⁴¹⁵) in Lampeter, and subsequently his widow and son, housed, fed and gave monetary support to missionaries from the 1870s to the 1890s.⁴¹⁶ Similarly Evan Morgan and his wife Ann of Brechfa⁴¹⁷ who were baptised in 1848, appear to remain fully committed until their deaths.⁴¹⁸ Ralph Fisher of Bank Farm near Kidwelly and the Jones family of Llwynyfilltirfach likewise recur in journal entries from the 1870s. In Pembrokeshire, the Whites of Neyland welcome a succession of missionaries from the 1860s to 1880s, William White accompanying them to preaching meetings, and introducing them to

⁴¹³ Stark, *The Rise of a New World Faith*. p. 20.

⁴¹⁴ See Figure 1.

⁴¹⁵ So called by Martell. The family lived at 5, High Street, Lampeter.

⁴¹⁶ E.g. Timothy B. Davis.

⁴¹⁷ To date Evan Morgan is the only convert in southwest Wales known to have included the priesthood office (Elder) on his gravestone. When his wife Ann died, the inscription he commissioned read: *Er Cof am Anne gwraig Henuriad Evan Morgan Nanthir ger Brechfa Bu farw Chwef 22 1886 yn 84 oed* [In memory of Anne Wife of Elder Evan Morgan Nanthir near Brechfa Died Feb 22 1886 84 years old]. A number of other gravestones have been identified in Wales and England which use the title *Elder* in the inscription.

⁴¹⁸ Evan Morgan died in 1899, age 92.

friends and acquaintances, until the family emigrate in 1876.⁴¹⁹ Family members continue to welcome missionaries into the 1890s, although they do not appear to maintain their LDS faith.

Missionary activity. The missionary workforce assigned to Wales increased in number from the 1860s through the 1890s, although this does not appear to be the case for south-west Wales. A missionary presence is maintained, however, with a clear emphasis on holding public as well as Saints meetings from the 1860s through the 1880s. Thereafter emphasis on preaching declines, and is replaced by reference to gospel conversations, combined with supportive visits to the scattered membership. Few references are made to convert baptisms. **Opposition** to the missionary work is verbal rather than physical, representing nuisance rather than danger, and appears to cease by the 1890s, when it is often replaced by an almost fond reminiscence.

Emigration. Bowen has suggested that,

Mormon Missionary work had little permanent effect on Wales's religion because in the end it was not the aim to convert society in Wales but proselyting to get the Welsh to accept the teachings and to emigrate from Wales to Utah.⁴²⁰

As membership declined, naturally so did emigration. Although it continued to receive attention in the Welsh conference, missionaries may have felt that gathering had already been preached for so long, those who remained in south-west Wales would surely have already emigrated if that was their intention or if they had the resources.

In 1899 the *Star* declared:⁴²¹ "The British Mission prospers; it is a power in the land, it is one of the training schools of Zion." Membership numbers are clearly not the basis of this statement, although the very challenge of shrinking numbers would provide training enough to test faith and fortitude. Such would certainly be the case in south-west Wales, where individual strength would be needed in the absence of fellowship.

⁴¹⁹ William White, his wife and children emigrated to Utah Territory in 1876. He was a well to do butcher in Neyland and offered to pay emigration costs for any local members who could not afford to pay their own.

⁴²⁰ Bowen. *Ar Drywydd y Mormoniaid* .

⁴²¹ *Star* 61, 52, p. 817.

The primary source material for this research consisted of missionary journals - not a novel source as such,⁴²² and those cited here have mostly been known of and available for many years. However, originality for this study derives from its being the first known overview of the history of the LDS Church in south-west Wales during this time period. While space has only allowed for a broad overview, there is clearly **ample scope for** more in-depth, localised study – or indeed of other areas of Wales as none of the missionaries were exclusively in the southwest. There would also be value in creating a membership database - similar to Morris’ study⁴²³ of Staffordshire - given that branch records are essentially non-existent for the area and time period. Davies notes as a neglected element in studies of religion⁴²⁴ the broader question of how we define religion ‘at the popular level of religiosity.’ Further study could shed light on what it meant to be a member of the LDS Church at a time and place where local organisational structure had largely disappeared. The missionary journals also all present male perspectives; the first female missionaries would not arrive in Britain until 1898 and neither served in south-west Wales. Ulrich notes that ‘Mormonism attracted strong women,’⁴²⁵ and it has been said that LDS women ‘have been more devoted than the men.’⁴²⁶ The personal writings of women can be found on the *Welsh Mormon History*⁴²⁷ website – which would also offer potential for future research.

Research is necessarily guided by the nature of source material available. Jordanova⁴²⁸ refers to the ‘serendipity’ of source material, which often survives ‘accidentally.’ This was indeed a serendipitous rather than systematic selection of journals. Journal-keeping is a voluntary activity, the degree of openness and detail the choice of the author; motivation varies. Entries show varying levels of literacy and emphasis on the secular as well as spiritual aspects of missionary work. The formal style of the educated David John contrasts starkly with the imaginative spelling of the relatively unlettered John

⁴²² Rasmussen draws on a similar set of missionary journals for his discussion of the LDS Church during the same time period but in Lancashire. See: Matthew Lyman Rasmussen. *Mormonism and the Making of a British Zion*. (Salt Lake City, Utah: University of Utah Press, 2016).

⁴²³ David M. Morris. *The Emergence and Development of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Staffordshire, 1839–1870*. (Unpublished PhD Thesis. University of Chichester, 2010).

⁴²⁴ Davies. *Mormon Spirituality*. p. 23

⁴²⁵ Laurel Thatcher Ulrich. *A House Full of Females. Plural Marriage and Women’s Rights in Early Mormonism, 1835-1870*. (New York: John A. Knopf, 2017).

⁴²⁶ William Mulder and A. Russell Mortensen. *Among the Mormons*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1958) p.405.

⁴²⁷ <https://welshmormon.byu.edu>

⁴²⁸ Ludmilla Jordanova. *History in Practice*. (London: Arnold, 2000) p. 28.

Price. The journals from the 1860s were all kept by missionaries with leadership responsibilities whose focus would naturally differ somewhat from the travelling elders. As a whole, however, the journals were seen to provide sufficient rich and varied detail to respond to the research questions.

All of the journals were accessed as transcriptions, many of which were created by non-British descendants of the authors, so potential for inaccuracy is strong. This is exacerbated by the often creative spelling and vague references to location and individuals in the journals. In essentials however these were not seen as significant issues. Unlike journals of earlier missionaries to Wales, very few of those cited here were written in Welsh, and all had been translated through verifiable and creditable means.

Dennis speaks of the: ‘near-demise’ of the LDS Church in Wales: that later missionaries ‘would not experience anything like the success and excitement of the 1840s and 1850s.’⁴²⁹ This is clearly true of south-west Wales. Modernization, urbanization and industrialization have been identified as creating an increasingly secularised society,⁴³⁰ so the LDS Church would not have been alone in losing membership. In addition, early levels of emigration were such that it is hard to imagine the LDS Church could have maintained growth from the relatively few who remained. It was, to some extent, a victim of its own success. There was clearly a wish to maintain a presence in south-west Wales, as elsewhere in Britain, and later history shows that this would be a lull rather than extinction.

Dame Hilary Mantel defined history as: ‘what’s left in the sieve when the centuries have run through it.’⁴³¹ Clearly there is much still ‘left in the sieve’ in terms of primary source material relating to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in south-west Wales during the second half of the nineteenth century, allowing for future research to enhance our knowledge of this rather neglected element of Welsh history.

⁴²⁹ Dennis. *The Welsh and the Gospel*, p. 267.

⁴³⁰ Heaton. ‘The Making of British Saints’ p. 125.

⁴³¹ Hilary Mantel. The BBC Reith Lectures. ‘*Lecture 1: The Day Is for the Living*’ 13 June 2017. <http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/radio4/reith2017/reith_2017_hilary_mantel_lecture1.pdf> [Accessed 3 March 2020].

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Appendices

- A. Conference designations across Wales 1864-1903
- B. Missionaries south-west Wales, 1864-1903.
- C. Missionary Profiles

Appendix A: Conference in Wales, 1864-1903

Conference	1864	1865	1866	1867	1868	1869	1870	1871	1872	1873	1874	1875	1876	1877	1878	1879	1880		To 1903	1904	
WELSH																					
Carms																					
Pembs																					
N. Wales																					
Glam																					
Mons																					
Swansea																					
Denbs																					
Flintshire																					
MTydfil																					
E. Glam																					
W. Glam																					

Blue = Derived from annual statistical reports listing conferences

Green = Derived from conference debt reports; named in any quarter of the year

Appendix B: Missionaries in south-west Wales, 1864-1903.

Note: This listing may be incomplete as it is based on names referenced in the journals and occasional references in the *Star*.

Missionaries	Years served		Notes
	Start	End	
1864-1869			
BYWATER, George G.	1860	1864	With Thomas Jeremy at a meeting in Carmarthen 1863
JEREMY, Thomas	1862	1863	Journal (Vols 3 and 4 cover 1862-63)
DELL, Philip	1863	1865	Transferred from Pembrokeshire to Swansea 1864
DAVIES, Richard J.	1866	1868	Referred to by Barry Wride as going to Llanelli
EVANS, Abel	1865	1866	1866 preaching tour incl. Carmarthenshire & Pembrokeshire
WRIDE, Barry	1865	1868	Journal , though only a small amount of time in south-west Wales
MORRIS, Elias	1865	1869	Journal
LAWSON, Joseph	1866	1868	John Parry refers to his appointment to Pembrokeshire in 1866.
PARRY, John	1866	1868	Journal
THOMAS, William C.	1868	1869	Referred to by Elias Morris
LEWIS, John S.	1868	1870	Journal (one volume: 1869-70)
1870-1879			
JOHN, David	1871	1873	Journal
WILLIAMS, Miles Ll.	1874	1875	Referred to by Martell as visiting Cardiganshire
MARTELL, Thomas C.	1875	1876	Journal

LEIGH, Samuel	1875	1877	Referred to by Martell as being in Llanelli.
EVANS, Thomas D.	1875	1878	Journal
HOWELL(S), Lewis	1876	1878	Referred to by Leigh as being in south-west Wales
WILLIAMS, William N.	1877	1879	Referred to by Lewis as being in Carmarthen
HOWELLS, Thomas F.	1877	1879	Referred to Lewis as being in Pembrokeshire
LEWIS, Walter J.	1877	1879	Journal
LEWIS, Enoch	1879	1881	In Carmarthenshire and Cardiganshire with John Evans
1880-1889			
EVANS, John	1880	1882	Journal
HARMON, Benjamin M.	1880	1882	<i>Star</i> refers to his being in Carmarthenshire in 1881
HARMON, Edwin	1880	1882	<i>Star</i> refers to his being in Carmarthenshire in 1881
DAVIES, Daniel	1881		<i>Star</i> refers to his being in Carmarthenshire with Thomas Perkins
RICHARDS, David	1881	1882	Journal
PERKINS, Thomas	1881	1883	Star refers to his being in Carmarthenshire with Daniel Davies
REESE, William G.	1882	1884	Diaries
MANTLE, Llewellyn J.	1883	1884	Confirmed in Wales incl. South-west Wales
JONES, Ricy H.	1885	1886	In Carmarthenshire with Lewis
THOMAS, Daniel F.	1885	1886	Served in Brechfa area
THOMAS, John	1886	1888	Journal
WATTERSON, William	1886	1889	Referred to by Thomas as assigned to Pembrokeshire
DAVIES, Thomas B.	1887		Referred to by Thomas as assigned to Carmarthen

DAVIES, Alma C.	1887		Referred to by Thomas as assigned to Pembrokeshire
DAVIS, Theophilus M.	1887	1888	Referred to by Thomas as being in south-west Wales
MORSE, Richard	1887	1889	Referred to by Thomas as assigned to Carmarthen
DAVIS, Timothy B.	1888	1890	Journal
THOMAS, H.H.	1889		Referred to by Davis as being in Carmarthen
EVANS, John T.	1889	1890	Referred to by Davis as being in Carmarthen
1890-1899			
GRIFFITHS, John J.	1889	1890	Referred to by Davis as being in Carmarthen
JONES, Evan	1893	1895	Journal
TREHARNE, William	1894	1896	Journal
GRIFFITHS, William T.	1895	1896	Journal
ELLIS, Ellis J.	1895	1896	Referred to by Price as being in south-west Wales
PRICE, Daniel E.	1895	1897	Journal
REES, David	1896		Referred to by Price as having transferred from Carmarthenshire
JONES, William	1896		Referred to by Price as having transferred from Carmarthenshire
PETERS, John W.	1899		Referenced in the <i>Star</i> as being in Saundersfoot
WILLIAMS, Benjamin	1899	1901	1901 census in Carmarthen with John Davis
1900-1903			
DAVIS, John	1900	1902	1901 census in Carmarthen with Benjamin Williams

Appendix C: Missionary Profiles.

These are brief profiles for missionaries whose journals provided primary source data for this research, as they spent at least some of their mission in southwest Wales.

DAVIS, Timothy Bowen (1842-1916) was a native of Llanwenog, Cardiganshire. He emigrated with his father and all but one of his siblings in 1863, and the family settled in the northern part of Utah Territory. The mother was to have followed with the remaining son, but for some reason never did. Davis (hereafter referred to as *T.B. Davis* to distinguish from other missionaries with the same surname) returned to Wales in 1888, at the age of 46, and was assigned to work in the north of Carmarthenshire and Cardiganshire.

EVANS, John (1829-1920). A native of Llandovery, Carmarthenshire, Evans converted to the LDS faith in 1849 and emigrated in 1855 with his wife and infant son. He and his family settled in Brigham City in northern Utah. He returned to Wales as a missionary in 1880 at the age of 51 and served for two years, travelling across south Wales.

EVANS, Thomas David (1833-1906) was a native of Troedyrhiw, Glamorganshire, who converted to the LDS faith in 1849. He emigrated in 1856 and settled in Spanish Fork, Utah. He served as a missionary in Wales between baptism and emigration (1852-56), being assigned to southwest Wales. He and T.C. Martell (see below) left Spanish Fork together in 1875 for their return to Wales as missionaries.

GRIFFITHS, William Thomas (1846-1931). A native of Merthyr Tydfil, Griffiths was baptised into the LDS Church in 1865 and emigrated in 1868. He returned to Wales in 1895 as a missionary and served for almost two years. His wife's family were from Pembrey, Carmarthenshire, so he had many connections in the area.

JEREMY, Thomas (1815-1891). Born in Llanegwad, Carmarthenshire, Jeremy and his wife were the first converts to the LDS Church in Llanybydder, where they were baptised in 1846. They emigrated in 1849, but he returned to Wales as a missionary in 1860 and served as president of the Welsh Mission. He returned to America in 1864.

JOHN, David (1833-1908) was a native of Little Newcastle, Pembrokeshire, who was first baptised in his mid-teens, but who, because of his family's staunch Baptist loyalties, agreed with his father's demands that he set aside his new faith and train to become a

Baptist minister. This he did, making him one of the best educated converts of the time. However, he returned to the LDS church, and served as a missionary for four years before emigrating to America in 1861. He returned to Wales as a missionary in 1871 and was assigned to serve on the presidency of the Welsh conference.

JONES, Evan (1839-1935) Born in Llanegwad, Cardiganshire, Jones converted to the LDS faith – contrary to his family’s wishes – in 1863 and emigrated in 1867. He settled in Cache Valley in northern Utah Territory. He returned to Wales as a missionary in 1893 and served for two years. His journal is extensive, although only a small proportion of his mission was spent in southwest Wales.

LEIGH, Samuel (1815-1894). Born in Llanedy, Carmarthenshire, Leigh was baptised into the LDS Church in 1848 and emigrated in 1849, although he did not arrive in Salt Lake City until 1852. He settled in Cedar City, southern Utah. He was age 60 when he returned to Wales as a missionary in 1875. He returned to America in 1877.

LEWIS, Daniel (1834-1905) was a native of Caio, Carmarthenshire. He converted to the LDS faith in 1854 and emigrated in 1856 with the second of Dan Jones’ large companies of Welsh converts. He returned to serve a mission in Wales from 1886 to 1888. He was appointed as president of the Welsh conference and as such travelled extensively, visiting members and branches in the area. He spent approximately 14% of his mission in southwest Wales.

LEWIS, John Saunders (1835-1893) was born in Bedwellty, Monmouthshire. He converted to the LDS faith in 1855 and emigrated in 1856. He was known for his musical abilities, particularly singing. He died in Salt Lake City, Utah. Although he served as a missionary in Wales between 1867 and 1870, only one volume of his journal was accessible for this research, although it is clear that the volume formed part of a larger record.

LEWIS, Walter J. (1854-1924) Lewis was born in Salt Lake City, Utah Territory, as his parents had converted to the LDS faith in Wales, but married in Salt Lake City. His father and mother were from Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire respectively. Lewis served two missions in Wales: 1877-79 and from 1892. His journal relates to the first of these missions.

MARTELL, Thomas Charles (1823-1905) was a native of Newcastle Emlyn, Carmarthenshire, who converted to the LDS church in 1849 and emigrated to Utah Territory in 1854, where he settled in Spanish Fork. He was 52 years old when he returned to Wales to serve as a Travelling Elder. Before emigrating he had been the manager of a draper's in Llanelli, but had also served for several years as a local missionary, and was appointed president of the Carmarthenshire conference (see T.H. Lewis 'Three Carmarthenshire Mormons' *Carmarthen Antiquary* 4, p. 49). In Utah Territory at the time of his return to Wales he had a number of responsibilities within the LDS church in Utah Territory: he 'followed farming and other activities,' and had several community responsibilities such as member of the Spanish Fork City Council. Of the approximately one year covered by his journal, Martell spent about 300 days in southwest Wales.

MORRIS, Elias (1825-1898) A native of Llanfair Talhaiarn, Denbighshire, Morris converted to the LDS faith in 1849. He served as a missionary in north Wales in 1850-51 after his conversion, and emigrated in 1852. He returned for a second mission to Wales 1865-1869. He died in Salt Lake City, in Utah – which by then had achieved statehood.

PARRY, John (1817-1882) Born in Trelawnyd, Flintshire, and often given the suffix 'jnr' as he was the son of John Parry, who founded what would become the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. Baptised in 1846, Parry emigrated in 1856 after serving a first mission in Wales. He returned to Wales in 1865, where his first six months were spent in North Wales. He was in south Wales between February and December 1866, serving as counsellor to Abel Evans, President of the Welsh conference.

PRICE, Daniel Evan (1852 -1926) A resident of Samaria, Idaho – a town settled by the Welsh - when he left for his mission in Wales, Price was born in Talgarth, Breconshire. He was baptised at age 8, as his parents had converted to the LDS faith. The family emigrated in 1860. Price was 42 years old when he returned to Wales as a missionary and served from 1895 to 1897. He spent less than a month in southwest Wales - mainly in Llanelli – out of the year and a half of his mission.

REESE, William Griffiths (1857-1938) was a native of Amroth, Pembrokeshire, whose parents converted to the LDS faith there and emigrated when he was only two years old. He returned to Wales in 1882 as a missionary and spent the majority of the eighteen

months of his mission in the Swansea area and points east. He visited southwest Wales only twice during that time – for two weeks and later for three weeks – and spent all of his time there visiting (and expounding the gospel to) his relations and friends, or to the families of church members he had known in Utah Territory.

RICHARDS, David (1823-1902). Born in Aberstruyth, Monmouthshire, he and his wife and four children emigrated in 1860 and crossed the plains to Utah Territory as part of a handcart company. He returned to Wales as a missionary in 1881, but very little of his time was spent in south-west Wales.

THOMAS, John (1837-1914) was a native of Llanelli, Carmarthenshire, who was baptised into the LDS church there, and emigrated to Utah Territory in 1870. He returned to Wales as a missionary in 1886, age 51. Of his assignment he records, ‘Bro Owens Told Me to Labor in Swansea & Neath allso Llanelly⁰. and kindly tould me to take my Time & visit my Relations.’ He spends some 25% of his mission in southwest Wales, largely in Carmarthenshire. His journal, which comes in four volumes, is particularly detailed – the single-spaced transcript (with transcriber footnotes and index) runs to almost 300 pages - including information on a number of families he encountered while on his mission, inscriptions on gravestones, lists of letter he wrote and received, addresses of family, friends and acquaintances. There is some speculation – and evidence from his journal - that Thomas returned to Wales as a missionary to avoid prosecution for practising polygamy.

TREHARNE, William (1838-1907) was a native of Llangyndeirne, Carmarthenshire. His family joined the LDS church when he was a child and they were among the first large group of Welsh converts to emigrate under the leadership of Dan Jones on the *Buena Vista* in 1849. William’s parents both died on the journey west but he and his four older sisters continued to Utah Territory. He settled and raised a family in Salt Lake City. He was in his late fifties when he returned to Wales as a missionary.

WRIDE, Barry (1833-1913). Born in Llantrisant, Glamorganshire, Wride was baptised as a member of the LDS Church in 1857 and emigrated in 1861. He returned to Wales as a missionary just four years later. Although he presided over the Monmouthshire conference he also made brief visits to south-west Wales.