

Capel y Boro
Sun 31 Jan 2021, 11am

Pilgrimage Service



Opening video:
Wales pilgrimage route
Visit Wales / National Churches
Trust

Intrada and welcome

Who would true valour see
(John Bunyan)

Alun Cilie
Yr Hen Gapel

Philip Larkin
Church Going

O anfon di yr Ysbryd Glân
(John Hughes, Uxbridge)

**Chapels of the past – Bethel
and Parson’s Hill, Woolwich**
A talk by John Samuel

Dyma gariad fel y moroedd
(Gwilym Hiraethog)

**The man who bought 12 Welsh
valley chapels:**
Film of Revd Robert Stivey I
(Wales online)

**A reading, Calfaria, Aberdare
and Rev Thomas Price**

**The man who bought 12 Welsh
valley chapels:**
Film of Revd Robert Stivey II
(BBC News)

A prayer by Giles Arnold
CEO, Church Growth Trust

The Church’s One Foundation
(S J Stone)

**A talk by John Jones on
Geoffrey Chaucer**

George Dyson
**The Canterbury Pilgrims –
Prologue (opening)**
Hereford Choral Society and
Sinfonia/Geraint Bowen

**Film of Geoffrey Chaucer’s
Canterbury Tales at the
National Library of Wales**

Geoffrey Chaucer
**The Canterbury Tales –
Prologue (opening)**
Read in Middle English and in a
translation by Neville Coghill
by Dr Linne R Mooney, former
Professor of Medieval English
Palaeography, York University

I Corinthiaid 13
**from the 1588 Welsh Bible in
the National Library of Wales**
read by Pedr ap Llwyd, Chief
Executive and Librarian, National
Library of Wales

T S Eliot
**The last sermon by
St Thomas à Becket**
Prose interlude from
Murder in the Cathedral

Edward Grim
**Eyewitness account of the
martyrdom of St Thomas**

**A message and prayer from
Revd Canon Andrew Dodd,
Canon Treasurer of
Canterbury Cathedral**

Cyuned y nefolaidd gôr
(Gomer, Diadem)

Closing music:
Richard Wagner Tannhäuser
Act 3 - Pilgrims Chorus



Opening video:
Wales pilgrimage route
Visit Wales / National Churches
Trust

Photographs of churches,
cathedrals and chapels
throughout Wales, in a
promotional film for *Explore
Churches* which is a website set
up by the National Churches
Trust with Visit Wales to mark
the opening two years ago of the
Wales Way Pilgrimage routes.
These brings together existing
paths and creates new ones for
pilgrims who want to take in the
huge variety of sacred spaces in
Wales.



<https://www.explorechurches.org/cymru> (scroll down page for video)

Intrada
Ysbryd y tragwyddol Dduw,
disgyn arnom ni; Ysbryd y
tragwyddol Dduw, disgyn arnom
ni:
plyg ni, trin ni, golch ni, cod ni:
Ysbryd y tragwyddol Dduw,
disgyn arnom ni.

*Spirit of the eternal God, descend
upon us; Spirit of the eternal God,*

*descend upon us: fold us, treat us,
wash us, raise us: Spirit of the
eternal God, descend upon us.*

Who would true valour see

let them come hither:
here's one will constant be
come wind, come weather.
There's no discouragement
shall make me once relent
my first avowed intent
to be a pilgrim.

Who so beset me round
with dismal stories
do but themselves confound:
my strength the more is.
No foes shall stay my might;
though I with giants fight,
but I will have the right
to be a pilgrim.

Hobgoblin nor foul fiend
can daunt my spirit:
I know I at the end
shall life inherit.
Then, fancies, flee away!
Fear not what others say;
I'll labour night and day
to be a pilgrim.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00f2946>

Alun Cilie Yr Hen Gapel (excerpt)

Hen le anial yw heno,
Anhardd friw ar wedd y fro;
Adeilad gwag, di-olau,
A hen Dŷ Cwrdd wedi cau.
Lle dinod, llwyd ei wyneb.
Iddo yn awr ni ddaw neb;
Annedd y saint yn ddi-sôn
A Bethel eu gobeithion.

Ar gul lân, gwerinwyr gwlad
Ddoe a'i cododd i'w Ceidwad.
Yn hardd Dŷ i gwrdd â'u Duw
Ac i arddel y gwirdduw;

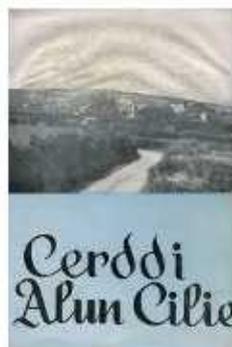
Diwael wyrth eu dwylo oedd,
Gwiw ar gadarn graig ydoedd,
A'i fawredd yn llefaru
Am wychder hen falchder fu.
Erys o hyd dros ei wedd
Ôl eu manwl amynedd;
Ôl cynion ar dalcennau
Ac ar fold ei gry' fwâu.



*Old desolate place tonight,
A blemish on the landscape;
An empty, lightless building,
An old Meeting House long shut,
Insignificant, grey-faced,
Nobody comes to it now;
The dwelling of saints, speechless,
And the Bethel of their hopes.*

*"Gwerin," on a narrow lane,
Once raised it to their Saviour,
Lovely house to meet their Lord
And affirm the true Godhead;
Their hands' noble miracle,
Shapely, on strong rock sited;
And its majesty gave voice
To ancient honour's splendour,
On its face is their lasting
Trace of scrupulous patience,
Chisels' trace on the gables
And on its strong arches' frame.*

© Translation Joseph P Clancy



Philip Larkin Church Going



Once I am sure there's nothing
going on
I step inside, letting the door
thud shut.
Another church: matting, seats,
and stone,
And little books; sprawlings of
flowers, cut
For Sunday, brownish now; some
brass and stuff
Up at the holy end; the small
neat organ;
And a tense, musty, unignorable
silence,
Brewed God knows how long.
Hatless, I take off
My cycle-clips in awkward
reverence.

Move forward, run my hand
around the font.
From where I stand, the roof
looks almost new –
Cleaned, or restored? Someone
would know: I don't.
Mounting the lectern, I peruse a
few
Hectoring large-scale verses, and
pronounce
'Here endeth' much more loudly
than I'd meant.
The echoes snigger briefly. Back
at the door

I sign the book, donate an Irish
sixpence,
Reflect the place was not worth
stopping for.

Yet stop I did: in fact I often do,
And always end much at a loss
like this,
Wondering what to look for;
wondering, too,
When churches will fall
completely out of use
What we shall turn them into, if
we shall keep
A few cathedrals chronically on
show,
Their parchment, plate and pyx in
locked cases,
And let the rest rent-free to rain
and sheep.
Shall we avoid them as unlucky
places?

Or, after dark, will dubious
women come
To make their children touch a
particular stone;
Pick simples for a cancer; or on
some
Advised night see walking a dead
one?
Power of some sort will go on
In games, in riddles, seemingly at
random;
But superstition, like belief, must
die,
And what remains when disbelief
has gone?
Grass, weedy pavement,
brambles, buttress, sky,

A shape less recognisable each
week,
A purpose more obscure. I
wonder who
Will be the last, the very last, to
seek
This place for what it was; one of
the crew
That tap and jot and know what
rood-lofts were?

Some ruin-bibber, randy for
antique,
Or Christmas-addict, counting on
a whiff
Of gown-and-bands and organ-
pipes and myrrh?
Or will he by my representative,

Bored, uninformed, knowing the
ghostly silt
Dispersed, yet tending to this
cross of ground
Through suburb scrub because it
held unpilt
So long and equably what since is
found
Only in separation – marriage,
and birth,
And death, and thoughts of these
– for which was built
This special shell? For, though
I've no idea
What this accoutered frowsty
barn is worth,
It pleases me to stand in silence
here;

A serious house on serious earth
it is,
In whose blent air all our
compulsions meet,
Are recognized, and robed as
destinies.
And that much never can be
obsolete,
Since someone will forever be
surprising
A hunger in himself to be more
serious,
And gravitating with it to this
ground,
Which, he once heard, was
proper to grow wise in,
If only that so many dead lie
round.

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and Faber and the Marvell Press

O anfon di yr Ysbryd Glân
yn enw Iesu mawr,
a'i weithrediadau megis tân
O deued ef i lawr.

Yn ôl d'addewid fawr ei gwerth,
O Arglwydd, tywallt di
dy Ysbryd Sanctaidd gyda nerth
i weithio arnom ni.

O'th wir ewyllys deued ef
i argyhoeddi'r byd
ac arwain etifeddion nef
drwy'r anial maith i gyd.

Yn ôl d'addewid, Iesu mawr,
yr awron anfon di
y gwir Ddiddanydd yma i lawr
i aros gyda ni.

*O send thou the Holy Spirit,
In the name of great Jesus,
With his activities like fire:
O send him down!*

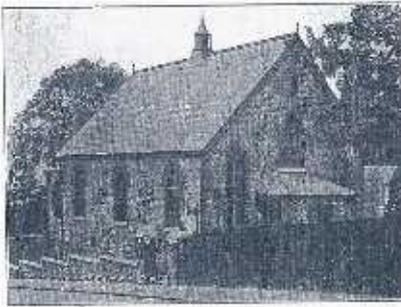
*According to thy promise
of great worth,
O pour out from above
Thy Sacred Spirit, with strength,
To work within us.*

*Of his true will, may He come
To convince the world,
And lead the heirs of heaven,
All through the vast desert.*

*According to thy promise send him
To convince the world,
And lead the heirs of heaven
To come to the secure Canaan.*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yL6voj344Vw>

Chapels of the past – Bethel and Parson's Hill, Woolwich
A talk by John Samuel



There is evidence of Welsh worship in the Woolwich area during the late eighteenth century, before denominationalism took hold. It appears that for some periods Presbyterians and Congregationalists in the district shared both ministerial resources and premises. There is, however, no record that they shared worship or communion, rather they worshipped separately on alternate Sundays. While the exact date of construction of the chapel is a matter of dispute, (the lease of the land commenced in 1806), the location of the church in Woolwich until 1905 was in Parson's Hill, in the town centre.



Chapel Parson's Hill, Woolwich.

The Calvinistic Methodist church in Wilderness Row (the

forerunner of the church at Jewin) took responsibility for outgoings under the lease and in turn received a rental contribution from the Congregationalists, who shared the chapel.

The remainder of the lease was sold to the Congregationalists in 1874. From that time onward it was Welsh Congregationalists that worshipped in Woolwich. It was not a strong cause in terms of numbers, but it was sustained by the efforts of missionaries who were sent to minister to the faithful worshippers.

Rev. Evan Evans of Bermondsey presided over the church until his death in 1887, aged 91 years. The Congregational 'Forward Movement' had in 1901 acquired premises in Sibley Grove, East Ham, as a place of worship for Welsh people in the district, who, since 1899, had met for worship in a private dwelling house in nearby Katherine Road. The same body encouraged the Woolwich and East Ham churches to 'call' a minister to lead them, by providing some ongoing financial help.



Llewelyn Bowyer

Llewelyn Bowyer (who many years later changed his surname to 'Boyer'), a student at Bala Bangor College was installed as minister of the two churches in 1902.

In September 1905, during the pastorate of Llewelyn Bowyer, pictured above, the lease on the Parson's Hill property expired. Again, with the help of the other Welsh Congregational churches in London, a freehold plot of land was purchased in Willenhall Road, Woolwich, up the hill from the town centre, in the direction of Plumstead Common. A deacon at King's Cross chapel, J M Peate (an uncle to Dr Iorwerth Peate) was the architect, who prided himself on having specified the finest materials in the new building. The chapel, Bethel, was built in a matter of months by Joseph Sanford of Shooters Hill. The foundation stones were laid by Mrs Benjamin Rees and W R Evans Esq, Secretary of the Boro' church from 1884-1913.

In a relatively short time, the building was completed, with services held to celebrate the official opening on Sunday, 25th November 1906. Even so, the minister was not the first person to preach in the new church. That honour befell the evangelist Rosina Davies, a popular figure during the 1904/5 religious revival in Wales and coincidentally a great-aunt to the actress Dame Sian Phillips.

At the end of 1911 Llewelyn Bowyer and his family returned to Wales, when he was inducted as the minister of Dan-y-Graig church, Alltwen near Pontardawe. Llewelyn Bowyer ministered in Dan-y-graig until 1928, when he returned to

North Wales, becoming the minister of the church at Ebeneser, Deiniolen, where he remained until his retirement. Two further ministers followed on at Bethel into the 1920s, Rev R J Mason and Rev Ishmael Lewis. Thereafter the church did not have its own minister until 1964, when the Revd Richard Jones was appointed, combining these duties with a full time teaching post at Sarah Bonnell School in Stratford, East London. However in that intervening 40 years, people worshipped faithfully at Bethel relying on the services of visiting preachers. I refer briefly to two of them: In the 1930s Bethel was faithfully served by the renowned Rev Ben Davies, Panteg, who had moved in retirement from Ystalyfera to London, to live closer to his daughters. In commemoration of his time at Bethel, after his death, his family presented the church with a new communion set, which, when Bethel ceased to be, was transferred to the Borough, where it remains.



Parson, T Rees Richards

The other retired minister was Rev Rees Richards, pictured above. He moved to live at

Barnet in 1937, becoming a member at the Tabernacl, King's Cross. He was active in that church taking especial interest in the activity of the cultural society, presiding over many of its meetings. Like Rev. Ben Davies before him, he was of great service to some of the smaller Welsh Congregational churches in the London area, particularly that at Bethel Woolwich, during the 1940s and 50s. It is not an easy journey from Barnet to Woolwich, especially when dependent on the vagaries of public transport on a Sunday. He preached there frequently and he regularly presided over the monthly communion service, Again like Ben Davies, to all intents and purposes, he was Bethel's minister, but without the official title. A framed portrait of Rees Richards hung in the vestry for a quarter of a century after his death.

And so to Richard Jones, Woolwich, as he was known, to distinguish him from the minister of the same name at Charing Cross Chapel. He arrived in 1964 and he and his wife Gracie served Bethel faithfully to the end in 1983. He always preached to his congregation gathered around him, while sitting on the keyboard of Joseph Parry's beloved Kelly harmonium, which had come from the church at Fetter Lane. He would then promptly turn around and play the organ for the hymns. As many of us will know, he was a truly larger-than-life character, who delivered inspiring sermons.

Having moved from the church at Ealing Green, Janice and I

worshipped at Bethel from January 1973 onward.



Interior of Bethel Woolwich

By the 1980s no member lived within six miles of the chapel and the last caretaker, who lived in adjoining street, had died. If everybody attached to the church, including children, turned up, (which rarely happened), there would 17 worshippers. But especially because of the problem of continuing vandalism, it was decided to close the chapel following a service on 17th October 1981, which happened to be my 40th birthday. Everyone came to our house in Belvedere for tea afterwards. The building was sold and converted into flats but the original chapel walls were retained in the new structure. The foundation stones can still be seen, pictured below.



The congregation continued to worship until 1983, renting a room on a Sunday afternoon at the Methodist Church in Welling until Richard, having retired from teaching, returned to Wales as

the minister of Tabernacl, Cwmgors. The cause was officially dissolved at a service at the Borough in July 1983, by which time I had served at its final Secretary for over a decade.

Dyma gariad fel y moroedd,
Tosturiaethau fel y lli:
Twysog Bywyd pur yn marw -
Marw i brynu'n bywyd ni.
Pwy all beidio â chofio amdano?
Pwy all beidio â thraethu'i glod?
Dyma gariad nad â'n angof
Tra fo nefoedd wen yn bod.

Ar Galfaria yr ymrwygodd
Holl ffynhonnau'r dyfnder mawr;
Torrodd holl argaeau'r nefoedd
Oedd yn gyfain hyd yn awr:
Gras â chariad megis dilyw
Yn ymdywllt ymâ 'nghyd,
A chyfiawnder pur â heddwch
Yn cusanu euog fyd.

*Here is love, vast as the ocean,
Loving kindness as the flood,
When the Prince of Life, our
Ransom,
Shed for us His precious blood.
Who His love will not remember?
Who can cease to sing His praise?
He can never be forgotten,
Throughout Heav'n's eternal days.*

*On the mount of crucifixion,
Fountains opened deep and wide;
Through the floodgates of God's
mercy
Flowed a vast and gracious tide.
Grace and love, like mighty rivers,
Poured incessant from above,
And Heav'n's peace and perfect
justice
Kissed a guilty world in love.*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nc2s_SiwKP0

The valleys of South Wales have a rich religious history at the core of the revival movement and as communities grew thanks to industrialisation the chapel stood tall and multiplied. But as congregations get smaller due to a number of economic, social and community reasons will these magnificent chapels survive and if they do how will they be used. Many chapels have become homes, warehouses or winebars to art centre or even climbing centres. Well, a chartered surveyor and minister, the Rev Robert Stivey left Islington London a few years ago to buy chapels in the valleys, some of which were semi derelict or derelict. He has now bought twelve of them, here is his story:

**The man who bought 12 Welsh valley chapels:
Film of Revd Robert Stivey I**
(Wales online)



<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/man-who-spending-hundreds-thousands-16686842>

A reading, Calfaria, Aberdare and Rev Thomas Price

One of Rev Stivey's most recent acquisitions is Calfaria Chapel, Aberdare which he bought for £25, 000 in 2019. Its last service was 2011.



Let's take this one chapel as an example of the extraordinary heritage of these Valleys chapels. Calfaria Baptist Chapel, Aberdare, was one of the largest baptist churches in the South Wales Valleys and the oldest in the Aberdare valley. The chapel had an ornate interior, including a boarded ceiling with a deeply undercut rose, while the balcony balustrading had a cast iron front with an intricate foliage design.



The organ was installed in 1903 at a cost of £850 and was played for the last time in 2012 by Robert Nicholls, during a Radio Cymru broadcast shortly before the chapel closed.



In 1811, a small piece of land was leased from Griffith Davies of Ynysybwl and in 1812, Carmel Baptist Church was opened. Known locally as Penpound, the first minister was William Lewis. The church struggled in the early days owing to the failure of the Aberdare Ironworks in 1815 and Lewis's pastorate came to an end after only two years.



Thomas Price, pictured above, commenced his ministry in 1845. As the membership grew the building became too small so Carmel was handed over to a smaller English-speaking congregation while a new chapel, Calfaria, was built nearby. The new chapel was designed by Thomas Joseph, a colliery engineer from Hirwaun, cost £1,400 to build and seated 840. The building was extended in 1859 and the adjacent Calfaria Hall built in 1871. The first service was held at Calfaria on 8 February 1852

When Thomas Price arrived in Aberdare in 1846, Carmel had 91 members, but the impact of his ministry caused it to grow rapidly over the next few years. During his time in Aberdare he baptised 1,596 people, and planted out

new Baptist works in most of the pit villages around Aberdare.

This was one account of what happened: "His abounding energy and skill as an organiser meant that Thomas Price was able to increase the number of Baptists in the valley through opening Sunday Schools and later erecting chapels in the surrounding villages at a greater ratio than the increase of the population. After releasing 121 members to form a church at Aberaman (Gwawr), 58 to form the English church as Carmel, while the Welsh members entered their new chapel as Calfaria, and 69 to form the church as Mountain Ash, (Rhos), there still remained at Calfaria 1,031 members. Then 163 members were transferred to form a new church at Abernant, 131 to Ynyslwyd, 49 to Gadlys, together with others to form Heolyfelin. he also assisted the daughter churches to form at Cwmaman, Abercwmboi, Blaenllechau, Cwmdare, Llwydcoed and Glynneath. I make that twelve churches planted in the upper Cynon Valley. In effect, he was virtually single-handedly responsible for the establishing of the Baptists in that whole area."

In 1913, a local resident recalled: "I remember that once a month on Sunday afternoons, Dr Price, the Baptist minister, used to baptise his recent converts in the Cynon River, alongside the iron bridge at the bottom of Commercial Street. I have seen as many as 25 or 30 converts, men and women, on the same afternoon. On these occasions the whole of the Baptist community used to meet at the chapel and march in procession through the streets with the

converts, the men converts being attired in long black robes and the women in white. They marched through the streets from the chapel to the place of baptism singing hymns. As a matter of course, large crowds gathered on the river banks to witness the immersions."

The Plaque to Price in Calfaria Chapel reads:

"In memory of the late reverend Thomas Price. M.A. PH.D. Who died on Feb. 2nd 1888 aged 67. He had been a faithful, industrious and active minister of Calfaria Church for 42 years. He had been a successful leader with every goodly movement in the Aberdare Valley, in his own country and in other countries. He filled the most important circles socially and religiously, with honour both to himself and his nation. He excelled as a citizen, politician, literary man, lecturer, minister and preacher. He was a benefactor second to none, he loved everyone and he was universally respected. His end was peace. 'I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.'



Price is buried in the chapel graveyard, pictured above. In the twentieth century like so many chapels, there were difficulties with the decline of the Welsh language in the valley and by 2003 the membership had fallen and after many years of decline, Calfarfa eventually closed in 2012.



And this is where we pick up with Rev Robert Stivey and our next clip.

The man who bought 12 Welsh valley chapels:
Film of Revd Robert Stivey II
(BBC News)



<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-49180454>

Once these chapels are bought they have to be maintained at the cost is considerable. Another chartered surveyor, Giles Arnold, who knows Rev Stivey and is familiar with the

challenges he faces, is the chief executive of the Church Growth Trust, a charity set up to save churches and chapels for religious use. He has recorded for us this week a message about their work and also gives us a prayer.

A prayer by Giles Arnold
CEO, Church Growth Trust



Bore da, it is good to be with you this morning and thank you for letting me speak with you. We are a charity that holds over 100 properties in England and Wales and we try and keep them in gospel use for the future. That is our vision to safeguard these properties and to ensure that they are used by evangelical churches that are reaching their local communities.

And not only do we want to ensure that these buildings are held for gospel use but we want to ensure that they are suitable for modern church use that they are in good condition and that they are compliant with legislation so we help all of our occupying churches so that that they are repairing the buildings, that they are looking good and attractive so that they are compliant with everything from asbestos and disability access to safeguarding. But we also will

look into our architecture, how suitable the building is for modern church use so we will look at adapting it for making it more welcome to make it more open to make sure the facilities are right for the church to reach the local community with the gospel. And even though we are focused on property because that is the charity and that is the work we are called to do, we are also very conscious that the church is not the building, that the church is us. And Peter says in his first letter about us being like living stones built into a spiritual house, a temple, and that is what we are called to do, to be those living stones, working together and becoming the temple through which God wants us to reflect his glory and show his presence in the world and bless the community around us.

But, of course, our buildings are really important for us to have, not because they are the church, but because they reflect who the church is. So if your building is in poor condition and it's falling to pieces and it's cold and damp and miserable then it is going to reflect the wrong picture of who God is and who we are as the church. So to have your building looking good, to be comfortable, to be warm, to have the facilities that you need to be able to do the activities that you want to do, to reach the community with the life changing gospel of Jesus Christ, then you need to invest in that property that is all of those things. So let us pray.

God we thank you, that you love your church, that you want to continue to grow your church and Lord we thank you that you care about the little things, the

things about your building and the places in which we present the gospel to people around us. We pray that you give us the encouragement, strength and resources that we need to be able to do that most effectively and for your glory we ask this in Jesus's name. Amen.

The church's one foundation

is Jesus Christ her Lord;
she is his new creation
by water and the word:
from heaven he came and sought
her
to be his holy bride;
with his own blood he bought
her
and for her life he died.

Called out from every nation,
yet one through all the earth;
her charter of salvation
one Lord, one faith, one birth:
one holy name she blesses,
and shares one holy food;
as to one hope she presses
with every grace endued.

We see her long divided
by heresy and sect;
yet she by God is guided
one people, one elect:
her vigil she is keeping,
her cry goes up, 'How long?'
and soon the night of weeping
shall be the dawn of song.

In toil and tribulation,
and tumult of her war,
she waits the consummation
of peace for evermore:
till with the vision glorious
her longing eyes are blessed;
at last the church victorious
shall be the church at rest!

Yet she on earth has union
with God the Three-in-One;
and mystic, sweet communion
with those whose rest is won:

O happy ones and holy!
Lord, grant to us your grace,
with them the meek and lowly,
in heaven to see your face.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p07cdt1x>

A talk by John Jones on Geoffrey Chaucer



I've wanted to do something about Geoffrey Chaucer for some time, what with his close connections to Southwark and the City of London. But I couldn't find an angle, until now.

You may remember that there was a news piece back in 2004 which revealed Chaucer's copyist, Adam Pinkhurst, after 600 years of speculation. Whatever the outcome, it gave prominence to the Hengwrt manuscript of *The Canterbury Tales* which is in the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth. How it got there is something that we'll come back to later. We're talking here of a narrative poem written at the end of the fourteenth century, written in Middle English, before the language was standardised. And this is undoubtedly the most valuable Geoffrey Chaucer manuscript in existence anywhere in the world.

Geoffrey Chaucer is widely regarded as England's greatest medieval poet and has been called the 'Father of the English language'. His origins can be traced in the City of London. He was born in c.1340 to John Chaucer, a London wine merchant and his wife Agnes, who owned a house on Upper Thames Street which stands today between London Bridge and Monument Stations.

During his life he worked at Custom House, next to the old Billingsgate fish market, as controller of export tax on wool, a position he got appointed to by King Edward III in 1374. During this time he was allowed to live in the twin-towered gate-house on Aldgate High Street. Chaucer wrote *Parlement of Foules* (1381), *House of Fame* (1385), *Troilus and Criseyde* (1385) and the *Legend of Good Women* (1391) while living there.

Nevertheless, Chaucer's most celebrated work is considered to be *Canterbury Tales*, a collection of stories that 30 pilgrims tell each other during the pilgrimage from the Tabard Inn in Borough High Street, to the shrine of Thomas Becket in Canterbury. This story also presents a great connection with the City because Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1162 until his death in 1170, was born on Cheapside, the core of the medieval City.

Hwngwrt was a mansion near Dolgellau, which was bought by Robert Vaughan of nearby Gwengraig in the seventeenth century, an antiquarian who owned the most important collection of old Welsh

manuscripts including the White Book of Rhydderch, the Black Books of Carmarthen, the Book of Aneurin and the Book of Taliesyn. These manuscripts remained at Hengwrt for over 300 years until Sir John Williams, one of the founders of the National Library in Aberystwyth purchased them in 1904. They thereafter became the backbone of the National Library's collection.

How the manuscript got to Hengwrt is still a matter of speculation, although presumably, as a member of the landed gentry, Robert Vaughan came to London which was the centre of the book publishing industry, and picked up the manuscript which would then not have been that fashionable.

George Dyson
The Canterbury Pilgrims – Prologue (opening)
Hereford Choral Society and Sinfonia/Geraint Bowen

When that April with his showers sweet
The drought of March hath pierced to the root,
And bathed every vein in such moisture
Of which virtue engendered is the flower;
When Zephyr eke with his sweet breath
Inspired hath in every holt and heath
The tender branches, and the young sun
Hath in Ram's sign his half course run,
And small birds make melody,
That sleep all night with open eye. -

So worketh nature in their hearts, -
Then folk do long to go on pilgrimage,
And palmers for to see strange strands,
To far saints known in sundry lands;
And specially, from every shire's end
Of England, to Canterbury they wend,
The holy blissful martyr for to seek,
That them hath holpen when they were sick.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qJ6WKcgjRD8>



The opening of the prologue to George Dyson's 1930 choral work "The Canterbury Pilgrims" performed by the Hereford Choral Society and Sinfonia conducted by Geraint Bowen at the Thee Choirs Festival in Hereford Cathedral. And that opening excerpt that the chorus sang there we will hear shortly spoken in middle English.

Film of Geoffrey Chaucer's The Canterbury Tales at the National Library of Wales

The Hengwrt manuscript of "The Canterbury Tales" is one of the treasures of the collection of the National Library of Wales, A few years ago the library staged an

exhibition anchored around this manuscript. This is a clip from it.

<https://blog.library.wales/chaucer-the-story-continues-2/> (up to 2:39)

Geoffrey Chaucer
The Canterbury Tales – Prologue (opening)

Read in the original Middle English and in a translation by Neville Coghill by Dr Linne R Mooney, former Professor of Medieval English Palaeography, York University



Dr Linne R Mooney says:
"I was a professor of medieval English Literature at University of York until two years ago when I retired. And while I was there I did a lot of work on a manuscript in the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth. It is the earliest copy of *The Canterbury Tales* which were written by Chaucer in a period before there was print in this country. William Caxton did not bring print to England until 75 years after Chaucer had died. And so all of the earliest copies of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* were hand written. They are manuscripts and the very earliest that has survived is in the National Library of Wales and is called the Hengwrt manuscript.

"In my work on the Hengrwt manuscript I found the name of the man who had written it, the man whose handwriting records the earliest copy of *The Canterbury Tales* and his name was Adam Pinkhurst. He was a scrivener in London and there is some evidence that he knew Chaucer personally and worked directly for him in making that earliest copy. He also made at least two more copies of *The Canterbury Tales* including the most famous one now in a library in California."

**Geoffrey Chaucer
from *The Canterbury Tales* –
Prologue:**



The Prologue on the Hengrwt manuscript

Whan that Aprille with his
shoures soote,
The droghte of March hath
perced to the roote,
And bathed every veyne in swich
licour
Of which vertu engendred is the
flour;
Whan Zephirus eek with his
swete breeth
Inspired hath in every holt and
heeth
The tendre croppes, and the
yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours
y-ronne,
And smale foweles maken
melodye,
That slepen al the nyght with
open ye,

So priketh hem Nature in hir
corages,
Thanne longen folk to goon on
pilgrimages,
And palmeres for to seken
straunge strondes,
To ferne halwes, kowthe in
sondry londes;
And specially, from every shires
ende
Of Engelond, to Caunterbury
they wende,
The hooly blissful martir for to
seke,
That hem hath holpen whan that
they were seeke.

Bifil that in that seson on a day,
In Southwerk at the Tabard as I
lay,
Redy to wenden on my
pilgrymage
To Caunterbury with ful devout
corage,
At nyght were come into that
hostelrye
Wel nyne and twenty in a
compaignye
Of sondry folk, by aventure y-
falle
In felawshipe, and pilgrimes
were they alle,
That toward Caunterbury
wolden ryde.
The chambres and the stables
weren wyde,
And wel we weren esed atte
beste.
And shortly, whan the sonne was
to reste,
So hadde I spoken with hem
everychon,
That I was of hir felawshipe
anon,
And made forward erly for to
ryse,
To take oure wey, ther as I yow
devyse.

**Geoffrey Chaucer
in a version by Neville
Coghill from *The Canterbury
Tales* – Prologue:**

When in April the sweet
showers fall
And pierce the drought of March
to the root, and all
The veins are bathed in liquor of
such power
As brings about the engendering
of the flower,
When also Zephyrus with his
sweet breath
Exhales an air in every grove and
heath
Upon the tender shoots, and the
young sun
His half-course in the sign of the
Ram has run,
And the small fowl are making
melody
That sleep away the night with
open eye
(So nature pricks them and their
heart engages)
Then people long to go on
pilgrimages
And palmers long to seek the
stranger strands
Of far-off saints, hallowed in
sundry lands,
And specially, from every shire's
end
Of England, down to Canterbury
they wend
To seek the holy blissful martyr,
quick
To give his help to them when
they were sick.
It happened in that season that
one day
In Southwark, at The Tabard, as I
lay
Ready to go on pilgrimage and
start
For Canterbury, most devout at
heart,
At night there came into that
hostelry

Some nine and twenty in a
company
Of sundry folk happening then to
fall
In fellowship, and they were
pilgrims all
That towards Canterbury meant
to ride.

The rooms and stables of the inn
were wide:

They made us easy, all was of the
best.

And, briefly, when the sun had
gone to rest,

I'd spoken to them all upon the
trip

And was soon one with them in
fellowship,

Pledged to rise early and to take
the way

To Canterbury, as you heard me
say.

I Corinthiaid 13
from the 1588 Welsh Bible in
the National Library of
Wales (by William Morgan)
read by Pedr ap Llwyd, Chief
Executive and Librarian, National
Library of Wales



Pe llefarwn â thafodau dynion ac
angylion, ac heb fod gennyf
gariad, yr wyf fel efydd yn seinio,
neu symbal yn tincian.

A phe byddai gennyf
broffwydoliaeth, a gwybod
ohonof y dirgelion oll, a phob
gwybodaeth; a phe bai gennyf yr
holl ffydd, fel y gallwn symudo
mynyddoedd, ac heb gennyf
gariad, nid wyf fi ddim.

A phe porthwn y tlodion â'm holl
dda, a phe rhoddwn fy nghorff i'm
llosgi, ac heb gariad gennyf, nid
yw ddim llesâd i mi.

Y mae cariad yn hirymaros, yn
gymwynasgar; cariad nid yw yn
cenfigennu; nid yw cariad yn
ymffrostio, nid yw yn
ymchwyydo,

Nid yw yn gwneuthur yn
anweddaidd, nid yw yn ceisio yr
eiddo ei hun, ni chythruddir, ni
feddwl ddrwg;

Nid yw lawen am anghyfiawnder,
ond cydlawenhau y mae â'r
gwirionedd;

Y mae yn dioddef pob dim, yn
credu pob dim, yn gobeithio pob
dim, yn ymaros â phob dim.

Cariad byth ni chwymp ymaith:
eithr pa un bynnag ai
proffwydoliaethau, hwy a ballant;
ai tafodau, hwy a beidiant; ai
gwybodaeth, hi a ddiflanna.

Canys o ran y gwyddom, ac o ran
yr ydym yn proffwydo.
Eithr pan ddelo'r hyn sydd
berffaith, yna yr hyn sydd o ran a
ddileir.

Pan oeddwn fachgen, fel bachgen
y llefarwn, fel bachgen y deallwn,
fel bachgen y meddyliwn: ond pan
euthum yn ŵr, mi a rois heibio
bethau bachgennaidd.

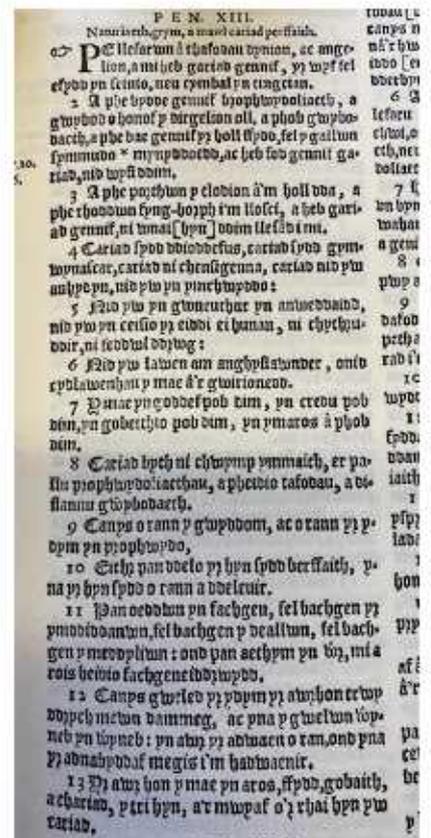
Canys gweled yr ydym yr awr
hon trwy ddrych, mewn dameg;

ond yna, wyneb yn wyneb: yn
awr yr adwaen o ran; ond yna yr
adnabyddaf megis y'm hadwaenir.

Yr awr hon y mae yn aros ffydd,
gobaith, cariad, y tri hyn; a'r
mwyaf o'r rhai hyn yw cariad.



National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth
Home to William Morgan's 1588 Bible:



*If I speak in the tongues of mortals
and of angels, but do not have love,
I am a noisy gong or a clanging
cymbal. And if I have prophetic
powers, and understand all
mysteries and all knowledge, and if
I have all faith, so as to remove
mountains, but do not have love, I
am nothing. If I give away all my*

possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

And now as we head on our pilgrimage to Canterbury and the shrine of Thomas Becket to mark the 850th anniversary this Christmas just gone, here is an excerpt from his very last sermon as accounted by T S Eliot in his play "Murder in the Cathedral", this is the prose interlude from it and Becket preaches in the Cathedral on Christmas Morning, 1170:

T S Eliot

An excerpt from the last sermon by St Thomas à Becket; Prose interlude from Murder in the Cathedral



Beloved, we do not think of a martyr simply as a good Christian who has been killed because he is a Christian: for that would be solely to mourn. We do not think of him simply as a good Christian who has been elevated to the company of the Saints: for that would be simply to rejoice: and neither our mourning nor our rejoicing is as the world's is. A Christian martyrdom is no accident. Saints are not made by accident. Still less is a Christian martyrdom the effect of a man's will to become a Saint, as a man by willing and contriving may become a ruler of men. Ambition fortifies the will of man to become ruler over other men: it operates with deception, cajolery, and violence, it is the action of impurity upon impurity. Not so in Heaven. A martyr, a saint, is always made by the design of God, for His love of men, to warn them and to lead them, to bring them back to His ways. A martyrdom is never the design of man; for the true martyr is he who has become the instrument of God, who has lost his will in the will of God, not lost it but found it, for he has

found freedom in submission to God. The martyr no longer desires anything for himself, not even the glory of martyrdom. So thus as on earth the Church mourns and rejoices at once, in a fashion that the world cannot understand; so in Heaven the Saints are most high, having made themselves most low, seeing themselves not as we see them, but in the light of the Godhead from which they draw their being.

I have spoken to you today, dear children of God, of the martyrs of the past, asking you to remember especially our martyr of Canterbury, the blessed Archbishop Elphege; because it is fitting, on Christ's birthday, to remember what is that Peace which He brought; and because, dear children, I do not think I shall ever preach to you again; and because it is possible that in a short time you may have yet another martyr, and that one perhaps not the last. I would have you keep in your hearts these words that I say, and think of them at another time. In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.



Becket's last sermon was given on Christmas Day 1170. He was martyred four days later. Eliot's 'Murder in the Cathedral' is largely based on the eyewitness account of the martyrdom of Saint Thomas by

Edward Grim. Grim was a priest visiting Canterbury who stood close to Becket when he was attacked and almost lost his arm in trying to save him. He wrote an account of the life of Becket very shortly after the murder had taken place. This excerpt from Grim's account is from the moment that Becket enters Canterbury Cathedral on 29 December 1170, and is being chased by the four knights who had confronted him earlier, and who would eventually kill him.

Edward Grim
Eyewitness account of the martyrdom of St Thomas



“ Without delay, the sacrilegious men came into the house of peace and reconciliation with swords drawn, instilling terror in the onlookers by the sight of them, and by the clatter of armour alone. Those who were present were disturbed and shaken – for now those who had been singing vespers had hurried to the deadly spectacle – and in a spirit of fury the knights cried out, ‘Where is Thomas Becket, traitor to the king and the kingdom?’ When he did not respond they shouted with greater vehemence, ‘Where is the archbishop?’ To this call unafraid, and as is written, ‘The righteous will be brave as a lion without fear’, he came forward from the steps where he had been carried by the monks in fear of the knights, and in a perfectly clear voice answered, ‘Here I am,

no traitor to the king, but a priest. What do you want from me?’ And he who had earlier already said that he did not fear them said ‘See, I am ready to suffer in the name of Him who redeemed me with His blood. Far be it that on account of your swords I flee or withdraw from righteousness’. ‘I am prepared to die for my Lord so that in my blood the Church may find liberty and peace, but I forbid you in the name of Almighty God to harm my men, whether clerk or lay, in any way’. It was quite fitting that the soldier martyr should follow in the footsteps of his Captain and Saviour, Who when he was being sought by the wicked said, ‘If you seek me let these men go’.”

And now we go inside Canterbury Cathedral this week to meet the Revd Andrew Dodd, who before his appointment at Canterbury last year served a curacy in New Addington and then was Rector of St Mary's Newington at the Elephant and Castle. We are thrilled that he has agreed to take us on a tour and to give us some prayers for our pilgrimage today.

A message and prayer from Revd Canon Andrew Dodd, Canon Treasurer of Canterbury Cathedral



“Canterbury Cathedral continues to be a destination for so many people. My connections with the Borough and with the Elephant and Castle is that I was rector of St Mary's Newington just next door to Kennington tube station for about eight years from back in 2011. That part of south London and Southwark has a special place in my own heart as both my children were born at St Thomas's Hospital and I still feel that the Elephant and Castle have a very strong sense of home for me and my family. I thoroughly enjoyed my time when I was there and it is interesting that at a time when we are thinking about pilgrimage and Canterbury that, of course, you are just the other end of the A2 starting at the silver box roundabout of the Elephant and Castle and journey straight down from there to Canterbury, perhaps the A2 is not the exact route taken by the pilgrims but it would certainly be very close.

“We have lots of pilgrims and visitors who come to the Cathedral and in normal non-covid times this would be a place where we would welcome people to come but unfortunately the Cathedral is now closed to public worship though we are live streaming worship from the Cathedral; if you are interested let me tell you about the Thomas a Becket Life and Legacy conference that is coming up in April, if you go to the Canterbury Cathedral website you will be able to find details of this very scholarly and interesting conference celebrating the 850th anniversary of Thomas's martyrdom, of course that has been put back slightly because of covid but we

still continue to celebrate his life and legacy.

The Martyrdom Chapel



“You join me here at the Martyrdom Chapel this is the site where Thomas was actually murdered by the knights, they would have come in through the door that is just in front of me here and allegedly in a drunken rage then cut down St Thomas as he was preparing for Evensong or Vespers as it would have been.

“He died in a particularly gruesome way and his body was then taken down rather hurriedly to the crypt where it remained for many years and pilgrims started to come to the site of his murder very soon after and he was declared a saint very shortly after that time. Many years later his remains were translated to the Trinity Chapel where we will go in a few moments and I will share some prayers at that place.

“But as you join us here at the Martyrdom Chapel we reflect on the nature of St Thomas and the life of a man who stood up for his beliefs for how the church and its Lordship of God and Christ with us in our lives has superiority over our political or worldly ambitions and, of course, the two are often interconnected in what we do in the world in terms of our actions, in terms of our everyday encounters that we

have, and have that cosmic, spiritual dimension that extends beyond time and space. That was something that Thomas understood and he was prepared to offer his life for.

“The sculpture behind and me and above the altar is of three swords, actually there are more swords as when the light shines on it you can see the reflections and the shapes that are cast and they represent the swords of the knights that were used to cut him down. Well, let us pray, let us pause for a moment of quiet reflection, and offer our prayer to God.

“God of our Pilgrimage you have given us a desire to take a questing way and to set out on our journey, help us to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, that whatever we encounter as we travel we may seek to glorify you by the way that we live our lives. Amen

“You call us lord to leave the familiar things behind us and to forsake our comfort zones. May we open our eyes to new experiences. May we open our ears to hear you speaking to us and may we open our hearts to your love. Grant that this time spent on pilgrimage may help us to see ourselves as we really are and may we strive to be the people that you would have us be. Amen

“I am going to move now to the Trinity Chapel which is the place where St Thomas’s mortal remains were laid to rest and where the shrine of St Thomas was constructed.”

The Trinity Chapel



“Welcome to the Trinity Chapel this is the place where the mortal remains of St Thomas lay. The body was moved here in 1220. It was in 1538 that it was destroyed by the commissioners sent by Henry VIII and Thomas Cromwell. If you are interested in reading Dame Hilary Mantel’s books, the latest one *The Mirror and the Light* has a very vivid and wonderful description, from the imagination of a novelist of course, but with historical references of what that destruction of the shrine might have felt like, it’s a wonderful read and I would encourage you to read it, if you cared to.

“This is the place that if we have pilgrims who come to visit us that I always invite them to come to offer prayers, a place where for generations people have flocked in huge numbers to come and ask for God’s grace and God’s blessing on them. In medieval times they would have asked a saint to intercede for them on their behalf and around me we have a series of stained glass windows the so-called Miracle Windows that depict some of the stories of those who asked the saint to intercede for them. One of the windows is missing because it has been taken to a new exhibition on St Thomas and his legacy at the British Museum which opens in April. And the window may well

also be on their website where you will be able to see a detective story unfold on how our stained glass team put the pieces together like a jigsaw puzzle to have a coherence and to make a narrative that the windows didn't have before.

“So this is the place where pilgrims would have come, would have offered their prayers sometimes a thanksgiving, sometimes an intercession, sometimes words of sorrow or a lament and as they did so they knew it was a place where God in a very special way was able through prayer and the perseverance of the pilgrims to speak to them in ways that continue to this day. When I bring pilgrims here it is very often the case that they have come here after a long walk maybe from The George Inn at the Borough to here, sometimes further afield such as the new North Downs Way. Sometimes it is a staging post as people go on the Via Francigena, all the way to Rome.

“What lockdown has done has meant that those pilgrims are no longer visiting us so I invite you now to come in this virtual way as you are worshipping to make your prayers and offer your thanksgiving to God, wherever you are, at this place which is special and sacred to the life of our church and cathedral and for the whole of Britain. Let us pray.

“First, a short piece of poetry by T S Eliot first, from “Little Gidding” in the *Four Quartets*:

If you came this way,
Taking any route, starting from
anywhere,

At any time or at any season,
It would always be the same: you
would have to put off
Sense and notion. You are not
here to verify,
Instruct yourself, or inform
curiosity
Or carry report.

“Let us pray. Eternal God give us the courage to set off on our own pilgrimages in our lives. May we travel unhindered by worldly possessions, simply trusting in you for all that we need. Sometimes our hearts will be heavy as we plod along and our feet will ache and feel dirty. At other times we will rejoice as the sun shines on the path stretching before us. May we ponder your truth that the pilgrim's journey is not finished until we reach our journey with you. Amen.

“Lord, you know our beginnings and our end. Help us to realise we are only pilgrims on this earth, and save us from being too attached to worldly possessions. May we experience the freedoms to wonder, the freedom to hope, the freedom to love as we journey. Amen.

“Creator God, you are the source of our life and motivation. May we journey in faith and love, rejoicing and eager to serve you. Grant us a glimpse of your glory as we seek to follow you, who is the way the truth and the life. Amen.

“And the prayer of St Thomas, his special collect prayer:

“Lord God, who gave to your servant Thomas a Becket grace to put aside all earthly fear and to be faithful even to death. Grant that we, disregarding

worldly esteem, may fight all wrong, uphold your rule and serve you to our lives' end, through Jesus Christ our lord who is alive and forever reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit one God now and forever. Amen.”

Cyduned y nefolaidd gôr

a llwythau dynol-ryw
i ganu'n llon â llafar lef
mai cariad ydyw Duw.

Eglura gwirioneddau'i air,
a'i drugareddau gwiw,
ac angau Crist dros euog ddyn
mai cariad ydyw Duw.

Dwyn rhyfedd waith ei ras
ymlaen
mewn calon ddrwg ei lliw
a ddengys drwy'r eglwysi oll
mai cariad ydyw Duw.

Derbyniad euog ddyn i'r nef,
O'r fath ryfeddod yw,
a ddengys drwy'r trigfannau fry
mai cariad ydyw Duw.

Fy enaid clwyfus, na lesgâ,
mae modd i wella'r briw;
ti gefaist achos da i ddweud
mai cariad ydyw Duw.

*The heavenly unite the choir
and tribes of mankind
to cheerfully sing with a voice
that God is love.*

*The truths of
his word, and his true mercies,
and the death of Christ explain to a
guilty man
that God is love.*

*Bringing forward the work of his
grace
in a wicked heart
that shows throughout the churches
that God is love.*

*Man's guilty reception into heaven,
Such is the wonder,
which shows through the dwellings
above
that God is love.*

*My wounded soul, let alone,
there is a way to heal the wound;
you had good cause to say
that God is love.*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bNgC16vdkBA&t=2058s>
(from 0:26 to 4:01)

Blessing

Bless to us, O God, the people whom we meet. Pray for all pilgrims and seekers and companions on the way; for all travellers. Christ, may we walk together with you, in solidarity with the poor and with all of God's creation. Amen.

Closing music: Richard Wagner *Tannhäuser* Act 3 - Pilgrims Chorus

Dame Gwyneth Jones
(Venus/Elizabeth); Choir and
Orchestra of the Bayreuth
Festival/Sir Colin Davis (Producer
Götz Friedrich, 1978)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tLNf7Bsp-w8> (2:22:45 - 2:25:17)

Readers:

Alun Cilie
Yr Hen Gapel
Catrin Treharne

Philip Larkin
Church Going
Mark Salmon

**Chapels of the past – Bethel and
Parson's Hill, Woolwich**
A talk by John Samuel
John Samuel

**A reading, Calfaria, Aberdare
and Rev Thomas Price**
Neil Evans

A prayer by Giles Arnold
CEO, Church Growth Trust
Giles Arnold

**A talk by John Jones on
Geoffrey Chaucer**
John Jones

Geoffrey Chaucer
***The Canterbury Tales* – Prologue
(opening)**
Professor Linne R Mooney

I Corinthiaid 13
**from the 1588 Welsh Bible in
the National Library of Wales**
Pedr ap Llwyd

T S Eliot
**The last sermon by
St Thomas à Becket, excerpt**
Neil Evans

Edward Grim
***Eyewitness account of the martyrdom
of St Thomas***
Glyn Pritchard

**A message and prayer from Revd
Canon Andrew Dodd, Canon
Treasurer of Canterbury Cathedral**
Revd Andrew Dodd

Producer Mike Williams

T S Eliot *Four Quartets* and *Murder in the
Cathedral* excerpts © Estate of T S Eliot,
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