**The Smyrna Chapel – Nantmawr**

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Isaac Watkin in his History of Llanyblodwel (Ref 1) states in the chapter about worshippers called Independents or Congregationists:

*“William Tanat of ‘The Rock’ built a chapel in 1830, on a piece of land at Nantmawr, which he leased from the Earl of Powis, and rented it to the members for £2 a year. The formal opening took place on June 9th and 10th, 1831, the minister- in charge, Rev. Edward Davies, having previously named the building “Smyrna.”*

The building is identified from an OS map dated 1874 which shows the words ‘Independent Chapel’ against a house now known as Stone House. It is on Nantmawr Bank opposite the existing chapel.

According to Watkin, Edward Davies was born in Llanyblodwel parish in 1786 and died in 1843. A plaque was attached to the pulpit in Smyrna chapel which read:

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| Sacred to the Memory of  Rev  Edward Davies Minister of Smyrna Chapel. He died November 14th, 1843. Aged 57. |

The Shropshire Religious Worship Census of 1851 (Ref 2) reveals that Smyrna Chapel had space for 70 sittings and the average attendance at evening service was 60!

The Register of Births and Baptisms for Smyrna Chapel for the years 1825-1836 is preserved at Somerset House as No 16 of the Shropshire Non-Parochial Registers. Note that the 1825 date is earlier than the opening date quoted by Isaac Watkin. It is possible that services were held in private houses before Smyrna was built.

A list of Baptisms for 1825-36 for Smyrna Chapel is available from Shropshire Family History Society.

The congregation eventually became too large for the building and land was purchased on the other side of the road (in Trefonen parish) for a new chapel for 240 people with a manse, a schoolroom and a schoolmaster’s house. The cost was over £3000. This was opened in 1875 and is the Nantmawr Independent Chapel still standing today (now a private house).

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**References**

1. History of the Parish of Llanyblodwel by Isaac Watkin. 1905.

2.Shropshire Archives HO 129/361/17. The Shropshire Religious Census 1851.