

Out and About

Short but rich history for St Cadoc's Catholic church in Cowbridge

by RICHARD TAYLOR

THE history of St Cadoc's RC church in Cowbridge may be a relatively short one, but it is nevertheless a distinguished one, that lends a fascinating insight into the development of an institution in the town.

Just a few months ago, on January 29, the church celebrated its golden jubilee, with the visit of Archbishop Peter Smith.

The church was first established in 1956.

The Catholic population of Cowbridge had steadily risen since the turn of the century, but there was no official venue in which to attend mass.

Though venues such as the Blue Bell Inn (now Filco) and West House were used for

mass, Catholics were forced to travel to Llantwit Major, Barry and Bridgend to attend organised services.

In 1955, however, Mr L.E.W. Williams, of the Verlands, was determined that a proper Catholic church be established in Cowbridge, and donated some of his land accordingly.

It was completed within the year, and dedicated by Archbishop McGrath on January 29 1956, to St Cadoc, a pioneer of Christianity in the Vale.

Father Brendan Morris was the first priest to serve in the church, though he was the successor to Father John Magner as the Catholic parish priest.

The parish grew over

the next 30 years, and when Father Dewi Davies arrived in 1986, mass was conducted on Tuesday evening, Thursday morning and Sunday morning.

The Good Friday Liturgy and Easter Vigil were also introduced as permanent celebrations at St Cadoc's.

In addition, the only regular Welsh mass in the diocese was held on Sundays, conducted by Father Davies and Father Edwin Regan, now Bishop of Wrexham. This continued until February 25 1990.

With the congregation growing, it was decided that the church needed to extend to accommodate the numbers of people attending mass each week.

The extension was completed, including new stained glass windows, by Easter 1991, and allowed for such groups as the Catholic Women's League to be accommodated at the church.

The new extension was dedicated in December 1992 in a special mass held by Emeritus Archbishop John Aloysius Ward.

In November 1997, Father Dewi Davies moved to St Iltyd's, Dowlais, and he was replaced by Father Pierce Maher from St Helen's, Barry. He remains the current parish priest.

St Cadoc's lost its Sunday mass in 2003, with a Saturday evening mass taking its place, but the congregation remains strong.