

RUG CHAPEL NEAR CORWEN

6th April 2003

Rug (pronounced Reeg) appears to be a rather dour little grey Victorian Chapel set in a manicured modern garden by an old coaching road, now the A5.

The fact that it is maintained by CADW, the Welsh Historic Monuments organisation, gives a clue that it might be rather more interesting.

The inside of the Chapel is full of painted 17th century oak in a surprisingly domestic style, sympathetically restored to present an interior full of colour and iconography. There are box pews that look like 17th century cupboards carved with flowers, peacocks and strapwork painted in reds, blues and greens. The ceiling imitates clouds with four low-flying angels attached to the trusses (fig. 2).



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

with dragons, serpents and other strange creatures. Apparently there is a similar set of benches at Dolwyddelan Church. There are three pieces of moveable furniture: a credence table dated 1632, an altar table and a painted wooden chandelier complete with a naive angel and wooden candles hanging beneath the cups for real candles.

The story of the Chapel is that it was built as a private chapel in 1637 by Colonel William Salisbury (1580-1660) a staunch royalist, reconstructed in 1854 and conserved by

CADW in 1993. The excellent interpretation and guide book tell us Colonel Salisbury was a 'colourful character'. Members thought that he might also have been a recusant which would explain the



Fig. 4

silver provided for the chapel and its careful preservation.

The visit was necessarily crowded but Vic Chinnery was able to introduce it to us outside before we squashed inside. It repays a quiet visit alone as there is lots to examine in detail.

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