

# Rhos, North Wales, 1904, Part I

By Tom Hill

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(John Powell Parry was born in 1887 and was therefore seventeen years of age in 1904 when the revival came to Rhosllanerchrugog, a mining town three miles south of Wrexham in North Wales. The following account is taken from a recorded interview by Paul Cook of Hull with Powell Parry on 2 October 1974 in Plas Bennion, a small hamlet near Ruabon just south of Rhos. Powell Parry died on 27 June 1979 at the age of ninety-two.)

"In 1904 Rhosllanerchrugog was a Welsh-speaking mining town, with few English people living there. Almost every man worked down in the pits and Powell Parry himself was working underground by the age of fourteen.

"Wages were poor and life was hard, the boys working nine-and-a-half hours for three shillings (fifteen pence) a day. There was little social concern for the condition of the people and drink was a widespread social evil.

"In spite of this, there was great respect for the Bible and ministers, so much so that the Bible was a subject of discussion even in the public houses. There were many preachers in the town who, though not well educated or men with degrees, nevertheless took their call to the ministry seriously.

"They stood firmly on the authority of Scripture and 'modernism' was unknown among them. Churches and chapels were full and Sunday morning services were packed.

"The Christians were a serious people and while not expecting revival, they were concerned that the doctrine of the churches was pure. In the chapels two discerning elders would sit in the 'big pew', beneath the pulpit and facing the congregation, to discern any error in the preaching.

"Discipline and holy living were expected of the members and the town knew this; Christians were noticeably different and were generally respected.

"The revival in Rhos started quite unexpectedly in the Welsh Baptist Chapel where Rhys Bevan Jones, from South Wales, had been invited to conduct a mission. The first knowledge that Powell Parry had about the revival came as he returned home early one morning at the close of the night shift.

"A young man told him that something wonderful was happening at Penuel Chapel, and as Powell came near to the church it was evident that something remarkable was going on: 'People were rejoicing, and it was bursting out of the walls and into the streets.'

"Revival spread rapidly through the whole town until every church was affected. The Methodists, Congregationalists, Salvation Army, the Church of England and Baptists were all caught up in the great wave of revival so that 'denominationalism disappeared' and you could enter any church in the town and find crowds of people at prayer; there was a great harmony in the town."

(This excerpt is taken from *Revival! A People Saturated With God*, by Brian Edwards (Evangelical Press, Darlington) 1990, p. 243-244.)