

# All-night raves in ruined church

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**ALL-NIGHT** rave parties are being organised in one of the oldest churches in South Wales by two men who say they are using the entrance money to do up the derelict building.

Party-goers travel to the 13th century ruin on the outskirts of Cardiff from as far away as Swansea. Gatherings are also held for those in their early teens.

But legal action is now being taken by South Glamorgan County Council who own the church because the men are trespassing.

The police have been called to the hill-top St Mary's church at Caerau, Ely, on "numerous occasions."

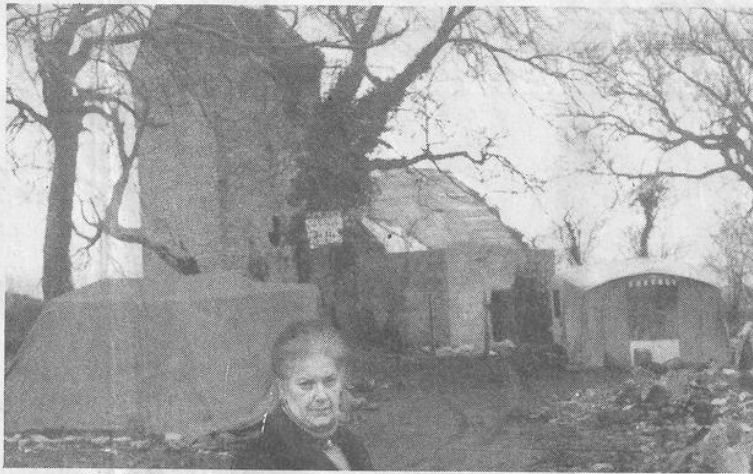
Said Superintendent David A'herne: "We have found children in their early teens there who have been reported missing and returned them to their parents."

He added: "The men tell us they are born-again Christians who are going to convert the children of Ely."

## People disturbed

Police have also tackled complaints of noise and been asked to remove vehicles parked on the road leading up the hill.

Said Mr A'herne: "We are concerned because it is out of the way, children could be endangered. That's why we are working closely with the



**COMPLAINTS RECEIVED:** Coun Mrs Jacqui Gasson at the old St Mary's Church

local council and local councillors to find a solution."

Coun Mrs Jacqui Gasson said she has received complaints from people who are disturbed by party-goers when they leave at late hours.

She said: "I am very concerned that parents might not know where their children are and that organisers have not been properly vetted."

Mrs Gasson added: "These parties must be stopped although I recognise that the inside of the church and the grounds have been cleared of rubble."

The two men, Mr Jamie "Pickles" Selby and 17-year-old Gareth Wall, both from Barry, live in a caravan and tent at the church entrance,

which overlooks the Culverhouse Cross to Docks Link Road.

Mr Wall said that early evening parties were held for younger teenagers twice a week, "to keep them off the streets" and adult all-night raves on Fridays.

"We have had four so far and just asked for donations but we plan to charge an entrance fee to pay for hiring equipment with the rest going to pay for doing up the building," he said.

The two men provide:

- Strobe lighting and loudspeakers for music.
- Heating.
- Soft drinks, while guests bring their own alcohol.

Up to 60 people a night attend the raves, after the two men moved in eight weeks ago.

The men now want the council to provide portable toilets and a skip to take away the rubbish that people have dumped in the lane before they arrived.

The council bought the church and plan to turn it into a heritage park when money is available.

They have warned the men they are trespassers

The 13th century Norman church is a Grade II listed building, but has been the target for vandals since it fell into disuse nearly 20 years ago.

Various voluntary schemes have attempted to tidy up the church.

The two men have cleared the graveyard, and one was working on the tower when we arrived yesterday.