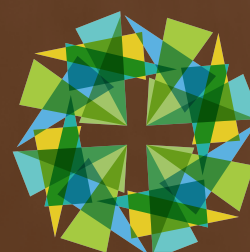


Methodist Heritage News



Autum 2016

The Half-Shilling Curate

October sees the publication of *The Half-Shilling Curate: A Personal Account of War and Faith* by Sarah Reay, which tells the story of a young Wesleyan army chaplain during the Great War.



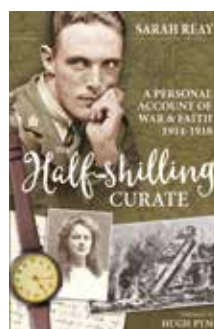
The Revd Herbert Butler Cowl, the Half-Shilling Curate.

Sarah Reay's grandfather, the Revd Herbert Butler Cowl, was fondly known by his family as "the Half-Shilling Curate". The Revd Cowl's descriptive account, dating from Christmas Eve 1914 to the end of hostilities in 1919, includes his personal letters and writings, and illustrates the importance and value of faith during war.

At the outbreak of war, Herbert

volunteered to become a Wesleyan Army Chaplain and served on the Western Front. His service was cut short when he was severely wounded during heavy enemy bombardment at the Front. He was transported back to England on the hospital ship *Anglia*, which hit a German mine in the Channel. As a result of Herbert's actions on that fateful day, he became one of the first Wesleyan Army Chaplains to receive the Military Cross for exemplary gallantry.

The foreword for the book is written by Hugh Pym of the BBC. Endorsements come from the former Commander-in-Chief of the British forces, retired General Sir Peter de la Billière, and from the Revd Dr Peter Howson, author of *Muddling Through: The Organisation of British Army Chaplaincy in World War One*.



For further information or to contact the author, please visit the website at www.halfshillingcurate.com, follow @ShillingCurate on Twitter or visit the *Half-Shilling Curate* Facebook page.

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Editorial



Welcome to the autumn 2016 issue of *Heritage News*. A particular welcome to Owen Roberts, the new Methodist Heritage Officer, who introduces himself elsewhere on this page. I am sure that everyone involved in the Methodist Heritage network is very grateful to Jo Hibbard for combining her new role as the Methodist Church's Director of Engagement with an ongoing commitment to heritage over the last year.

I hope you will find the articles in this issue of *Heritage News* interesting. Following the success of last year's Mission Shaped Heritage Conference (fully reported in the last issue), two regional heritage network days are being organised this autumn, in York and Salisbury. They will provide a focus for the further development of our Methodist Heritage network; please come along if you can. Further details can be found on page 5.

Many thanks as always to George Luke and Ernest James (in Methodist Church House) for producing another issue of *Heritage News* to such a highly professional and attractively readable standard.

James Strawson

Introducing the new Methodist Heritage Officer

I am thrilled to be the new Methodist Heritage Officer. I have been working for the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the past three years, with previous experience of project management in the arts and the NHS. I have a lifelong interest in Church history and, more broadly, religious heritage, particularly the history of dissent. I'm a member of the Chapels Society and spent much of my time at HLF explaining the shades and intricacies of nonconformity, including the various strains of Methodism!

At HLF, I learned how heritage can change people's lives and inspire communities, as well as what practical and strategic factors make a successful heritage project. I hope to bring this knowledge and experience to the role.

I'm currently involved in my local Baptist church, but have both a Methodist and Anglican family background. This ecumenical richness forms an integral part of my life. Having been steeped in Methodism, I'm delighted to be working with you in our heritage networks. Jo is a hard act to follow; I'm fortunate to have all the success of the previous eight years' work to build upon. I look forward to learning from all the expertise and putting my professional experience and personal interest to good use.

Owen Roberts



Francis Asbury: correction

In the spring issue of *Heritage News*, we featured the bicentenary of the death of Francis Asbury. A reader has pointed out that the article contained two errors, for which we apologise. The voyage to Philadelphia took 55 days (4 September to 27 October 1771). Francis Asbury was in fact "set aside for the office of Superintendent" and it was to John Wesley's dismay that the term 'Bishop' was adopted, with the American Methodists calling themselves "the Methodist Episcopal Church".

Further information about early Methodist involvement in America can be found in *Methodists and their Missionary Societies 1760 – 1900* by John Pritchard (Ashgate Methodist Studies Series, Routledge, 2013).



Photos: © www.jennynightingale.co.uk

Jenny Nightingale.

Child-friendly heritage

Over the past few years, our heritage sites have increased their focus on welcoming family groups and school visits. One of the sites' key needs was a trail leaflet for each site to tell their particular Methodist story in a fun way for children. Exeter-based artist Jenny Nightingale was commissioned to illustrate a series of children's guides to Methodist heritage sites.

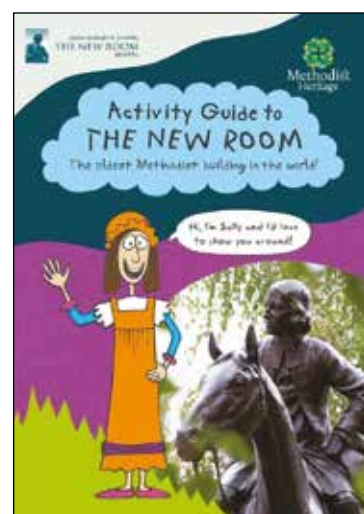
"It's been fascinating to visit and hear the stories of each Methodist Heritage site," Jenny says. "The task of re-telling these stories in a way that's accessible for children has been fantastic!"

With a mixture of facts, inspirational stories, challenges and fun activities, the guides help make visiting a heritage site an enjoyable and memorable experience for children.

"We were keen to include opportunities for children to explore faith for themselves," says Jenny. "In each of the guides, there is the option for them to pray – either in writing

or drawings – and connect with God personally. We wanted to create a resource that is more than simply academic, but also experiential. We have been sensitive in our approach to offering this opportunity, being aware of an audience of children from a mixture of different faiths and backgrounds."

The booklets are available from: Englesea Brook Chapel & Museum of Primitive Methodism; Epworth Old Rectory; the New Room in Bristol; Methodist Central Hall, Westminster and Wesley's Chapel. To see more of Jenny's work, visit: www.jennynightingale.co.uk.



Celebrating the bicentenary of Walcot Methodist Church, Bath



The Sunday morning service. The President of the Conference, the Revd Steve Wild, was the preacher.



The celebrations continue outside the church.

Walcot Methodist Church (renamed Nexus Methodist Church in 2001 following an amalgamation with Claremont Methodist Church) is celebrating its bicentenary this year.

Walcot Chapel was opened on 30 May 1816 as an 'overflow' chapel because the original Methodist chapel on King Street was no longer big enough. Three services were held on the day; the preachers were Joseph Benson (headmaster of Kingswood School), Robert Newton and Jabez Bunting.

The now Grade II listed building was designed by William Jenkins. It is typical of its period, having a porch with four columns on the front. Inside it is roughly square with a gallery on three sides and large windows. There was originally a high pulpit, which put the preacher on a level with the gallery. By 1819 an organ (moved from the Assembly Rooms and costing £168) had been

installed. The handsome wooden case is still in place and has its own official listing; the internal workings have been modernised. It is believed to be the longest-serving organ in a Methodist church.

The climax of the bicentenary year was the weekend of 28-30 May, with a Sunday morning congregation of 170 and a sermon from the President of the Methodist Conference, the Revd Steve Wild. There was also a flower festival and a frieze made by the Junior Church to illustrate the history of the Sunday school and Junior Church.

Celebrations continue to the end of the year. For more details, visit www.nexusbath.org.uk.



Walcot Church decorated for the bicentenary weekend.

Heritage and Archives regional network days

Interested in Methodist history, archives and all things heritage?
Then this is for you.

This is a free, one-day event aimed at archivists, historians and heritage enthusiasts. It will include workshops to provide information and practical skills about:

• Saving treasures and selling tat! •

How to sort out what to keep. Assessing the significance of church objects and artefacts, recording them and using them for mission.

• Archive resources •

Some case studies (including a collection of eighteenth-century handwritten testimonies) and how such records can be used to develop today's discipleship and ministry.

• Community archives •

An introduction to the community archive websites and how people can add to these their own memories of church, of old chapels, or stories about their ancestors.

• Radical Wesley •

Paul Morrison, from the Joint Public Issues Team, asks if Methodists forget their legacy of radicalism and overlook its resonance today.

• Case study •

A case study from Surrey on effective ways to use your church anniversary for mission.

There will be an update on the latest news from the Heritage Committee, and our colleagues in the Discipleship & Ministries Learning Network will be available over lunch to talk about their work. There will also be an opportunity for you to share and showcase your project or services.

We are delighted to welcome as a guest speaker Jill Baker, Vice-President Designate for the Conference and former President of Methodist Women in Britain, who will talk about Methodist Pilgrimage.

Both events will start at 9.30am for registration and close at 4.00pm. Refreshments and lunch will be provided.

If you would like to book a place at either the York or the Salisbury event, please contact Diane Foster, Methodist Heritage Administrator, at fosterd@methodistchurch.org.uk or call 020 7467 5117.

For any more information, or to talk about a showcase for your project, contact Owen Roberts, Methodist Heritage Officer, at robertso@methodistchurch.org.uk or call 020 7467 5164.

Venues

Saturday 1 October

Central Methodist Church,
St Saviourgate, York YO1 8NQ.

Saturday 5 November

Salisbury Methodist Church,
St Edmund's Church Street,
Salisbury SP1 1EF.



Left to right:
Mike Rose, Gary
Best and David
Worthington

Work to construct the new visitor centre in the Horsefair Courtyard of the New Room began in January 2016 and is scheduled to be completed in spring 2017.

Good progress on the Horsefair project at the New Room/John Wesley's Chapel in Bristol



Above: Artist's impression - external view from Horsefair
Below: Artist's impression - internal view from Horsefair chapel doors



A glass atrium will connect the existing chapel and the new three-storey building, which will include a café and shop, an expanded library and archive centre and an education suite. The expanded museum in the preachers' rooms above the chapel will tell the story of how the Wesleys and the Methodist movement in Bristol changed the world in the eighteenth century and how it continues to shape it today.

The project team is led by Gary Best as warden, supported by Mike Rose as deputy warden and David Worthington as manager. The project is supported financially by the Heritage Lottery Fund, with additional funds from the Methodist Church and the Bristol District, amongst others.

The New Room is the most visited Methodist Heritage site in the UK, with over 25,000 visitors per annum. The new project is seeking to double the number of visitors who engage with this city centre location, which remains in active ministry to local, national and international visitors 277 years after John Wesley laid the foundation stone for the building in May 1739.

Alan Rose (1937-2016)

Distinguished Methodist historian
and long-serving member of the
Wesley Historical Society



Alan Rose was the eleventh editor of the *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* and the first layperson to be appointed to that office, succeeding the Revd John C Bowmer as editor in 1981 and continuing in office until 2011. He brought a wealth of experience to the role, serving as a local preacher for over half a century and also as a circuit steward in the Ashton-under-Lyne Circuit. He also brought

a detailed knowledge of Methodist sources, history and heritage as a district archivist, a former member of the Methodist Church Archives and Local History Committee and as a respected local historian in the north-west of England.

Alan was born in Higher Openshaw, Manchester, and having attended the William Hulme Grammar School, studied chemistry at Manchester

University. There followed a teaching qualification at Durham University, and later a degree in history from the Open University. His first teaching post was at a boys' comprehensive school in Droylsden and he subsequently taught history at Stamford High School, Ashton-under-Lyne, from 1971 to 1989.

After taking early retirement, Alan worked as a tutor for the Workers' Educational Association and established a small business selling books, predominantly Church history. Indeed, his sons recall no family outing being complete without a visit to a second-hand bookshop! Alan's knowledge of second-hand books proved invaluable in helping to raise funds for the development of Englesea Brook as a heritage centre for Primitive Methodism.

During his editorship of the *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, Alan sought to extend the coverage of the non-Wesleyan dimensions of Methodism at both local and connexional level, with a special interest in the hitherto-neglected Methodist New Connexion (MNC).



Mount Zion Chapel, Halifax
Photo: © Anthony Greenwood

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Dates for your diary...

Group Leisure Travel Trade Show



Hall 8 – Travel Row 18

www.grouptravelshow.com

Regional Network Days

Saturday 1 October (York)

Saturday 5 November (Salisbury)

See page 5 for details.

J P “Percy” Martin, the Uncle Books and Quentin Blake exhibition

**7-21 October, John Wesley’s Chapel,
The New Room, Bristol BS1 3JE**

Includes one-day conference, *Writing and Publishing in Bristol*, on 15 October. For further details, email Jamesgibbs@btinternet.com

Churches Visitor & Tourism Association

21-22 October, St Alban’s Abbey

Church tour on the Friday at 2pm. Symposium & AGM on the Saturday, 10am-4pm. Members £20, Non-members £25. For details, see www.cvta.org.uk

Historic Religious Buildings Alliance

30 November, St. Alban’s Centre, Baldwin Gardens, London EC1N 7AB

Open Day and ‘the Big Update’. For details, go to www.hrballiance.co.uk

SAVE THE DATE Wesley Historical Society Annual Lecture and AGM

**Saturday 1 July 2017, Kingswood School,
Lansdown, Bath BA1 5RS**

The full programme for the day includes a talk by Gary Best (a former headmaster of Kingswood School) on the role of Kingswood School in Methodist education, and the Society’s annual lecture (also by Gary Best): *John Cennick – the first lay preacher*. Optional visit to John Wesley’s Chapel, the New Room, in Bristol on 2 July. For details, email johnahargreaves@blueyonder.co.uk.

from previous page

Alan often recalled that his curiosity in this branch of Methodism was sparked by discovering a commemorative spoon inscribed “MNC” during his Sunday school days. He became a leading authority on the history of the MNC, which was the subject of his 1990 Wesley Historical Society Lecture, *The Methodist New Connexion, 1797-1907: Portrait of a Church*. The lecture concluded with the observation that although the MNC ceased to exist as a separate Church in 1907, “its traditions have been absorbed into a larger Methodism ... yet it deserves to be remembered as a distinctive member of the Methodist family and the Holy Catholic Church”. In 1979 Alan collated a list of Methodist New Connexion circuits and ministers and was delighted to witness the development of Mount Zion Chapel at Halifax as a heritage centre, reflecting its Methodist New Connexion as well as its Wesleyan roots.

Alan’s publications included a two-volume history of Methodism in Ashton-under-Lyne (1969) and he was joint editor with Sylvia A Harrop of *Victorian Ashton* (1974), to which he contributed a chapter on Ashton churches and chapels.

As Chairman of the Tameside Local History Forum he helped to stimulate interest in the history of the borough and served as an adviser to the council’s blue plaque committee. He was also an adviser to the local studies library at Tameside, the John Rylands University Library Manchester and Chetham’s Library, Manchester.

Alan was a member of the Methodist Sacramental Fellowship and his love of the Wesley hymns was reflected in his membership of the Charles Wesley Society. He was a long-time member of the Oldham Choral Society.

Alan and Glenda were married during his time at Droylsden. They had two sons, Michael and Paul, who both paid moving tributes to their father at his funeral service at Stalybridge Methodist Church: “Remembered for his cheerfulness and sharp sense of humour, he was a good and peaceful man who never dictated his beliefs to us, rather living his Christianity by example.” The whole occasion was a fitting thanksgiving for Alan’s life of service and testimony to his faith.

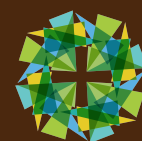
John A Hargreaves, General Secretary of the Wesley Historical Society

The deadline for submission of articles for the Spring 2017 newsletter is 9 January 2017. Please send your ideas to: **Owen Roberts, Methodist Heritage Officer, Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR**
Tel: 020 7467 5164 Email: robertso@methodistchurch.org.uk

You can visit the Methodist Heritage website at:
www.methodistheritage.org.uk

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For more information about what the Christian people called Methodists believe and what the Methodist Church does in Britain and around the world today, visit www.methodist.org.uk.



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