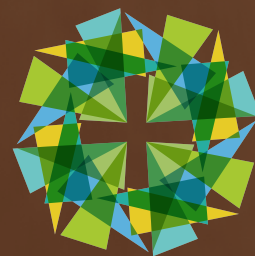


# Methodist Heritage News



Autumn 2010

## A History of the World in 100 Objects

*A History of the World* is a major new project and unique partnership between the BBC, the British Museum and 350 museums and institutions across the country. In addition to choosing 100 objects to illustrate a history of the world delivered through a series of short Radio 4 programmes, hub museums across the UK were also invited to identify 10 items of major historical significance to their respective cities.

From the Bristol area, alongside a drawing of the slave ship *Brooks*, Isambard Kingdom Brunel's despatch case and Banksy's *Paint Pot Angel*, the hymns of **Charles Wesley** were featured in a selection of the 'top ten'. The Bristol Museum curators recognised the significance of Wesley's hymns and their relevance to church worship today. Charles had a close association with Bristol, and lived in the city from 1749 to 1771 with his wife Sally and their eight children.

In BBC Radio Humberside's featured list, a **micrograph portrait of John Wesley** was selected to stand beside Amy Johnson's flying suit, a box of Reckitts Blue and the Wroot Jade Neolithic axe head. The portrait is an artistic representation of John's features made up of 14,000 words from his

biography. It was created by Louis Gluck Rosenthal in Sheffield in the 1850s and took three years to complete.

*The micrograph portrait of John Wesley*



Photo: © The Old Rectory, Epworth



*Charles Wesley's study where many of the hymns were written*

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In this exciting first edition of *Heritage News*, Leslie Griffiths, chair of the Heritage Committee, lends us his reflections on the committee's work over the past two years. We also feature the ex Methodist president's recent trip to the West Indies to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas, where an extremely rare and precious item from our Connexional archive played a leading role.

Over the coming months we'll be featuring a number of Methodist heritage sites and showcasing their developments in progress. All of our key sites now have 'accredited' museum status and, in this autumn edition, Claire Potter celebrates and explains the importance of this for The Old Rectory - the childhood home of John and Charles Wesley.

Two of our key sites - the New Room in Bristol and The Old Rectory at Epworth - have been contributing to BBC Radio 4's series *A History of the World in 100 Objects*. You can read more about their involvement in this very popular and widely publicised project on page 1.

And finally, I am proud to announce the publication of the all-new *Methodist Heritage Handbook*. This free visitor guide to historic Methodist places of interest was published in March 2010 and I'm very pleased to say that it has been a huge success and we've just ordered a further 10,000 copies to send out across the Connexion.

Jo Hibbard, Methodist Heritage Officer

## Dear Reader

It's my pleasure to write this word of greeting and to introduce you to this important publication. I'm chair of the Methodist Church's Connexional Heritage Committee, which has now been in existence for two years. Everything we do or discuss is underpinned by the necessity to yoke heritage with mission. Our core committee is constituted in a way that allows us to maintain contact with our historic sites, our archival holdings and also our potential audiences.

Innovative understandings of mission can flow as much from an understanding of our heritage as from anything that could be called 'fresh expressions'. That may sound paradoxical but it's true for all that.

And so I welcome you to these pages. This is yet another contribution that we hope will help to forge a sense of unity amongst those interested in heritage and a sense of purpose amongst those who want to use our heritage to further the mission of the Church.

The Lord bless you and bless you kindly.

Leslie Griffiths, Chair of the Methodist Heritage Committee

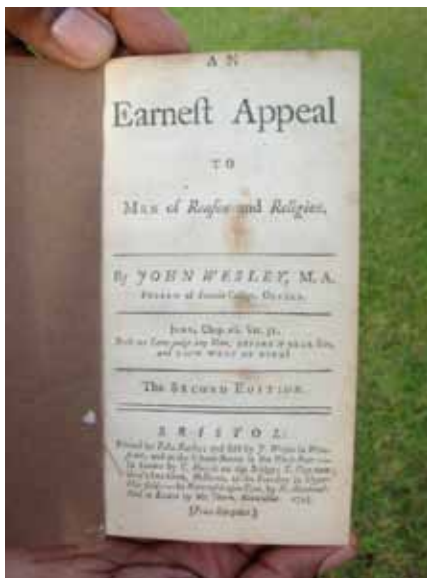


For the latest news, events, resources visit: **Methodist Heritage** at [www.methodist.org.uk/heritage](http://www.methodist.org.uk/heritage)

# To Antigua, with love

In May 2010 the president, vice-president and other representatives of the British Methodist Church, attended the celebrations for the 250th anniversary of the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas (MCCA) in Antigua.

During the main service David Gamble, the president of the Conference of the Methodist Church in Britain, handed over to the president of the MCCA a 1743 original second edition copy of a pamphlet by John Wesley. This unprecedented withdrawal of such a publication from our collection was approved because we have several copies of each of the editions of this pamphlet. Every one is unique however, containing contemporary margin notes and different end pages depending on the particular print run from the 1700s. It was assured that the document would be well protected and securely housed after transfer, particularly because, as part of the 250th anniversary celebrations, the MCCA intends to have its archives upgraded and extended.



## The handing over

The Revd Thomas Quenet, partnership coordinator with World Church Relationships in the Connexional Team, attended the ceremonial 'handing over' and recalled, "At the five-hour service, when David Gamble spoke of how he had acquired the pamphlet just hours before his departure, there was a noticeable intake of breath by the congregation. I am sure this was because they appreciated the importance of the gift and the effort it took to get it released so that it could be placed in the ownership of the MCCA."

## A history of the MCCA

But why did the Church want to give this particular and rare 18th century document to the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas? The MCCA website tells us that...

"Sometime in 1755, Nathaniel Gilbert was ill and sent his daughter, Mary, who was five years old, to fetch a certain book from another room. While we do not know what book he wanted, the book that Mary brought to him was a treatise by John Wesley, *An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*. This had been sent to him by his brother, Francis, and was in fact not the book he had wanted at the time. However, with time on his



hands, the ill Nathaniel Gilbert read it and was never the same man again.

"As a result of this, Gilbert, two years later, journeyed to England, with three of his slaves. A drawing room meeting was arranged in Wandsworth on January 15 1759, with John Wesley as the preacher. Nathaniel Gilbert and two of his slaves were converted. He returned to the West Indies in 1759, and with his return Gilbert began to preach to his slaves in Antigua."

## The broken chains of slavery

This was the beginning of the MCCA. Gilbert preached from his doorstep to his slaves and today steps from the plantation house are located at Methodist Church House, Wesley's Chapel and the World Methodist Council headquarters in Lake Junaluska, USA. The stone at Wesley's Chapel forms part of the font and is carved with the broken chains of slavery.

Photos, bottom left: John Wesley's pamphlet, top right: President David Gamble hands over the pamphlet to President Mulrain  
© Richard Vautrey, used with permission



# The Tolpuddle Martyrs



**M**ethodism is often quoted as having been hugely influential on British social, spiritual and economic development in the 19th century, and several of our heritage sites have stories linked to that impact. One of the most famous examples has to be the story of the 'Tolpuddle Martyrs' - a group of agricultural labourers from Dorset who formed a trade union in 1834 to protest about continual reductions in their wages to starvation levels.

Photo © Lloyd Thomas

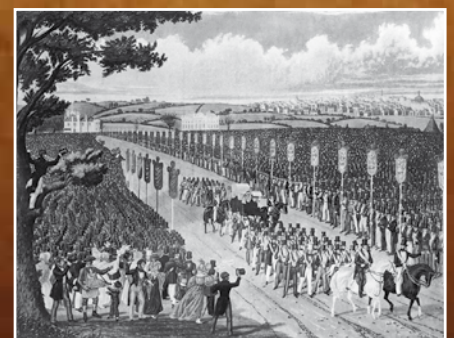


Martyr's sculpture, Tolpuddle

Local landowners and Church leaders had the group arrested, convicted and transported to Australia. Five of the martyrs were sent to New South Wales, but George Loveless - a Methodist local preacher and the leader of the group - was transported separately to Tasmania (then Van Diemen's Land), landing in Hobart on 4 September 1834.

At this travesty of justice, a huge outcry swept across the country. Petitions and protest meetings were organised to

demand the men's freedom and thousands marched through London. Two years later, after the intervention of the home secretary, the martyrs were eventually pardoned and released.



Demonstration in London in 1834 against the transportation of the Tolpuddle Martyrs

Photo © Photos.com

## HERITAGE NEWS FROM TOLPUDDLE

### Hobart comes to Tolpuddle

In the summer of 2009, the Tolpuddle Methodist Chapel in Dorset and Hobart's Wesley 'in the city' Methodist Church in Tasmania renewed their historical links and Hobart's minister, The Revd David Parker and his wife Chris made the long journey from Tasmania to Dorset. Escorted by Methodist Heritage Officer Jo Hibbard, David and Chris visited the courtroom in Dorchester where the martyrs were tried and were introduced to the Friends of Tolpuddle Methodist Chapel development group. It soon became clear that in Tasmania the Martyrs are remembered with affection. George Loveless worked in servitude in Glen Ayr before getting his full pardon, and today the winery there produces a 'Tolpuddle' Pinot Noir.

Through online contact and renewed friendships, both churches hope in future to share their sides of the George Loveless story and their experiences of being the Church in Dorset and Tasmania today.



Methodist Heritage Officer Jo Hibbard meets the Revd David Parker and his wife Chris outside the Martyrs' Memorial in Tolpuddle.

### Working together

In a very moving service in April 2010, the Methodist and Anglican churches in Tolpuddle celebrated the signing of a covenant which signified the two groups working together in the town. The Methodist chair of district preached and the Bishop of Sherborne made a point of including an apology on behalf of the Church of England for the part the 19th century Church played in persecuting the Martyrs.

### Developing the chapel

The new development group at the Methodist chapel in Tolpuddle has recently been awarded a Methodist Heritage and Mission grant to develop new display materials and explore ways to make the chapel more welcoming for visitors.

Every year approximately 40,000 people visit the TUC Tolpuddle Martyrs' Museum, which sits at the opposite end of the village to the chapel. Around 7-8,000 attend the Martyrs' Festival in July, which concludes with a service in the Methodist chapel. Find out more at: [www.tolpuddlemartyrs.org.uk](http://www.tolpuddlemartyrs.org.uk).

The chapel development group are keen to link with the other attractions in Tolpuddle – the museum, the tree where the Martyrs met and the grave of James Hammett, the only one of the Martyrs to re-settle in Tolpuddle on his return from Australia.

Photo © David Wighton



Grave of 'Tolpuddle Martyr' James Hammett



Tolpuddle Martyrs were Methodists and it is presumed they worshipped in this chapel, built in 1818



The Tolpuddle men gathered here, in Thomas Standfield's cottage, to take their oath of secrecy and solidarity



The TUC's annual 'Tolpuddle Martyrs Day' rally

Photo © David Wighton



Photos: left, George Oliver and Frederick James Hall standing outside 8 Church Street, right, Actress Shirley Anne Field, unveiling the plaque.  
© Action for Children

## 140 years of Action for Children in London

Action for Children (formerly known as National Children's Homes) celebrated its 140th birthday on 9 July 2009 and marked the anniversary by installing a blue memorial plaque at the site of its inaugural children's home in London.

Actress Shirley Anne Field, who grew up in an Action for Children children's home called Edgworth, near Bolton, joined Pam Chesters, chair of the charity, to unveil the plaque (supported by a donation from the Methodist Church's Archives and History Committee) in the presence of representatives of the Methodist Church.

Ms Field, now one of the charity's ambassadors, said, "Having grown up in one of their homes I know first hand just how valuable Action for Children's work is in supporting children and vulnerable young people. Being separated from my own family

aged four was an extremely distressing experience. However, Action for Children gave me a safe childhood.

My two older sisters were not as lucky, so not as safe and nourished as myself and my younger brother. When I look at my grandchildren today I give a silent thank you to that home. I'm grateful for the childhood it gave me."

Action for Children was first conceived by Methodist minister Thomas Bowman Stephenson in 1869.

Concern at the living conditions of children in London and a determination to provide a safe, friendly environment for his parish's young people led Stephenson to

establish the first children's home at 8 Church Street (now Exton Street) near Waterloo later that year. The first residents of the home - George Oliver and Frederick James Hall - arrived shortly after it opened.

Since then, the charity has transformed the lives of thousands of vulnerable young people, helping them to overcome problems ranging from neglect and abuse to homelessness and family breakdown. It currently works with approximately 156,000 of the UK's most vulnerable children, young people and families, running around 420 projects that provide care and support.



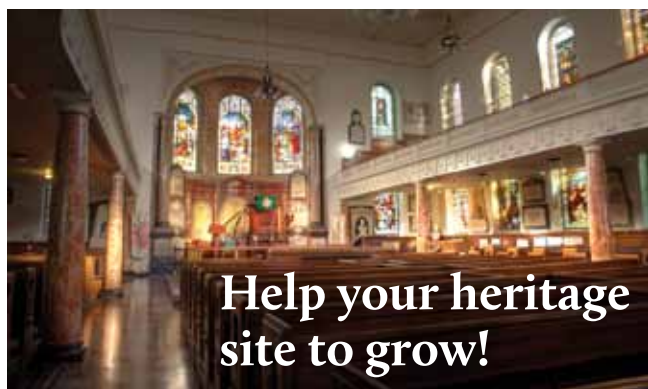
### Christmas came early at The Old Rectory

There was an early Christmas present in December 2009 for The Old Rectory in Epworth - the childhood home of the Wesleys - with the news that it had been granted full accreditation as a museum.

"This is a very significant step forward and is the result of a great deal of commitment and hard work, much of it by volunteers," said The Revd Claire Potter, development manager and curator of The Old Rectory.

The team at The Old Rectory held a celebration in February where local MP Mr Ian Cawsey unveiled the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA)'s Accreditation Certificate. On the same day a new exhibition room was also opened to the public featuring several recently restored pictures, including two satirical Hogarth prints.





## Help your heritage site to grow!

If you ask me why you should travel half way around the country to attend the Methodist Heritage Sites' Network meeting then the answer is simple. It will help your own Methodist heritage site to grow!

- You will meet with others who may feel that they too are 'ploughing a lonely furrow' and receive fellowship and support.
- You will discover that even the four main Methodist heritage sites have their problems in relation to property repairs, finance and questions like "How can we pay even one staff member?"
- You will see real progress in action. It's not just the 'session' or the 'company' that will do the talking – it will be all around you, in the very fibre of the buildings and displays.

During the last few years I have seen imaginative plans put forward by The Old Rectory at Epworth, Wesley's Chapel in London and the New Room at Bristol. Some that were originally much smaller in significance (like Englesea Brook, Westminster Central Hall and Tolpudde) are now at different stages of growing 'big', and maybe even 'very big'. I have seen open air secular sites like the Black Country Museum, Ironbridge Museum and Beamish acquiring a chapel and then looking for the best way to develop its impact on visitors and I have discovered that Methodist artefacts can turn up anywhere!

The Methodist Heritage Sites' Network meeting is held annually and is supported by many members of the Methodist Heritage Committee, who can offer various qualifications, experience and expertise to help you with all your questions. So whether you are a trustee, volunteer, minister or heritage site manager, or if you have an interest in any Methodist heritage site, make sure that you put the next Methodist Heritage Sites' Network day in your diary now: **Saturday 5 March 2011 at Wesley's Chapel, City Road, London.**

Stephen Hatcher, Chair of the Methodist Heritage Sites' Network

## A tribute to Irene Cunliffe

Mont Zion Chapel in Ogden, near Halifax, is the oldest New Connexion chapel still holding regular meetings. The present church, dating from 1815, replaced the original building of 1773 in which John Wesley preached in 1774 and 1790. The original foundation stone and sundial remain.

It was with great sadness that the Methodist Heritage Committee received news of the death of Irene Cunliffe, staunch supporter and promoter of Methodist heritage and Mount Zion Chapel.

Stephen Hatcher, chair of the Methodist Heritage Sites' Network pays tribute to Irene...

Irene was born in Halifax in 1936, the only child of Jack and Edith Cunliffe. From her father she learnt to handle a screwdriver, and from her mother, embroidery, lace making, knitting and tapestry.

Irene was a life-long teacher and a life-long learner; a committed Christian and Methodist. Being a local preacher for 45 years, a circuit and district officer for many years and a member of the Connexional Home Missions and Social Responsibility Committees meant that she had a wide experience! Methodist Homes was a charity close to her heart and for 28 years she regularly visited Glen Rosa care home at Ilkley.

Irene's organisational skills and leadership qualities meant that she was not only the person to take a wider view in relation to the potential of Mount Zion Chapel, but she was also able to do something to 'make it happen'! Her experience as a volunteer at East Riddlesden Hall, Nostell Priory and Gibson's Mill all helped to give her a vision of 'what might be' at the chapel.

Irene's promotion of the chapel continued through her involvement with Yorkshire Historic Churches Trust, English Heritage and more recently as editor of *The Dial* - Mount Zion's newsletter. Thanks to her vision and hard work Mount Zion Chapel has an exciting future.

Irene showed courage and conviction through the whole of her life. Just a few days before she died on 30 April 2010 it was my privilege to visit her in her new home at Old Well Head, Halifax. She was in good heart, full of faith, and rejoiced in all that I told her about the meeting I had just attended at Mount Zion with the West Yorkshire District.

Thank you Irene.

## OBITUARY



## Dates for your diary...

**Churches Tourism Association (CTA) Convention 2010: 'Britain Together – Sacred Steps'**

*The premier, national, residential event for everyone who'd like to open up their church building to wider audiences, learn how to enthuse visitors, and work across boundaries to link places of worship with their local communities.*

**15–17 November 2010** at The Hayes, Swanwick, Derbyshire

Further details and booking from:  
[www.churchestourism.info](http://www.churchestourism.info)

### Methodist Heritage Sites' Network Meeting

*A free all-day event for all those with interest in Methodist historic places, especially anyone involved in managing, developing and presenting Methodist heritage sites.*

**Saturday 5 March 2011**, 10.30/11.00am – 4.30pm (times TBC)

Wesley's Chapel, City Road, London EC1Y 1AU  
Further details from: Jo Hibbard, Methodist Heritage Officer Tel: 020 7467 5257  
Email: [hibbardj@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:hibbardj@methodistchurch.org.uk)

### Wesley Historical Society Annual Lecture and AGM

*Dr Eryn White, Senior Lecturer in History, University of Aberystwyth on 'Wesley, Whitefield and Wales'*

**Saturday 25 June 2011**, 10.30/11.00am – 4.00pm  
Gladstone's Library, St Deiniol's, Hawarden, Flintshire CH5 3DF

Overnight accommodation available at the Library

Further details from: Dr J A Hargreaves,  
7 Haugh Shaw Road, Halifax HX1 3AH  
Tel: 01422 250780  
Email: [johnhargreaves@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:johnhargreaves@blueyonder.co.uk)



## Spreading the good news of our Methodist heritage

**H**ave you got your copy of the *Methodist Heritage Handbook*?

If you are a trustee or volunteer, have you ordered extras for your Methodist heritage site and some to offer to your nearest Tourist Information Centre? If not, contact Methodist Publishing on 01733 235962 – and order some for your church too!

Nearly 1,000 copies were given out at the handbook's launch in March at the Best of Britain & Ireland Travel Trade Forum in London and since then, over 10,000 copies of the handbook have been distributed around Britain and beyond, with interest from as far as the USA, Malaysia and New Zealand. News of the launch has spread far and wide, and Jo Hibbard, the Methodist Church's Heritage officer, has been interviewed by several BBC local radio stations.

Both the *Methodist Heritage Handbook* and the Methodist Heritage Committee have been created using some of the money generously approved by the Methodist Conference to establish 'Methodist Heritage and Contemporary Mission' work. A new website will soon be available showcasing our heritage sites, promoting features and events programmes, and providing links to the main archive collections and research being undertaken on the history of Methodism.

## Places of worship at risk

**T**he Listed Places of Worship Grant

**Scheme** allows listed places of worship to claim back all the VAT incurred on repairs and maintenance work to the building, professional fees and repair works to fixtures such as bells and organs. Since its introduction in April 2001 over £107 million has been given back to listed places of worship across the UK.

The scheme has provided great relief to places of worship faced with raising enormous sums for maintenance and repair, and has enabled those who look after these valuable heritage and community buildings to maintain them for future generations. However the scheme is due to come to an end on 31 March 2011. To learn more go to [www.lpwscheme.org.uk](http://www.lpwscheme.org.uk) or [www.savetherefund.info](http://www.savetherefund.info).



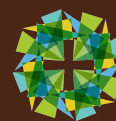
## Do you have a heritage story to share or promote?

**W**e are keen to hear about your stories of using Methodist heritage to support the mission of the Church. Only events relevant to the whole Connexion and taking place in the 12 months after the month of publication of the newsletter will be advertised (ie from and including April 2011 for the Spring edition). However, as the website is developed, more opportunities to publicise your upcoming local Methodist heritage events will become available via the online calendar.

The deadline for submission of articles for the Spring 2011 newsletter is **Monday 12 January**. Please send your ideas to: **Jo Hibbard, Methodist Heritage Officer, Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR** Tel: 020 7467 5257 Email: [hibbardj@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:hibbardj@methodistchurch.org.uk) You can visit the Methodist Heritage website at: [www.methodist.org.uk/heritage](http://www.methodist.org.uk/heritage)

*Heritage News* is the bi-annual newsletter of **Methodist Heritage**, part of the Methodist Church in Great Britain, a Registered Charity no. 1132208

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](http://www.methodist.org.uk).



**Methodist  
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