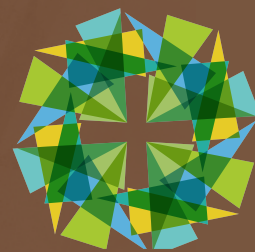


# Methodist Heritage News



Autumn 2012

**Sarah Friswell** was appointed in January as the new chair of the Methodist Heritage Committee. Here she sets out her vision:

## Transformational heritage

**H**eritage is not just something written about in books. Heritage is not just about bricks and mortar. Heritage is about engaging with the past through the present, and enabling it to help us shape the future. It is about people and their stories.

As British Methodists, we are lucky to live in a country with a rich heritage. We are surrounded by the buildings of yesteryear, a long and revered history of a 'great' nation. We are guardians of one of the most spoken languages in the world. But in twenty first-century Britain our society is crumbling, poverty is rife, the economy is in tatters and only a little over 200,000 people attend Methodist churches each week.

We could get depressed, but I for one am excited by the opportunities that are presented to us each week in our chapels, churches and at our heritage sites. People of faith and of no faith can be transformed by a visit to a chapel or a significant heritage place in ways never thought possible.

As guardians of our heritage we must never underestimate the real opportunities that exist to give people a glimpse of God.

We need to enthuse our own people and give them confidence to be part of telling the story, reflecting faith through actions. It may be through the comments of a volunteer steward – well trained and knowledgeable – who speaks of their

*...continued on page 2*



### There is a big birthday approaching!

Starting on 3 October, Methodist Central Hall in Westminster will have a year-long programme of special services and events to mark its centenary celebrations and the opening of its new visitor centre.

*Find out more on pages 4-5...*

## In this issue

### PAGE 2

Editorial  
Transformational heritage  
*continued*

### PAGE 3

Epworth Old Rectory  
responds to the Cultural  
Olympiad

### PAGES 4 & 5

Westminster Central Hall  
- 100 Years of Worship  
and Witness

### PAGE 6

Gwennap Pit

### PAGE 7

The archives of the  
Independent Methodists  
Heritage Sites 2013  
Network Conference

### PAGE 8

Methodist Heritage  
Handbook  
Dates for your diary

## Transformational heritage ...continued

own faith through showing visitors the font where they personally were baptized. It might be on a school visit, when the children are encouraged to say a prayer for someone dear before they dash off to another exciting craft activity. It may be the cup of tea offered to an elderly lady who, walking past the church, wanted a few minutes' rest.

The great thing about this form of mission is that it can be done by anyone. This is one of the strengths of Methodism. Its message is clear: all are welcome and valued.

Preserving our heritage just for people who like studying history would be a sure route to mothballing Methodism forever. We are called

to be a movement of people for God – not an established Church, grounded and immovable. So we can feel guilty if we ponder too long on our many assets. But we need to preserve and invest in the best of what we have. How we make those assets relevant to the modern-day tourist, the unchurched or the cynic is what counts. There is no room for being half-hearted, for squandering financial resources or for lagging behind the times. At our heritage sites, the quality of our visitor interpretation must be the best we can offer. We must nurture our volunteers who work as 'welcomers' and guides, meeting and greeting hundreds of visitors from around the world on behalf of the Methodist Church. We must provide excellent hospitality. We must be prepared to adapt to our visitors' needs. We must

provide resources for prayer and respond in times of trial. We should mark celebrations and anniversaries. Many of these actions could be true in any heritage/tourism context. The challenge is to offer them in a way which reflects Methodist values and draws on the particular history of the particular site.

To conclude, I would like to mention pilgrimage briefly. This is not a very Methodist concept, but has validity in the task we seek to undertake. Even if we wouldn't call them such, the visitors to our heritage sites are pilgrims. They are open to encounter people on the way, they are prepared to be surprised, they have time to listen and learn. Pilgrimage is transformational – this is what the work of Methodist Heritage should facilitate.

## Editorial



The Methodist Conference met in Plymouth, Devon, in the summer. Gwennap Pit Methodist Heritage site in Cornwall was the unique venue for this year's Diaconal Ordination Service (see p6). Gwennap Pit was reputedly one of John Wesley's favourite places to preach, and today it is part of the Cornish Mining World Heritage Site.

As part of our holiday this year, we decided to try to visit every Cornish Methodist heritage site listed in the *Heritage Handbook* (there's a new edition out; see p8). And we did manage it – except for one. Access to Innis (Bible Christian) Methodist Church is down a narrow lane and we didn't want to risk our transport!

All the sites are well worth visiting and we were

made welcome at every one in typical Methodist fashion. You can still visit the 'prophet's chamber' in the Wesley Cottage, Trewint, where John Wesley stayed on several occasions. Penrose is a beautifully restored Bible Christian Chapel where you can see tiered pews – something new to us. 'Three Eyes' Chapel at Kerley Downs, Baldhu, is the only one remaining of three chapels built by Billy Bray, an early nineteenth-century Bible Christian who featured in our spring edition. Billy loved his Lord and Saviour, and is reputed to have said, "If they were to put me in a barrel, I would shout 'glory' out through the bunghole! Praise the Lord!" Gwithian has one of the few remaining thatched chapels and the only one remaining in Cornwall, rescued for Methodism in 1999. We also discovered, in St Ives Museum, a telescope purported to have belonged at one time to John Wesley! With all this Methodist Heritage, the Sites' Network is planning to hold its first-ever conference in Cornwall next Spring.

**John Miles, Commissioning Editor**



Photos: left to right  
Wesley Cottage, Trewint  
Gwennap Pit  
'Three Eyes' Chapel at  
Kerley Downs, Baldhu  
Innis (Bible Christian)  
Methodist Church  
© TimEPhotography



## Epworth Old Rectory responds to the Cultural Olympiad



In this special year our special exhibition is celebrating the global family of Methodism. From Antigua to Australia; from Sri Lanka to Sierra Leone, Methodism has an impact. The exhibition allows visitors to discover how that missionary movement began, and to find out about some of the people who made it happen.

The exhibition focuses on three missionaries' histories – Thomas Coke, Francis Asbury and Thomas Birch Freeman – while recognising that there are many more that could have been included, some whose names will never be known. The exhibition has allowed us to explore sharing the collections held in different Methodist places to really bring the exhibition to life. So we have a portrait, an ordination parchment and a letter of Thomas Coke's, on loan from Wesley's Chapel; a portrait of Thomas Birch Freeman on loan from Oxford Brookes

University; and some ceramics on loan from a private collection.

The exhibition was launched by Bishop Ivan Abrahams, general secretary of the World Methodist Council. It includes a huge world map with every member church of the World Methodist Council plotted on it, which gives a dramatic visual impression of the sheer size and variety of the global Methodist family.

The exhibition also focuses on the impact of global Methodism. The family is so vibrant around the world that to focus only on the *history* of mission would be telling only half of the story. So five modern Methodists, from very different parts of the world, were invited to contribute how the Methodist church has influenced them. The exhibition allows visitors to hear the voices of today; to view their photographs and see some objects that belong to them. We have a Brazilian Methodist book of offices, a Ghanaian Methodist primary school

uniform, a Korean Sunday School hymnbook, a Jamaican Methodist order of service and a Sri Lankan certificate of Baptism.

The exhibition was only made possible through a grant from the Heritage Stream of the Connexional Grants Committee. The recording, sound and lighting equipment that we bought will be available for the use of other Methodist heritage sites after the exhibition closes at the end of October.

Epworth Old Rectory also held a family fun and sports day in April, where children and some adults ran wacky races for the glory of standing on a podium and being awarded a medal. We also hosted the *Wesley and Wellbeing* display during April.

All of this has enabled our visitors to make all sorts of connections with this sporting year – through the global family, sports, wellbeing and a sense of pride in their identity.

Claire Potter, development manager



1.



2.



5.



3.



4.

Paul Moynihan,  
archivist at  
Westminster's  
Methodist Central  
Hall, marks its  
centenary...

# 100 years of worship and witness

**W**estminster's Methodist Central Hall was built as the result of a huge Methodist fundraising initiative to mark the centenary of John Wesley's death. The 'Wesleyan Methodist Twentieth Century Fund' was established in 1898 with the challenging aim of raising a million guineas from a million Methodists (when a guinea – which is equivalent to £1.05p in today's money – was probably the equivalent of the average working person's weekly wage). It became known as the 'Million Guinea Fund'.

The aim of the Fund was to help facilitate a great push forward in Methodism at the turn of the century. To maintain equality, each donor was only allowed to donate one guinea, and received in return a personalised, illuminated certificate. Children who donated a shilling (5p) were awarded a commemorative John Wesley medallion instead. They raised over £4,162, and 90,000 medallions were struck.

The wealthy would often donate more (ten guineas, for example), but would name themselves and nine other people as the donors; either

relatives who had died or neighbours too poor to save a guinea themselves. All donors were invited to write their names and addresses on special pages, which were bound into 50 volumes called the Historic Roll. Donors wishing to be anonymous often signed as 'Mr Wesley'. The roll is over 17,000 pages long and remains on display at Central Hall.

The Fund finally closed in 1904 having raised a staggering 1,024,501 guineas (£1,075,727), allocated as follows:

- £300,000 for buildings such as chapels, Sunday schools, manses

- and soldiers' and sailors' homes
- £200,000 for educational work including training colleges, schools and scholarships
- £100,000 for foreign missions
- £100,000 for home missions and temperance work
- £50,000 for children's homes.

A further £250,000 was set aside to build a national focus in London, which would act as church, central offices for the Wesleyan Methodist Church and as a conference centre: Methodist Central Hall, Westminster.





6.



7.



8.

Methodist Central Hall stands on the site formerly occupied by the Royal Aquarium (primarily a music hall). The design for this “monumental building of Methodism” was chosen from 132 entries in an anonymous architectural competition. The rules stated that the design must not be Gothic and should not resemble a traditional church, so that people who had no connections with the Christian Church would feel comfortable and be willing to enter. The winning design, submitted by Messrs Lanchester & Rickards of London, was Viennese Baroque in style, with Romanesque decoration, but the exterior has no cross or other overtly religious symbolism.

The main church, known as the Great Hall, with seating for about 2,000 people, was intended to be an open air meeting place with a roof on, to reflect the style of Wesley’s outdoor preaching ministry. Its beautifully decorated inner dome is a self-supporting ferro-concrete construction. With a diameter of 25m (82ft), it is the second largest dome of this architectural type in the world, only being surpassed by the State Library in Melbourne, Australia.

The organ, originally built by Hill & Son in 1912, was recently renovated in time for the centenary celebrations and contains over 4,000

pipes, the largest of which are 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ m (32ft). A familiar name linked to Westminster Central Hall is that of Dr William Lloyd-Webber, who was musical director for 24 years (1958–1982). It was at here that his son Andrew premiered his first musical, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, in 1968.

One of the most significant events to have been hosted at Central Hall was the inaugural meeting of the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1946. The British Prime Minister Clement Attlee welcomed the delegates from the 51 participating countries. It was at this meeting that the first secretary general and the members of the Security Council were elected. The United Nations Organisation returned to Central Hall in 1996 as part of their 50th anniversary celebrations.

Despite its prominent Westminster location, Central Hall was barely damaged during the Second World War. The lower ground floor (which includes the café today) became the largest air raid shelter in England, housing up to 2,000 people each night.

Today, 100 years on, Methodist Central Hall is still fulfilling its primary function of being a thriving and growing Christian community of all ages in the heart of London, with

regular worship, prayer, preaching, evangelism, young people’s groups and a healing ministry. And it’s not just Methodists who worship here; Baptists, the Salvation Army and Evangelical missionaries, to name but a few, also come here to pray and praise God. The Ministry Team cares for visitors, has links with Parliament and a ministry to the media. The St Vincent’s Family Project, a social care initiative, is run jointly with the Daughters of Charity, a Roman Catholic religious order, serving many families in the local area. While the national offices of the Methodist Church may have departed, those for the London District remain at Central Hall.

The third original function – that of being a conference centre – is still a very important part of the building’s life and mission; for school exams and university graduations, press conferences, political debates, award ceremonies and concerts.

The first 100 years may be over, but the work and mission of Methodist Central Hall, Westminster, goes on. Happy birthday, Central Hall!

*Photographs: 1. Illuminated certificate. 2. The Royal Aquarium. 3. Postcard: Central Hall under construction, 1911. 4. UN commemorative stamps. 5. UN 50th anniversary, commemoration plaque, 1996 6. Great Hall and organ. 7. Central Hall exterior 8. Central Hall dome.*



John Wesley first preached in Gwennap Pit (Busveal, near Redruth, Cornwall) on Sunday 5 September 1762. He went on to preach there on 18 occasions up to 1789. The Pit was possibly created originally by mining activities, but was remodelled in memory of Wesley in 1806 into the terraced 'amphitheatre' that we see today.

# Gwennap Pit

In the year when the 250th anniversary of that first preaching event will be celebrated, it was appropriate this unique amphitheatre was chosen for another 'first' – the Diaconal Order Ordination Service on Sunday 1 July, in connection with the Methodist Conference in Plymouth.



With characteristic illustrative humour, Deacon Eunice Attwood (vice-president 2010/2011), directed her address to the ordinands: Phillipus den Uil, Jennifer Jones, Belinda Letby, Jonathan Miller, Suzanne Peat and Rachel Thomas-Prasad, with Sarah McDowell, who was received into the Order. Using the pit imagery of Psalm 40, she reminded them they had been lifted by God, set on a rock and called to serve. She warned them of 'pitfalls' in ministry, advised of the need for 'pit stops' for renewal and challenged them to 'mine deep' to discover the treasures of God.

When the rain came, it did not dampen the congregation's enthusiasm in declaring the ordinands worthy of their calling, nor the volume of the spontaneous applause, which echoed round the Pit – "Far the finest," wrote John Wesley, "I know in the kingdom."

The Revd Ian Haile



Preparation, undertaken by the Pit Management Executive in liaison with the Order's warden and her staff, was aided by the completion of improvements consequent upon the Pit being, since 2006, part of the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site. Of note are new interpretive panels and a CCTV system, enabling the Pit to be viewed from the Visitor Centre.

Around 450 people gathered for the ordination service, each receiving a bag containing the service order, a Cornish pasty, a Cornish cream tea

and a plastic poncho with the Diaconal logo.

The service was led by the Revd Dr Martyn Atkins, a former president (2007/2008) and secretary of the Conference – supported by his crutch following a recent operation. Others taking part included Michael King (vice-president 2012/2013) and the Revd Juan de Dios Pena (World Church representative from El Salvador), who read the Gospel reading in Spanish. Singing was led by the White River Gospel Choir from St Austell.

## The archives of the Independent Methodists

The Independent Methodist (IM) Churches have existed since 1806 as one of Methodism's earliest offshoots. Just under 80 of them remain – usually as unpaid ministries, but always as self-governing churches. Most are situated in the north of England.

The archives of the IM Connexion (their corporate body) are now computerised and form a valuable resource for researchers wishing to find information on family histories, the histories of individual churches and aspects of social history. Events as diverse as the Peterloo Massacre, the Lancashire Cotton Famine, the Pretoria Pit Disaster and two World Wars all have echoes in the histories of IM churches.

Records include the denominational magazine, Annual Meeting minutes and over 1,000

circuit plans, plus numerous documents and artefacts from individual churches. Baptism and marriage registers are of particular value to family historians. Two finding aids relate to the denominational magazine: an index to every church report from 1823-2010, and a biographical index to over 9,000 obituaries over the same period.

Items which may be of particular interest include a programme from the funeral of Wallace Hartley, bandmaster on the Titanic; information on the origins of the famous Wingates (Temperance) Band; and insights into nineteenth century elementary education through accounts of IM day schools.

Visitors are always welcome, but advance booking is advised. Email [archives@imcgb.org.uk](mailto:archives@imcgb.org.uk) or call

Andrew Rigby on 01942 225326. The IM connexional archivist will offer assistance to first-time visitors. The archives are housed in the Resource Centre, Fleet Street, Pemberton, Wigan WN5 0DS. Opening hours are 10am-5pm Monday to Friday, or at other times by arrangement. Parking is available on site.



*The former George Street Independent Methodist Chapel, Oldham, built 1816 and now a Grade II listed building. This is currently undergoing major restoration work to turn it into a heritage centre.*

## The World and the Parish: Heritage Sites' Network Conference 2013



Stephen Hatcher, chair of the Methodist Heritage Sites' Network, and Peter Forsaith, network conference organiser, invite you to the first ever Methodist Heritage Sites' Network Conference.

In the mid-1800s, Cornwall was the most Methodist county in Britain. Methodist heritage is still almost as prominent in the built environment as tin mining. That's why we have decided to locate the conference in St Ives. And you are invited!

The Sites' Network is aiming to widen participation in Methodist Heritage – in particular, friends who maybe have not seen their church as a 'heritage site' or a visitor destination before, but who are becoming aware of the value of their story and the special place it inhabits as a tool for mission. In 2013, the Network will be meeting for a two-day residential programme focusing on how our local stories can be told effectively on a global stage and how our globally renowned story can have local impact.

Join us at Treloyhan Manor Hotel, St Ives, from 12.30pm on Thursday 28 February to 1.30pm on Saturday 2 March 2013. Representatives of the National Trust and Cornish Mining World Heritage Site will be speaking. All meals (including a cream tea), accommodation and a 'Cornish Methodism and Mining' heritage day out are included for £155 per person.

You can make it a real history-lovers holiday, with our optional supplementary pre-programme: *Art & Religion in west Cornwall*. Treloyhan Manor is offering a significantly discounted rate for additional nights before/after the formal programmes, with D, B&B from £25.00 per person per night.

To express interest in attending, please contact Diane Foster, heritage administrator, at Methodist Church House on 020 7467 5117 or email [fosterd@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:fosterd@methodistchurch.org.uk). Please note that we shall be asking for an initial deposit of £25 per person.



## Dates for your diary...

### Gwennap Pit 250th Anniversary

Celebrating 250 years since John Wesley first preached at Gwennap Pit with worship and theatre **5 September 2012** from 5pm – the time at which John Wesley always preached when at Gwennap Pit. (Services in Busveal Chapel if wet.) For more details, visit: [www.gwennappit.co.uk](http://www.gwennappit.co.uk)

### Methodist Missionary History Project

#### Annual Conference 2012: Inter-church and Inter-faith

*Perspectives on Mission and Ecumenism*  
With Daniel Jeyaraj, Mark Laing, Eric Lott and Andrew Walls

**3–4 November 2012** at Luther King House, Manchester

Information and booking forms from Dr Kirsty Murray, email: [Kirsty.Murray@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Kirsty.Murray@ed.ac.uk)

#### Annual Conference 2013

*Marking 200th anniversary of the meeting that launched the first Methodist Missionary Society, and culminating in a connexional celebration arranged by the Leeds District*

**5–6 October 2013** at Hinsley Hall, Leeds  
*Please reserve the date now!*

### Churches Tourism Association

#### Convention 2012: 'Up & Running'

*The premier, residential event for everyone opening and promoting their religious buildings to visitors: share your successes, develop wider partnerships and learn new ways to enhance your church's welcome*

**19–21 November** at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire

For further details and booking, visit [www.churchestourism.info](http://www.churchestourism.info) or call 08451 222650

## Handbooks ahoy!

The enthusiastically awaited second edition of the *Methodist Heritage Handbook* was delivered just in time for the Methodist Conference in Plymouth in June.

Over 400 copies were distributed during the Conference. As a result of our advertising and promotional campaign, we also have many orders awaiting fulfilment – from Methodists around the world, as well as from group tour organisers and tourist information centres in Britain.

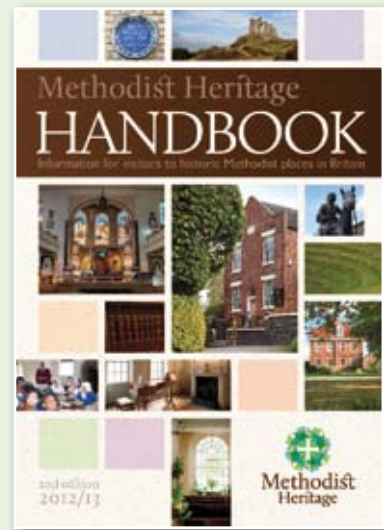
In addition, over 200 copies were given away as the result of a window display at Methodist Church House during late June and July. Members of the public were invited to call into Methodist Church House to pick up the new handbook and copies of the *John Wesley's London* walking map published last year.

The first edition of the handbook was phenomenally successful: 25,000 copies were distributed. In 2011, the handbook was supplemented by our ever-expanding website: [www.methodistheritage.org.uk](http://www.methodistheritage.org.uk). The website will be updated to reflect the structure and content of the new handbook.

As with the first edition, this handy 88-page full-colour handbook provides all the information you need to visit over 120 Methodist heritage sites, including our four nationally accredited museums. Once again, it is arranged geographically and explains the significance of each place to the development of the Methodist movement, to British social history, or to art and architecture.

So what's new? In response to users' suggestions and critique, the design of the 2012/2013 handbook has been refreshed and the content updated comprehensively.

Order your copy of the *Methodist Heritage Handbook* today. It's FREE (we only charge you for postage & packing!) Visit [www.methodistheritage.org.uk](http://www.methodistheritage.org.uk), or email Methodist Publishing at [resources@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:resources@methodistchurch.org.uk) or call 01733 235962. Why not order a handbook for each of your church families or every member of your history society or special interest group?

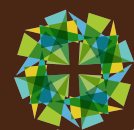


The deadline for submission of articles for the Spring 2013 newsletter is 7 January 2013.

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

*Heritage News* is the bi-annual newsletter of **Methodist Heritage**, part of the Methodist Church in Britain, 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  
Heritage**

The **Methodist Church** 