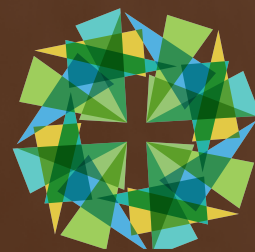


Methodist Heritage News



Autumn 2013

Before and after

The Entrance Hall fireplace after the most recent excavations.



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EPWORTH OLD RECTORY: Putting the hearth back into the home

In April, an exciting new project began at Epworth Old Rectory. The aim is to explore the main, huge chimney stack to discover the fireplaces built in 1709 for the entrance hall and the fore-kitchen. Both are key rooms in the house.

The Old Rectory was built after fire destroyed the birthplace of John and Charles Wesley. John, aged five, famously had to be rescued from the upper storey of the collapsing building. The Revd Dr Claire Potter, manager at Epworth Old Rectory, said: "We strongly suspect that the chimney stack was the only part of the pre-1709 house to survive the fire, so we may also find evidence of the earlier house.

"Having discovered the fireplaces, we then plan to restore them, hopefully so that open fires can once again burn in these rooms. This will make a massive

difference to the atmosphere of the house – restoring the very heart of the home."

So far the archaeologists have revealed evidence of the arches of the 1709 fireplaces on both sides; also a cupboard, and a later bread oven. Finding brickwork that appears to pre-date the front of the house supports the idea that the chimney survived, while charring to beams suggests they were reused from the previous house.

The entire 'Hearth Project' is designed to be visible to visitors; transparent screens enable them to watch what is happening in both rooms. See more photos of the excavations on Facebook at ow.ly/poVVB. Find out more about the trustees' ambitious development plans and fundraising needs for the whole house at www.epwortholdrectory.org.uk.



Editorial

Do you collect anything? In this edition of *Heritage News*, Tom Norgate of the Methodist Philatelic Society introduces us to the fascinating world of historic postcards. We also have a report on the response to our online archives. Visitors to the 2013 *Who Do You Think you Are? Live* show queued three-deep to talk about researching Methodism's family history.

Catch up on projects in the north-east of England and Sark in the Channel Islands, where the local communities have been inspired to use their Methodist heritage to engage visitors. Our key heritage sites are all forging ahead with developments too. When did you last visit the Old Rectory at Epworth? Extensive repairs and exposing the hearth that Susanna Wesley and her family knew are just the first, exciting phase of the renovation. What a difference, before and after – from the 1950s to the 1700s!

Finally, I am delighted to announce that the New Room in Bristol successfully passed the first-round application for £2.3million from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in July. Their outline proposals have HLF endorsement and they have been awarded development funding. The New Room trustees are seeking to construct a new building in the Horsefair Courtyard, which will transform their educational and hospitality facilities and allow the museum to expand by about 40%. The team now have up to two years to submit fully developed plans to compete for a firm award. Congratulations to Gary, David and your New Room team!

Jo Hibbard, Methodist Heritage Officer

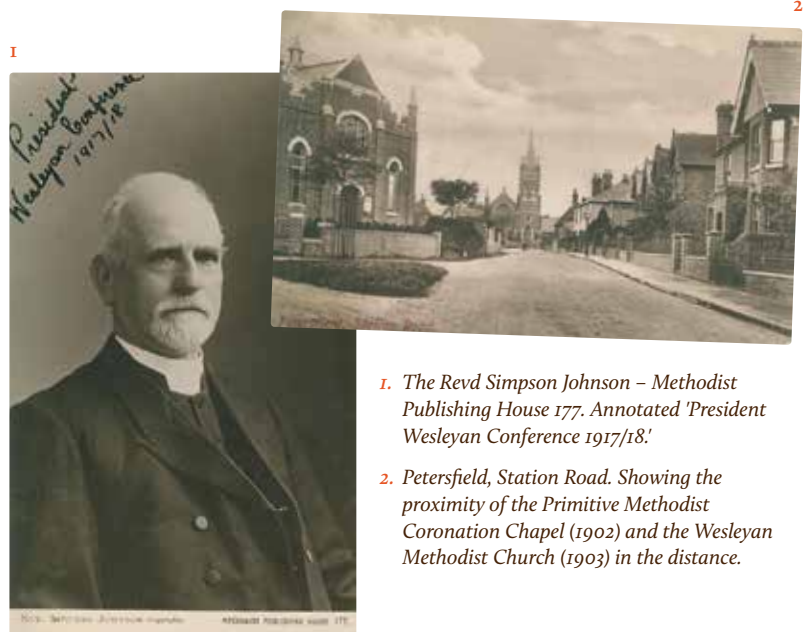
Picture Postcards in Methodism

The first topographical postcards began to appear in Great Britain from about 1902 onwards. The first to feature Methodist churches and chapels were produced by local photographers of various towns and villages.

One of these photographers was John William Righton of Newbury, Berkshire. By early 1903, he was producing topographical picture postcard views of the locality. He was also an active Wesleyan Methodist in the town, the circuit and the Oxford District. In July 1901 Righton attended the Wesleyan Conference held at Newcastle upon Tyne, as a representative from the Synod of Oxford District. Whilst there, his attention was drawn to the fact that future Conferences would now have an 'official Conference photographer'. With his interest in photography, the potential for future years undoubtedly crossed his mind.

In 1904, Righton attended the Sheffield Wesleyan Conference and produced some 50 different picture postcards. These featured Wesleyan churches in the city, the recently opened Cliff College, and some Gospel Cars.

The number of postcards being produced at home and abroad at this time was phenomenal. It was a period often referred to as the 'golden age of postcards'. However, not everything was 'golden' in Righton's judgement. In 1905, in conjunction with the Revd Charles H Kelly (book steward and president of the Wesleyan Conference that year), the Methodist Publishing House produced a series of over 170



1. The Revd Simpson Johnson – Methodist Publishing House 177. Annotated 'President Wesleyan Conference 1917/18.'
2. Petersfield, Station Road. Showing the proximity of the Primitive Methodist Coronation Chapel (1902) and the Wesleyan Methodist Church (1903) in the distance.



3. Wesleyan Church, Swanage (circa 1903), clearly showing church and interesting notices; typical of the period.



4. Swanage – Wesley's Cottage (circa 1903), annotated "As you are a Wesleyan thought you ought to have this".



5. Clapton, Hackney, London, Monday 13 May 1935. The Revd Donald Soper MA Centre front, flanked by R G Burnett, The Revd Robert W. Gair and The Revd J W Ellwood at 'The Great Platform Meeting'.



6. "The Ordination Bibles Heavy." Nottingham 1906 Conference by Righton, Newbury.

7. Wesleyan Gospel Car No 19 'Florence' with unidentified evangelist. His books and texts are on display for sales.

8. The Children's Home & Orphanage: 'Princess Alice Orphanage. A group of little ones with the governor.' Righton Newbury No 23 in series of 24 produced by Righton.

picture postcards – many in colour – including some bromide portraits of prominent ministers and laymen of the day. Righton's rationale was that "it was hoped to teach the young folk to collect Methodist Parsons in place of questionable people and subjects". There is no doubt that the series of cards proved popular not just with the young, and were collected by people of all ages.

In 1906, Righton produced a series of 50 bromide informal photographs of personalities attending the Nottingham Wesleyan Conference. A series relating to Methodist Children's Homes and Orphanages had also been produced by this time. Righton was not the only photographer attending Conferences and photographing personalities; Walter Scott of Bradford was also prominent at this time and for a number of years after.

Perhaps the start of the Great War in 1914 marked the demise of the picture postcard, not only nationally but in Methodism too. Of course, there were other subject sources of Methodist postcards, including Bible Christians, Independents, the Methodist New Connexion, Primitive and United Methodists, as well as colleges, schools, missionaries and the Epworth Press. Some have continued to the present day on a local basis, whether topographical or marking a Methodist Conference or other special occasion.

Tom Norgate is a founder member and committee member of the Methodist Philatelic Society (MPS), which was formed in 1970 for the study and encouragement of philately associated with Methodism. This includes postal history, postcards and postage stamps. The MPS has a worldwide membership. To discover more about our Methodist postal heritage, contact Terry Smart, 11 Northwood Park, Leeds LS26 8PE



Do you have faith in your family tree?



Researching family history continues to increase in popularity, and the Connexion's archivists and museum staff receive many hundreds of enquiries. Jill Barber, project director from Englesea Brook Chapel & Museum of Primitive Methodism, told us: "One researcher, with a triple wife murderer in his family tree, found a glowing obituary in the *Primitive Methodist Magazine* and was thrilled to discover his family were not all bad!"

Genealogy as a leisure pursuit has been greatly facilitated by access via the Internet to census data and church registers. The latest innovation is online community archives – websites designed to collect and share regional and organisational memories. In February 2013, *Who Do You Think You Are? Live*, the UK's largest exhibition for family historians, attracted 14,000 visitors to London Olympia over three days. Methodist Heritage was there to launch the new Methodist community archive network, *My Methodist Ancestors*.

These three websites allow anyone to contribute Methodist stories and photographs, with day-to-day responsibility for the content management looked after

by two small, dedicated teams of volunteer editors. Two websites have been established for family history linked to key nineteenth-century denominations. The first site, set up in June 2012 by the staff and volunteers from Englesea Brook Museum, focuses on the 'Prims' (www.MyPrimitiveMethodists.org.uk). Then in January 2013, a separate team of volunteer editors from among our London circuit archivists launched www.MyMethodistHistory.org.uk to develop other communities of interest around early Methodism, other nineteenth-century denominations and life in Methodism after the re-union in 1932, from war memorials to MAYC and overseas mission service. Search on this site and it searches the whole network.

Finally, in February, we launched a site for Wesleyan ancestry, www.MyWesleyanMethodists.org.uk – just in time to promote the whole network at *Who Do You Think You Are? Live*, and at the *Yorkshire Family History Show* in June.

With the help of other enthusiastic volunteers, the editorial team gave away nearly 750 *Methodist Heritage Handbooks* and spoke to over 500 people about the websites and about Methodist beliefs, history and records. On the first day at Olympia, the crowd queued three-deep to ask about Methodism and hardly allowed our four staff a break in five hours!

For people for whom faith has little interest and no apparent relevance today, discovering their ancestor was a preacher – or even just a committed chapel member – can be quite a revelation. It can result in questions about the impact of religion on daily life and the work of ministry in the past, but it may also lead to questions about Christianity today and to contemplating the potential impact of faith on a life in the present.



The Methodist Heritage Stand at Who Do You Think You Are? Live, London Olympia, February 2013



From Geoff Dickinson for *My Primitive Methodist Ancestors*



Elizabeth Bultitude was the last of the women itinerants in the Primitive Methodist Church. She was born at Hardwick, Norfolk on 12 August 1809 into a family with Wesleyan Methodist links. Her conversion took place at a camp meeting held on Mousehold Heath, Norwich led by Samuel Atterby on 14 May 1826. Elizabeth didn't actually join the Primitive Methodists until 1829. She was given a note to preach on 30 December 1830. She ... died on 14 August 1890. The Conference of 1891 noted the disappearance of her name from the list of preachers where it had stood for so long "as though to remind us that the gifts of the Holy Spirit were without distinction of sex".

Comment by Lynn MacFarlane (from south Australia) on *What is Primitive Methodism?* *A short introduction*

"Thank you for this fascinating potted history. I am keen to trace the threads of family beliefs and values as they seep down through the generations. Understanding them in the social context of the day is most illuminating. As well as adding colour to family history, it helps me to understand how I came to be me!"



From Ann Fox for *My Methodist History* Rededicated November 2011

Remembrance Sunday 2011 was more poignant than in previous years, for we were also honouring the memory of nine young men killed in action during World War I who were members of our church.

Their names had been inscribed on a stone war memorial unveiled in the Bromley High Street Methodist Church on 19 February 1922, which subsequently survived the move to a new Methodist church in 1965, but sadly was unable to be taken to our current place of worship in College Road in 1990, and was lost.

Leonard Davies, John G Gumbrell, Arthur G Heath, Frank Lettington, Bert Lovell, Sydney Powell, J Stanley H Shafto MC, Wallis Silcox, A Donald Thornton Smith DSO

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM



Isaac's Tea Trail: Pennines Methodist Heritage Walk



Off the beaten track, the Pennine Dales were rich gathering grounds for Wesley and his early 'helpers' who searched out these remote communities and transformed the lives of their people. One of the extraordinary evangelists featured in the Dales leaflet, Isaac Holden, also stars in his own trail resource – a 36-mile circular long distance walk.

Isaac's Tea Trail is named after a miner turned tea-seller, legendary Methodist evangelist and philanthropist from Northumberland. The 'Tea Trail' way-marked route also highlights Methodist Heritage sites, including Allendale, Keenley, Nenthead and Alston (where John Wesley preached

to lead miners) and includes the location of over 20 rural chapels from as early as 1750. Intrepid hikers will enjoy the wild landscape of the North Pennines, while the less energetic can always drive to the many places of interest.

The trail is printed on OS maps Landranger 87 Hexham and Haltwhistle, and the OL series 43 Hadrian's Wall and 31 North Pennines. *A guide to Isaac's Tea Trail: hidden heritage in England's North Country* by Roger Morris is available from Allenheads Trust Ltd, Allenheads, Hexham, NE47 9HN, priced £6.00 to cover P&P. Further information, including a trail leaflet, is available at www.northumberlandlife.org/teatrail.

Blazing a trail for North East Methodist heritage sites

The three northern Methodist districts Newcastle, Darlington and York & Hull have launched a new heritage trail leaflet, *A Dales journey in the footsteps of John Wesley*. The leaflet traces a journey through the North Pennine Dales made by John Wesley in 1761 and tells how the fires of Methodism took hold among the lead mining population.

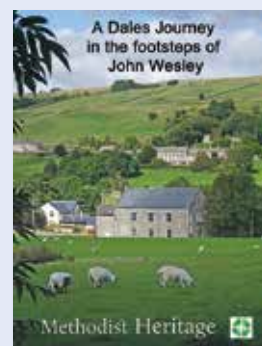
David Heatherington, curator of the Weardale Museum at Ireshopeburn in County Durham, which occupies the old manse adjoining High House Chapel, said: "The leaflet aims to address and promote the largely untold story of Methodism in our Christian heritage. It has no ancient ruins, no grand cathedrals and the public would be hard pressed to name anyone associated with Methodism other than the Wesleys. Yet the North East abounds in Methodist chapels and five of the oldest belong in our area: Keenley in Allendale, High House in Ireshopeburn, Newbiggin in Teesdale, the octagonal chapel at Yarm and

Osmotherley, on the edge of the North Yorkshire Moors. Each of these heritage buildings is worth visiting and has a fascinating story to tell."

Chair of the Darlington District Ruth Gee said, "The Methodist heritage in the North East is the foundation for the mission of the Methodist people today. We follow in the footsteps of the Wesleys as we seek to serve our local communities; as we challenge injustice; as we stand alongside those who find themselves on the fringe of society. All this we do because, like John Wesley, we are convinced that God's love is for all people and we want to introduce people to Jesus. In our

historic chapels we come close to the tradition that we have inherited and that has helped to shape our communities. We want to invite people to make the Dales journey, to learn more about our history and to encounter Methodism today."

The trail was launched by the Rt Hon Sir Alan Beith MP and the North East branch of the Wesley Historical Society, who visited two of the historic chapels at Ireshopeburn and Westgate in June. The leaflet can be obtained from Weardale Museum (01388 517433) or downloaded from ow.ly/poWn7 or ow.ly/poWtU.



Methodist Heritage Conference 2013

The World and the Parish

Dr Peter Forsaith, conference organiser

For over 20 years, representatives from Methodist Heritage sites have had an annual meeting. In the tradition of Mr Wesley, this has travelled around the country so that members can experience what other sites offer. Mr Wesley went regularly to Cornwall – which the Sites' Network (formerly the Heritage Forum) had never visited. West Cornwall contains perhaps the most significant concentration of Methodist Heritage sites outside London – in a distant part of the country, a popular tourist destination, and yet an area of economic hardship.

Clearly, West Cornwall could not be a destination for a one-day meeting, so the first ever Methodist Heritage Sites' Conference was planned as a two-night residential conference, using Treloyhan Manor (Christian Guild) Hotel in St Ives, and taking as its theme *The world and the parish: promoting local heritage to a global audience*. The programme included thought-provoking presentations from staff of the Cornish Mining World Heritage Site, the National Trust's Levant Mine and the Eden Project. Informative and stimulating workshops covered copywriting, fundraising and linking with local schools. The chair of the Cornwall Methodist District, the Revd Steve Wild, led a spirited guided walk around the (multifarious!) Methodist chapels in St Ives, while the middle day was spent on a coach tour around

some of the Cornish Methodist sites, and the King Edward Mine (not a Methodist site, but run as a voluntary trust, similarly to many Methodist sites).

A small, but enthusiastic, group took up the offer of a 24-hour pre-programme looking at *Religion and art in West Cornwall*, visiting galleries (including Truro School's new 'Heseltine Gallery'), the Leach Pottery and the amazing St Hillary Church near Marazion, about which Catherine Wallace (former curator of the Falmouth Gallery) gave a talk.

A cream tea and a pasty lunch were also planned for the main programme – the cold wintry weather was not! Mr Wesley knew to visit in summer!

A diverse group of 36 people attended the main conference, including many newcomers. However, several of the usual



attendees at network meetings were not able to join the conference, and it would have been good to have had the regular network members and to extend the audience as well. The Revd Dr Stephen Hatcher, chair of the network, reflected: "Did some of the new people expect to receive more about our history, rather than to learn about 'how to present our heritage' from others and to others?" The conference required considerable preparation, which proved a challenge at a distance. The organisers were very grateful to all the speakers, hotel staff and local Methodist site teams for their support. Stephen Hatcher added, "Overall, it was a very interesting and rewarding experience. The preferred plan for the future seems to be to hold a one-day conference in 2014, and look to do another residential event in 2015."

Dates for your diary...

The Churches Tourism Association Symposium and Annual General Meeting

This year's theme is *the Contribution of Church buildings to making connections between the Church and society*. With presentations and opportunity for debate on Methodist heritage in Oxford, research on openness of churches to visitors and tourists, partnerships with local authorities and other bodies, church security and developing and promoting Bath Abbey. **Wednesday 23 October 2013** at Wesley Memorial Methodist Church, New Inn Hall Street, Oxford OX1 2DH. Booking fee £25.00. Booking forms are available by emailing canonjbrown@mac.com.

The Canterbury Dictionary of Hymnology Launch Conference

Celebrating the first Dictionary of Hymnology for over 100 years with seminars, concerts and 'Songs of Praise'. **19-20 October**, at the New Room & Victoria Rooms, University of Bristol. Various options £25-£90 per person. Full details and registration at www.bris.ac.uk/arts/birtha/events/hymnology

Bristol's Heritage Buildings: Relics or Legacies?

Exhibition **21 October-23 November**, with Symposium on Saturday 16 November, at the New Room, Bristol. George Oakley's restoration of the chapel in 1930 will feature.

Historic Religious Buildings Alliance: Managing Major Buildings Projects in Places of Worship

To help anyone with the management of all stages of a building project in a place of worship. **8 October 2013 (from 10am)**, at the New Room, Bristol, £45 per person. Full details about the day and booking forms can be found at www.hrballiance.org.uk and click on 'news'.

A Church on the Move

In 2011, Jo Hibbard, the Methodist Church's heritage officer, visited Sark Methodist Church in the Channel Islands.

Inspired by Jo's visit, church members decided to use their heritage as a means of outreach to residents and visitors to the island. The result is an exhibition titled *A Church on the Move* – so called because the original chapel had to move because the singing was too loud, and was moved brick by brick to its current location!

Pop-up banners outlining the church's history have been fitted into the windows around the church. Poster boards were developed showing photos and news cuttings from the last 200 years. A loose-leaf folder compiled by lay pastor Ron Burke for the 200 year chapel anniversary in 1996 has been updated by Karen Le Mouton (the current lay pastor) and is also on display in the church.

Also on display are some of the original silver trowels made to commemorate laying the foundation stones, as well as Bibles and Sunday School books in both French and English, dating from the late 1800s.

The senior steward, Nellie Le Feuvre, has written her memoirs of life in the chapel over the last 85 years. John Wesley's story was displayed around the walls of the church and families had the opportunity to take part in a scavenger hunt, gathering items of significance to John Wesley. This was won by a young visitor (pictured below) who received a commemorative plate designed by local potter Lorraine Nicolle.

The exhibition started in April and runs until October.

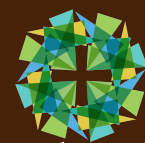


The deadline for submission of articles for the Spring 2014 newsletter is 6 January 2014. Please send your ideas to: **Jo Hibbard, Methodist Heritage Officer, Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR** Tel: 020 7467 5257 Email: hibbardj@methodistchurch.org.uk

You can visit the Methodist Heritage website at: 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.



Methodist
Heritage

The Methodist Church 