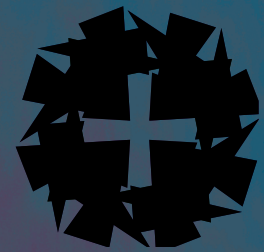


Methodist Heritage News



Spring 2014

BLOOD AND GUTS: a community at war

This year, across the country, there will be a range of events commemorating Britain's entry into the First World War in 1914. Dr Jill Barber, project director at Englesea Brook Museum, asks: Whose voices will be heard? Have we, as Methodists, a distinctive contribution to make to the debate about peace and war, which is just as urgent today?

In August 1914, the *Primitive Methodist Leader* thundered, "A wave of madness has swept over Europe, and Britain is invited to plunge into a fury that is insane."

A week later, in an astonishing U-turn, Primitive Methodist President Arthur Guttery called for young men to enlist,

declaring, "Our chapels are not the refuge of dissent; they are the citadels of liberty, and they train men who will break all tyranny in pieces." Methodist women were not exempt: "Braver still are the women, who surrender their husbands, sons and sweethearts, and who hide their tears in smiles that their loved ones



Photo © Englesea Brook Museum

may not be distressed." Many responded to the call, believing – as did Wesleyan President Dinsdale Young – that "love of country is part of the love of God". But others, also for conscience's sake, chose a path that led to rejection, persecution and, in extreme cases, death. There were 16,000 conscientious objectors (COs) during the First World War. Many were Quakers, but they also included Plymouth Brethren and Christadelphians, whose churches all took an anti-war stand. For Methodists, and other non-conformists, it was much more difficult.

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While 2014 marks the hundredth anniversary of the outbreak of the first 'world' war, it is likely that the stories of individuals' sacrifice, bravery and troubled conscience on all sides, rather than of global politics and battle plans, will engage most people – particularly as we explore what part Methodists played in that war, and their various attitudes to the conflict. Not surprisingly this edition of *Heritage News* starts to set out some of those positions and the events that will be taking place to commemorate, and try to ensure we continue to learn from, the atrocities that unfolded from 4 August 1914.

Alongside the stories from WWI, some fascinating articles have been submitted focusing on Methodists from other walks of life, picking up on past articles in this newsletter. Rather unintentionally this edition has taken up the theme of biography.

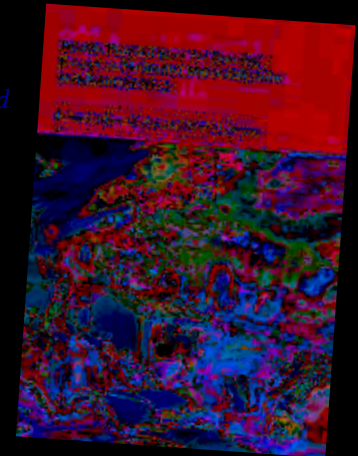
Finally, I want to take this opportunity to announce that John Miles, my assistant in commissioning and collating the content for *Heritage News*, has decided it's time to step away from the editorial computer after our next edition. I have been immensely grateful for all the help and kind support that John and his wife, Hazel, have provided, particularly in helping to maintain continuity with the past readership of the Archives & History Committee's newsletter. If you feel that you could help us put *Heritage News* together for 2015, do get in touch.

Jo Hibbard, Methodist Heritage Officer

Wesley Historical Society residential conferences past and future

WHS Publishing Editor Professor David Jeremy, and Conference Organiser the Revd David Hart
2011 Conference: *Memorialising and Remembering*

A new book of essays¹ *Brands Plucked from the Burning*, was published in November 2013 following the 2011 WHS conference, *Memorialising and Remembering in Methodism*. These essays explore how telling life-stories shaped identity for the Methodist movement; how remembering lives influenced later generations of Methodists and how techniques deployed by historians have exposed the process of memorialising and remembering in Methodism.



2014 Conference: *Methodism and Conflict*

To mark the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War, the next WHS conference in 2014 will explore Methodism's response to conflict. The conference will be held at High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire, from 26-28 June². A draft programme and booking form can be found on the WHS website, www.welseyhistoricalsociety.org.uk.

As well as exploring how Methodism responded to both world wars, this conference will also examine the challenges and impact of conflict on the theology and pastoral life of the Methodist people. The conference will seek to examine the way that Methodists have responded to, and been involved in, conflict. Implicit within the theme is an approach to understand the individual, as opposed to the institutional, responses. An international panel of speakers will explore topics such as the role of Methodist military chaplains, Methodism and conscientious objection in two World Wars, and Methodism and the occupation of the Channel Islands from 1940-1945. There will also be papers on Methodism and conflict in Eastern Asia.

For the first time, the conference will include the WHS Annual Lecture, which takes place on the final day, Saturday 28 June (coincidentally the 100th anniversary of the death of Archduke Franz Ferdinand). This lecture, *Methodist Consciences and the Challenges of the First World War*, will be given by Michael Hughes, professor of Russian and International History at the University of Liverpool.

1. *Brands Plucked from the Burning: Essays on Methodist Memorialisation and Remembering*, edited by David J. Hart and David J. Jeremy ISBN 978-0-9554527-9-6 Printed and distributed by Lulu.com; 292 pages; priced £14.95
2. Full board conference charge, including annual lecture, is £160pp. Day charge for annual lecture only is £25pp, including lunch. Attendance at the WHS AGM is free. Most accommodation is *en suite*, and there is excellent access for those with mobility restrictions.

(continued from page 1)

The chairman of a military tribunal examining men whose beliefs would not allow them to fight declared: “Men who are not Quakers ... are really not conscientious objectors”. One Wesleyan CO was told that he could not be granted exemption because it was “not part of the creed

of the Wesleyans that fighting is a wicked thing”.

No wonder that ordinary Methodists were confused by the alliance of their church with the state. Methodism had taken a peaceful stance throughout the nineteenth century, but now Christians who felt it was contrary to the gospel to take up arms were

called ‘cowards’ and ‘shirkers’. It was not a decision made lightly. While not doubting the courage of those who enlisted, one young man believed those who refused to kill “are heroes just as great”. Another admitted that “at heart he was a conscientious objector, but was too much of a coward to face its consequences”.

Brave enough to say no

During the First World War, 3,400 registered COs joined the Royal Army Medical Corps, or the Non-Combatant Corps (NCC), dubbed the “No Courage Corps”. Some 6,312 were arrested; 5,970 faced a court martial and most were imprisoned. Eighty-one conscientious objectors died; others had mental breakdowns. Many continued to be ostracised after the war, even by their churches. Here are some of their stories.

William Burrell was a Wesleyan local preacher, and could not believe that Christ would take up a gun or bayonet. He wanted to become a missionary, but as a CO was imprisoned in Wormwood Scrubs, Wakefield Prison (where he feared for his sanity), and eventually Dartmoor.

William Done was a Primitive Methodist who worked on the family farm. He became the target of a hate campaign, which began with a white feather sent through the post, and another stuck on the farm gate. Arrested, he was taken to Chester Castle where he was stripped and ordered to put on army uniform. William refused, and was given only a blanket to cover himself. A court



WWI Conscientious Objectors at Dyce work camp in Aberdeen, Scotland

martial resulted in a sentence of six years with hard labour, which he served in Wormwood Scrubs, before being transferred to a work camp at Dartmoor.

Victor Murray, later to become the last vice-president of the Primitive Methodist Church in 1932, refused to support the war in any way. He knew this would lead to suffering, but told a hostile military tribunal, “Wise or foolish ...I must obey the call of Christ as it comes to me.”

Samuel Wakelin became a Methodist because he was a CO. A Sunday School teacher, he was dismissed by the Strict and Particular Baptist Church for his pacifist views. His wife Lily suffered too, being shunned by other church members. Samuel served as a stretcher bearer, and found a home with the Primitive

Methodists at Park Lane, Wembley. His son Paul became a CO in the Second World War, serving with the Friends Ambulance Unit. His grandson Mark became president of the Methodist Conference in 2012/2013.

These are only some of the stories that have been discovered so far. Do you know about a Methodist who was a conscientious objector in the First World War? If so, we would be very interested to hear from you.

The Exhibition Blood and Guts: a community at war by Professor Michael Hughes (Lancaster University), will be on display at Englesea Brook Museum of Primitive Methodism from 3 April. For more information, visit www.englesea-brook-museum.org.uk, www.myprimitivemethodists.org.uk, or contact Jill on 01270 820836.

MEN

of Mission

Gary Best, warden of the New Room in Bristol, on why 2014 is a very significant year in which to remember our missionary history...

This year marks not only the tercentenary of George Whitefield's birth and the bicentenary of Thomas Coke's death, but also the 275th anniversary of the commencement of the outdoor preaching that led to the Methodist movement.

George Whitefield

The eighteenth century was a time of immense social, economic and political change and the problem facing those who desired to see a religious revival was how to enable the Church to compete in a world that denied most of the values for which Christianity stood. George Whitefield's solution was to "ply a religious trade in the open air of the marketplace" and to sell his product – the saving grace of Christ – not just across all of Britain and Ireland but also in America, to which he travelled an amazing seven times. And he did this in an age when roads were virtually nonexistent and when the Atlantic crossing was horrendously dangerous, not just because of the storms that swept across it, but because Britain was at war with other countries.

Whitefield initiated almost everything we associate with the

eighteenth century revival: open-air preaching, the use of lay preachers and the organising of a network of religious societies. Even the name 'Methodist' entered popular usage because Whitefield frequently used it. He was the first preacher to thoroughly grasp the importance of using the media to get one's message across. He used the emerging newspapers and magazines to great effect and



LEFT:
George Whitefield

RIGHT:
John Cennick

FAR RIGHT:
Thomas Coke

produced masses of published books – sermons, diaries, letters, etc. This made him the first modern celebrity, capable of commanding vast audiences. It was said that wherever he travelled, the one thing that people could not do was stay away from him. Whitefield became the eighteenth century's most prominent preacher and it is estimated he preached at least 18,000 times to perhaps 10 million hearers. In America he was the most well-known figure prior to George Washington and he is still regarded as a key figure in promoting 'the Great Awakening'. In England he

first preached in the open-air to the colliers of Kingswood on 17 February 1739. Knowing he had to leave for America, he persuaded John Wesley to take over and John preached in the open for the first time on 2 April.

John Cennick

Whitefield asked a young follower, John Cennick, to help Wesley.

On 14 June 1739, Cennick, though not ordained, preached in the fields to the colliers. Such was his success that John Wesley unofficially encouraged him to continue preaching. On 24 June, Charles Wesley, urged on by Whitefield and his brother, also commenced preaching in the open-air; first in London and then (from 31 August) in Bristol.

By the early 1740s Whitefield was known as 'the Father of Methodism', but it was John and Charles Wesley who turned Bristol (then the country's second largest city) into a centre for promoting a religious revival. The New Room, the foundation stone of which was laid on 12 May 1739, became what has been called 'the cradle of Methodism'. Within its walls the early preaching journeys were planned, the class system was devised, 18 of the Wesleyan annual conferences

were held, and a pattern for seeking social justice was encouraged.

John Cennick, who had become as much a protégé of Charles Wesley as of Whitefield and John Wesley, became one of the first 'sons of the gospel', as the lay preachers were originally called. When he fell out with the Wesleys, Cennick became first Whitefield's right-hand man and then, working for the Moravians, 'the Apostle of Northern Ireland' until his death in 1755.

Thomas Coke

John Wesley used to refer to preachers who stayed at the New Room as his 'family', and it was in Bristol that he consecrated Thomas Coke to be one of three men to go to the newly independent America in 1784. Born in Brecon, Coke had become an Anglican curate in Somerset and thus he viewed his consecration as a 'superintendent' as the equivalent of being made a bishop. With Francis Asbury, he created the American Methodist Episcopal Church on Christmas Day 1784. Birmingham-born Asbury was to become the greatest Methodist preacher in America, and became known as the 'Prophet of the Long Road' because of his preaching journeys.

Coke returned to England in 1785, but made eight further visits to America. He also engaged in mission in the West Indies in 1786 and returned there on three subsequent occasions. John Wesley nicknamed Coke 'the flea' because he was constantly hopping around on missions. He encouraged others to set up missions in Canada and Scotland. He died on his way to Ceylon in May 1814. By then he had earned himself the title, 'Father of Methodist Missions'.



Important celebrations are taking place in 2014 to mark the anniversaries of all three of these great 'Men of Mission'.

Thomas Coke Commemorative Weekend, Brecon (Powys, Wales)

3-4 May

The two hundredth anniversary of the death en route to missionary work in South Asia of the Revd Dr Thomas Coke. The principal events will be in the fine medieval Cathedral, formerly Brecon Priory:

Saturday 3 May, 2.30pm

Thomas Coke: Looking Back – Looking Forward

A celebration service, where the lead speaker will be the Reverend the Lord Leslie Griffiths of Burry Port. The celebration will be followed by tea provided by Pilgrims, the Cathedral Tea Room.

Sunday 4 May, 11.00am

Ecumenical Eucharist

Led by the Dean of Brecon, the Very Revd Geoffrey Marshall, where the preacher will be Bishop Thomas Bickerton of the Western Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Also there will be a talk by the General Secretary of the United Methodist Church's General Commission on Archives & History, the Revd Dr Robert J Williams, an exhibition in the specially re-opened Brecknock Museum, a civic reception in the Guildhall and a Thomas Coke Town Trail. For more information please contact Brecon Cathedral Office: **Tel: 01874 623857**

Email: admin@breconcathedral.org.uk

George Whitefield at 300: An International Tercentenary Conference at Pembroke College, Oxford

25-27 June 2014

Keynote speakers: Andrew Atherstone (Wycliffe Hall, Oxford; on Whitefield's 'afterlife'); William Gibson (Oxford Brookes University; on Whitefield and the Church of England); David Ceri Jones (Aberystwyth University; on Whitefield and the evangelical revival); Frank Lambert (Purdue University; on Whitefield and the Enlightenment); Mark Noll (University of Notre Dame; on Whitefield's spirituality); Carla Gardina Pestana (University of California, Los Angeles; on Whitefield and Empire);

Boyd S. Schlenker (Emeritus Aberystwyth University; on Whitefield's personal life).

Conference fee (including all meals and accommodation) £350 pp. Bookings received after 31 March 2014 may be subject to a surcharge, and only accepted if places are available. For a full programme and to download a registration form, visit www.mwrc.ac.uk/whitefield-conference

275th Anniversary of The New Room/John Wesley's Chapel, Bristol

Friday 20 June, 1.20pm

Talk by Gary Best, warden of the New Room, on John Cennick, 'The First Local Preacher'.

One of a series of 275th Anniversary events in 2014 (see *Dates for your Diary*, page 8) beginning on Friday 14 February with a talk by Gary Best, warden of the New Room, on George Whitefield's first open-air preaching.



Methodist-educated rugby player and legal advisor to the ANC

By James Gibbs

Richard Msimang was the son of Joel Ngadala Msimang (1854–1929) and grandson of Daniel Msimang, both Methodist ministers who played significant roles in the spread of Christian missions in Southern Africa. Richard was among the first pupils at the Ohlange Institute, founded by John Langalibalele (Mafukuzela) Dube in 1900. From there he was sent to a much older Methodist boarding school, the Healdtown Institution in the Eastern Cape.

In 1904, following a disagreement with a European superintendent, Joel Msimang resigned from the Methodist ministry and founded an independent Methodist Church. In the same year, he decided to send Richard to Queen's College in Taunton, Somerset.

Richard comes sharply into focus on his arrival at the school. In his *History of Queen's College, Taunton*, H J Channon writes: *A good few of us were practising shooting at goal on the Lower.*

We noticed a dark figure in a bowler hat and a heavy black overcoat, standing on the terrace watching us. It was the first day at Queen's of a Zulu, RW Msimang. He passed through the gap on to the field. The soccer ball was thrown to him, and he could not resist the temptation of racing towards it. Unfortunately for him the ball stopped just in front of a deep pool. Through the water 'Oomsi dashed, slipped and sat down, with his bowler floating away from him. We took him up to the Linen Room for a complete change of clothes. His charming smile we saw for the first time – it never seemed to desert him.

Channon went on to record that Msimang earned a place in the school's First XI, adding, "I can see him now dashing down the left wing to the corner flag and middling the ball with perfect accuracy." 'The Zulu' also played rugby and cricket at Queen's.

After completing his secondary education, Msimang continued to live at the school while articled to a Taunton solicitor. At

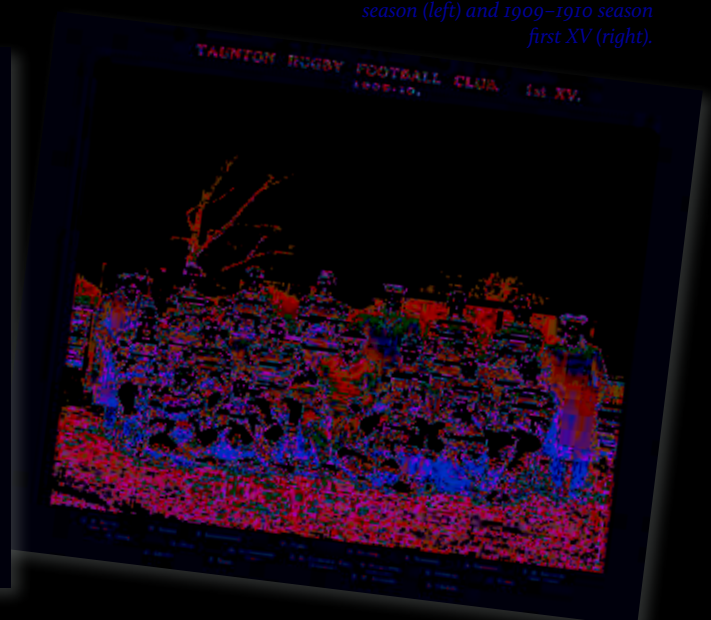
this time, he played rugby for Taunton RFC. He played for the club for five seasons (1907–12) and, Channon recalled, "became the most popular player Taunton has ever had."

In 1912, having passed his law exams, Msimang returned to South Africa, where he established a legal practice and became involved in politics, devoting long hours to the South African Native National Congress (SANNC).

Although he did not pull on a rugby jersey in South Africa, Msimang continued to take an interest in organised sport. His contribution was recognised in 1928 when he was elected vice-chairman of the Provisional Committee of the South African Non-White Athletics Union; the following year he was one of the founders of the Johannesburg Bantu Football Association.

Msimang's dedication to nationalist causes, combined with ill health and difficulty in getting the Swazi royal family to pay for work undertaken on their behalf, contributed to business difficulties and disappointments. When he died, in 1933, Richard W Msimang had achieved much, but still left a sense of unfulfilled promise.

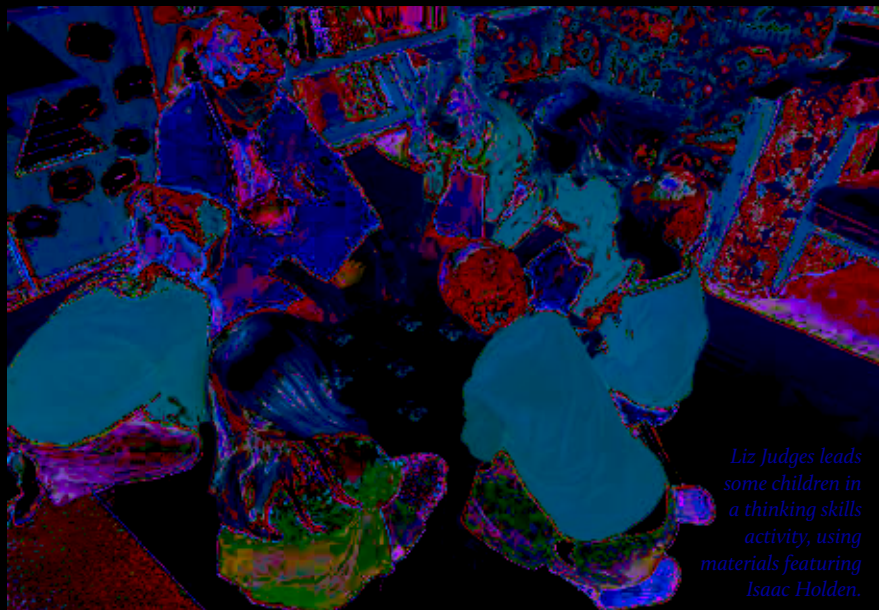
Taunton Rugby Football Club 1908–1909 season (left) and 1909–1910 season first XV (right).



Inspired by Isaac

In our Autumn 2013 edition, we introduced you to the legendary Methodist tea-seller and philanthropist, Isaac Holden from Northumberland, and the 36-mile circular 'Tea Trail' heritage walk¹ named in his honour. Here Liz Judges, deputy head at Wearhead Primary School, describes the educational work being inspired by this hero of Victorian Methodism.

Photo © Wearhead Primary School



Liz Judges leads some children in a thinking skills activity, using materials featuring Isaac Holden.

Isaac Holden was a hero of his time, yet surprisingly few have heard of him. The remarkable life story of a man who worked so hard as a community champion is incredibly gripping and exciting. He was a man of great faith and his qualities of resilience, risk-taking and resourcefulness are those that children readily identify with and understand.

I am passionate about the teaching opportunities that can be developed using Isaac's story to promote this community champion. Isaac Holden is a historical figure, yet his life story and extraordinary vision can be used in many National Curriculum subjects. Many of the ideas that Isaac championed had consequences that were more far reaching than even he could ever have imagined. Thus the story becomes as fresh today as it was more than 150 years ago and I have been

inspired to write a series of teaching ideas, predominantly for Key Stage 1.

One of Isaac's revolutionary ideas was that he realised that there was a link between contaminated water and health. At the time many lead miners became severely weakened and fatally ill through horrendous work-related conditions, poverty and by drinking contaminated water. Although one of Isaac's daughters (Mary Ann) died of scarlet fever at the age of seven, it is likely that he attributed her death to her having drunk polluted water. He initiated a chain of events that would eventually provide a safe water supply for Allendale in 1849.

During a recent Key Stage 2 lesson at Wearhead Primary School in Co Durham (called *What would you change?*), I examined Isaac's mission to change dirty water into safe, clean water². The children were horrified that Mary Ann had been killed by an

illness that is now so easily treatable with antibiotics. This hooked them into Isaac's vision and they were amazed that it was selling tea, on a harsh route of some 36 miles or so, that had enabled him to raise the funds for a safe water supply. Through a ranking activity they investigated and ordered the qualities that Isaac showed. Linking these qualities to their own lives, one pupil was quite adamant that if he were to change anything it would be the end of all wars.

Note: You can now access cross-curricular teaching materials for activities with 5–9 year olds inspired by Isaac Holden, via a web portal provided by Weardale Museum: www.weardalemuseum.co.uk

1. The trail is printed on OS Landranger maps 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 for £6.00 to cover P&P. Download a trail leaflet or details of four shorter trails, or get further information from www.northumberlandlife.org/teatrail
2. For more educational inspiration from Isaac Holden's story, please contact Mrs Elizabeth Judges, Deputy Head teacher, Wearhead Primary School, Bents Lane, Wearhead, Co Durham DL13 1BN. T: 01388 537265 E: ljjudges200@durhamlearning.net W: www.wearhead.durham.sch.uk

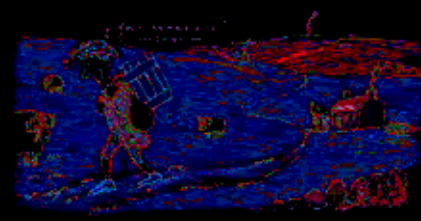


Photo: © iStock



Dates for your diary

Annual Meetings of the Methodist Heritage Networks

For more details or to register, email the Heritage Administrator at fosterd@methodistchurch.org.uk or call 020 7467 5117. Sites' Network at Stoke

Calling all Methodist heritage site trustees, managers and volunteers! Join us for site visits including Bethesda New Connexion Chapel, and a focus on artefacts.

Saturday 29 March This is a free event.

Archivists' Network at Westminster Central Hall

All circuit, district and connexional archivists, librarians and administrators with archiving responsibilities are welcome. Bring along an historic object and 'road test' the proposed new Methodist guidance on managing church artefacts. **Saturday 14 June** This is a free event.

The New Room/John Wesley's Chapel 275th Anniversary events

(See also page 5 – at the Chapel unless otherwise stated)

Wednesday 2 April, 4pm: Commemoration of John Wesley's first open-air preaching at the Brickfields Plaque, then tea and worship at the New Room

Friday 16 May, 1.20pm: A talk by Gary Best, warden of the New Room, celebrating the New Room stone laying

Wednesday 21- Saturday 24 May: Wesley Week Flower Festival, ending with Wesley Day Celebration Song Fest

Sunday 31 August, 3pm: Bristol District Celebration of Charles Wesley's first open-air preaching in Bristol

Events at Manchester Wesley Research Centre, Nazarene Theological College

(See also page 5)

Tuesday 1 April: Evening lecture from Prof Dennis C. Dickerson on Methodism and the Civil Rights Movement

Tuesday 17 June, 5.00pm MWRC Annual Lecture from Prof Morna Hooker

For more details, visit www.mwrc.ac.uk

Muddling Through

The Revd Peter Howson's book *Muddling Through: the organisation of British Army Chaplaincy in World War I* was one of the first on the shelves in the lead-up to the hundredth anniversary of the outbreak of WWI later this year. It includes the first recent history of the organisation of army chaplaincy within the three main Methodist denominations of Primitive, Wesleyan and United Methodists.

"Wesleyan Methodists had been serving the forces for over 50 years," says Peter. "The Primitive Methodists were tentatively engaging in ministry to troops in Aldershot, and the United Methodist Church had little involvement. The events of August 1914, and what followed after, challenged all these churches as it challenged every other church."

As with many other aspects of the British army, the outbreak of World War I started a process of change that was to result in a radically different provision of chaplaincy care once the war was over. Nothing was ever simple

with army chaplaincy. The war saw an increase in the number of churches becoming

involved with the army. By the end of the war, the principal chaplain for British troops in Italy was a Wesleyan, the Revd Owen Spencer Watkins. Initially opposed by the Vatican, he came to be a trusted leader, providing administrative oversight for all denominations.

Army chaplaincy has always been a mix of Church, Army and State. Such a coming together "inevitably led to confusion", and one of the themes of this book is the 'muddle' that resulted. Even so, army chaplaincy ended the war with a much higher profile than the one it had had in 1914; recognised by the addition of 'Royal', creating the Royal Army Chaplains' Department (RACHD).

Muddling Through (ISBN 978-1-909384-20-0; Hb, RRP £25.00) is available direct from military publisher Helion & Co Ltd tel: 0121 705 3393 www.helion.co.uk



The deadline for submission of articles for the Autumn 2014 newsletter is 7 July 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.

