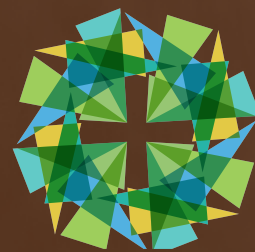


# Methodist Heritage News



Autumn 2015



## In this issue

### PAGE 2

Introducing new Methodist Heritage volunteers

### PAGE 3

Bible Christians pioneering South Australia

### PAGES 4 & 5

Shetland's historic spaces

### PAGE 6

Hannah Ball (1733-92) a friend of John Wesley and the founder of the first Sunday School

### PAGE 7

200th anniversary of Cloud Methodist Chapel  
Wesley Memorial Methodist Church Heritage Week

### PAGE 8

Who Do You Think You Are?

Dates for your diary

## The world is my parish

Christian Dettlaff, Curator at the Museum of Methodism and John Wesley's House, describes the latest success for the team at Wesley's Chapel, City Road, London, towards the museum refurbishment: the *World Parish* display winning Heritage Lottery Fund support.

At the beginning of May, we heard the news that we were to receive a grant of up to £98,300 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for our project to develop the *World Parish* exhibition display case in the Museum of Methodism.

Using dozens of unique collection objects, the project will curate an exhibition telling the story of the global spread of Methodism. The 18-month project represents the final piece of the accredited museum's recent redevelopment. This has been under way since 2013 and has seen a complete refurbishment of the museum in the chapel's crypt.

The Museum of Methodism has been refurbished in three phases, commencing in January 2013. Cultural consultancy Barker Langham has provided museum advice and award-winning architects John McAslan & Partners (who recently led the refurbishment of King's Cross station) worked on the refurbishment of the crypt. The financial support of Kwanglim

Methodist Church in South Korea was invaluable in getting the project under way.

This HLF-funded stage of the work is very much about people first though – not just buildings and objects. Wesley's Chapel has a thriving, diverse congregation with over 50 nationalities represented, and the concept of 'voice' plays a central role within Methodism, through its preaching and hymns. Fittingly, 25 oral histories will be collected from within the diverse Chapel community and uploaded onto iPads in the museum. The museum's heritage stewards and some of the congregation will conduct one-to-one interviews, to learn more about how congregation members from overseas found their faith and Methodism.

Commenting on the award, the Revd the Lord Leslie Griffiths, Superintendent Minister at Wesley's Chapel, said: "We have people from every corner of the world – now, at last, we'll be able to serve their needs, honour their histories and celebrate the diversity which they illustrate so well."

## Editorial



# Introducing new Methodist Heritage volunteers

Welcome to the autumn issue of *Methodist Heritage News*. Over the last few months, three new volunteers have joined the Methodist Heritage team: Alison Butler, Hannah Tweedie and myself as Publications Coordinator. On this page we give some background to our interests in Methodist heritage and outline how we see our roles developing.

I see my role as helping the Methodist Heritage Committee to continue to spread the word about the importance of Methodist heritage. A firm foundation for this has been laid by the committee over the last few years – a point which was acknowledged by the Revd Steve Wild, President of the Methodist Conference, in his opening address at the recent *Mission-shaped Heritage* conference held at Cliff College. We hope to include a report of the conference in the Spring 2016 issue of *Heritage News*. We are fortunate that both Steve Wild and Jill Barber (this year's Vice-President) have chosen to focus on the relationship between mission and heritage during the 2015/2016 connexional year.

One of the key features of mission-shaped heritage is 'telling our story' and there are many examples in this issue. For example, the story of Hannah Ball, a friend of John Wesley and the founder of the first Sunday School, the witness provided by Cloud Methodist Chapel in the last 200 years, and the pioneering endeavours of the Bible Christians in South Australia in the nineteenth century.

I hope that you will enjoy this issue of *Heritage News*. Please continue to let us have your inspiring heritage stories for future editions.

**James Strawson**



## Alison Butler

Liaison Officer for Methodist Historic Objects

With a background working for the National Trust For Scotland and being involved in the creation of the City of Edinburgh Methodist Church from four congregations, I am passionate about using our historic objects as 'spiritual prompts' to share our faith stories with others.

Safely kept for years in vestries and elsewhere our Connexion-wide collection is a largely untapped resource. My role is to help local churches care for, catalogue and use these historic objects to tell their story.

Our four Methodist museums can help us to identify the significance of items but whilst they do acquire objects from time to time, they can't be used as the 'attics' of the Church.

With a plan to identify 'heritage ambassadors' in each district, we hope to encourage more churches to use their heritage to share the love of Christ with others and share sensitive ways of disposing of objects where appropriate.



## Hannah Tweedie

E-communications Coordinator

Having decided at the age of seven that I wanted to become an archaeologist, it probably goes without saying that understanding the past is something I have always been passionate about.

After graduation, I worked on excavations in the south of England for several years, before moving to Edinburgh, where I now work as a heritage consultant. I provide advice to developers on the importance of archaeological and heritage sites, and help to ensure their protection for generations to come. I enjoy carrying out field surveys and finding the traces of the past which survive in the landscape.

I hope that as E-communications Coordinator I will be able to share my passion for heritage with others. I hope that using social media will allow us to reach out to a wider audience and that I will be able to challenge and inspire people by sharing stories from our Methodist heritage.



First Bible Christian Chapel, Burra Burra. Painting Lenoard Bence. Used with permission.

## Bible Christians pioneering South Australia

In 1845, rich copper deposits were discovered at Burra Burra in South Australia. By 1849, Bible Christian miners had built chapels there and sent urgent requests to England to supply ministers.

As a disadvantaged orphaned Devon boy, James Way had risen to become an experienced preacher and an ex-President of the English Conference. The Revd Way and the recently married Revd James Rowe were chosen as pioneer missionaries for the new colony.

At first, Way preached in a butcher's shop in Bowden near Adelaide. Rowe lived in a hole dug into a creek bank at Burra. The colony was largely founded on dissenters and after their arrival Way and Rowe opposed pressure to depend on state funding.

Chapels were deserted as men rushed to the Victorian gold fields. Within 18 months of arrival both Way and Rowe experienced serious illness and near-death.

By late 1852 Way was receiving pressing requests for Bible Christian ministers from Melbourne and Sydney. The Cornish were keen chapel builders and in 1856 Rowe was sent to establish the work in

Victoria, but demand outstripped supply of ministers.

The first 'great revival' took place at Burra under Way's leadership. Men were overpowered by the Holy Ghost in the mines and many came out converted and happy. Similar revivals took place at Moonta Mines and other places around the colony.

James Way retired from ministry in 1870. His son Samuel (who had successfully pursued a vocation in law) challenged his friend John Thorne to join the Bible Christians in South Australia. Thorne arrived in the colony in 1873 with a passion for mission. He led a team of apostolic ministers into the vast northern rural frontiers of the colony.

In contrast to his father's early disadvantage and the humble beginning of the Bible Christian Movement, Samuel Way rose to the position of Chief Justice in South Australia.

Sir Samuel Way's influence was profound and the Bible

Christian cause became aligned with his popularity, along with the leadership of the Revd John Thorne and others. According to an 1891 census, over a decade the Bible Christian church increased by a healthy 50.24%. A range of new mission initiatives during the 1890s then benefited the Church union that took place in South Australia in the year 1900.

**Revd Edwin (Ted) Curnow**



Revd James Rowe



Revd James Way



# Shetland's historic spaces

Jo Hibbard encourages Methodist heritage enthusiasts across the Connexion to make a trip to the Shetland Islands.



Over the course of publishing three editions of the *Methodist Heritage Handbook* and developing the website ([www.methodistheritage.org.uk/heritagesites](http://www.methodistheritage.org.uk/heritagesites)), the Heritage Committee and I have been able both to promote the sites more widely and expand the content, in particular to add island sites: the Channel Islands, Isle of Man and Isle of Wight. In 2016's *Methodist Heritage Handbook*, we hope to include the Shetland Islands too.

In April, I had the enormous privilege and pleasure to visit the Shetland Islands, at the kind invitation of the District Chair, the Revd Jeremy Dare. The Heritage Committee's 2014–2019 strategy focuses on localising the work. I was invited to Shetland to make suggestions on how Methodist congregations there could extend their outreach to visitors and tell the story of their faith community.

John Nicolson was a Shetland Islander who had been converted to Methodism while in the army. He returned to Shetland in 1819, and in two years had formed a 'circuit'. He asked for the Conference's help, and with the support of Adam Clarke, John Raby and Samuel Dunn were sent in 1822. Despite opposition from the Kirk, by the time of John Nicolson's death in 1828, there were 4 circuits and 1,000 members. His grave can be seen at Gruting (*Photo 7*). Despite heavy emigration, by 1932 there were 1,398 members. Today, there are 200.

The pictures on these pages illustrate the historic chapels across Shetland where the members welcomed me warmly and explained how they are adapting their historic spaces and engaging with their communities, and with tourists. In most places, sensitive renovation has extended the use of the chapel buildings with better facilities; you can see here new kitchens, extensions for toilets, and often the removal of pews to create more flexible meeting spaces. The scenery is stunning, the plants and birds sometimes often unique, and the history compelling, from pre-historic archaeology to modern mineral extraction. I thoroughly recommend the excellent museum in Lerwick, which places the Methodist story in the context of thousands of years of habitation on Shetland.

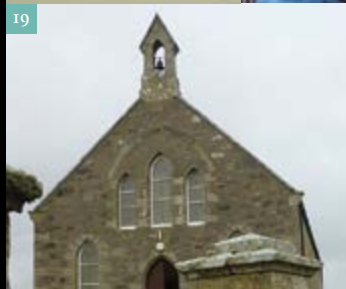
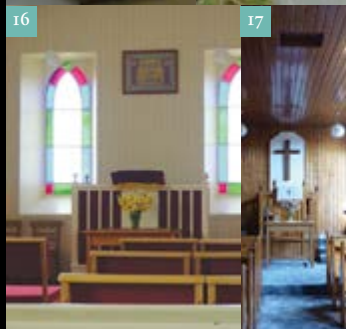
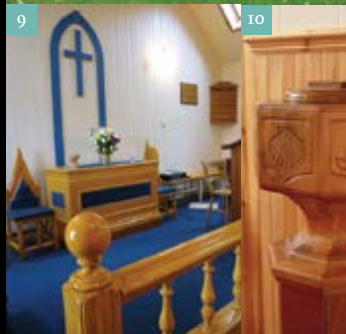
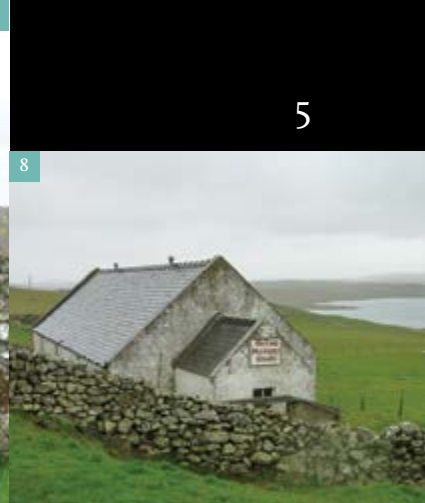
- |  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| 1. Haroldswick                         | 12. Culswick    |
| 2. Haroldswick                         | 13. Westerskeld |
| 3. Sandness                            | 14. Nesting     |
| 4. Lerwick                             | 15. North Roe   |
| 5. Lerwick                             | 16. Ireland     |
| 6. East Yell                           | 17. Vidlin      |
| 7. John Nicolson's gravestone, Gruting | 18. Vidlin      |
| 8. Gruting                             | 19. Walls       |
| 9. Whiteness                           | 20. Walls       |
| 10. Scalloway                          | 21. Tresta      |
| 11. Scalloway                          |                 |

Shetland Islands

Orkney Islands

Outer Hebrides

SCOTLAND



## Hannah Ball (1733-92) a friend of John Wesley and the founder of the first Sunday School

Pamela Atkins, circuit archivist and one of the editors of the *My Methodist History* and *My Wesleyan Methodist Ancestors* websites, has researched the story of Sunday School pioneer Hannah Ball.

**H**annah Ball was born near High Wycombe and grew up in comfortable circumstances in a family of farmers and lace makers. In her twenties she went to live with her widowed brother to care for his children.

Despite having felt a desire to learn to pray as a little girl, Hannah was not particularly religious as she grew up. In 1762 she had a terrifying experience during a thunderstorm. She felt “crushed beneath the weight of (her) sins”, then felt “a sense of the peace and mercy of God.”

Hannah attempted to study the foremost writers of religion in the search for those who worshipped in spirit and truth. Someone suggested the Methodists, but Hannah claims she “once thought I would as soon go to hell as unite with the followers of John Wesley!”

However, after further study and eventually reading the sermons of Thomas Walsh, Hannah began to long to hear a Methodist preach. When John Wesley visited High Wycombe in 1764 she was struck with his “venerable appearance”, but most affected by his preaching on the text “O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt” (Matthew 15:28).

A firm friendship grew between

Hannah and John. They frequently exchanged letters and he relied on her to report back to him on preachers in her circuit and to care for the Society in High Wycombe.

In 1774, John Wesley wrote to Hannah regarding a new preacher called Joseph Bradford:

“Warn him gently not to speak too fast or too loud and tell him if he does not preach strongly and explicitly concerning perfection.”

And in 1775, he wrote to Martha Chapman of Watlington (who was clearly in need of some encouragement):

“Cannot Hannah Ball step over for two or three days and kindle a flame among you?”

Hannah was instrumental in raising funds for a new chapel, which Wesley advised her to model on his new chapel in City Road, and he came to open it in 1777.

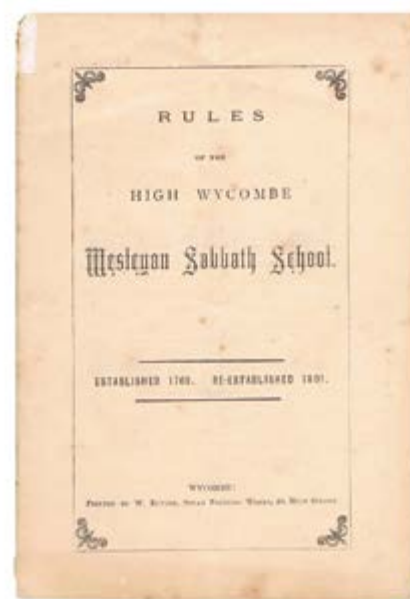
Hannah is best remembered for founding the first Sunday School. As early as 1769 she began instructing a class of children in Scripture and the Collect of the Day, before accompanying them to the service in the Parish Church. Finding that many of them were illiterate, she also started a class on Monday evenings to teach reading and writing. By 1771 she had established rules for

conducting a Sunday School, taught by volunteers with the aim being to assist the children in coming into a more vital religious experience.

Wesley encouraged her in this work, writing, “You have a peculiar love for children and a talent for assisting them.”

Hannah never married (having been warned against a man Wesley thought “ungodly”) and devoted her life to a practical expression of her faith, visiting the poor and sick and teaching. She wasn’t allowed to preach, but did take part in meetings.

Hannah died a few months after John Wesley and left her collection of his books to her siblings.



### NOTES

Hannah’s diary and letters are held at the MARC (John Rylands Library).

Hannah’s grave is at Stokenchurch, a few miles from High Wycombe.

Her will is available online from The National Archives Ref PROB/1222/240 (£3.30).

Papers and material relating to local commemorations of various anniversaries are held at Bucks County Records Office. More information about Hannah is available at [www.mymethodisthistory.org.uk](http://www.mymethodisthistory.org.uk).

## 200th anniversary of Cloud Methodist Chapel

Cloud Methodist Chapel in Congleton (part of the Dane Trent Circuit) recently celebrated 200 years of continuous worship – making it the oldest former Primitive Methodist church in the world today that still holds regular services!

Around 300 people attended a marquee service on Sunday 17 May in Woodhouse Green. The marquee was full to overflowing and resounded with wonderful singing accompanied by the Over Alderley Band. Dane Bridge Choir enhanced the worship with their harmonies. John Anderson and the Revds Pam Butler and David Leese took the congregation into the future with the message “God is love and his love is still the same today as it was 200 years ago, and is unchanging.” Revd Leese spoke of his ancestors the Deakin family, in whose farmhouse Hugh Bourne held some of his earliest services. CYGnature, the church’s youth group, presented a short drama highlighting the building of Cloud Chapel. The Sunday School children and mums sang two action songs.

After the service, people lingered to chat despite the chilly wind.

In the chapel, there was an exhibition celebrating Primitive Methodism and Cloud’s history, featuring items loaned from Englesea Brook Museum. As part of this exhibition we have researched the servicemen on our WWI memorial plaque. A limited edition memorial plate is available commemorating the bicentenary of Cloud Methodist Chapel, along with notelets depicting different views of the chapel. In June we retraced the steps of Hugh Bourne with a walk around the Cloudside area, stopping en route to read extracts from his journal.

Planned future events include Harvest Festival services on 18 October and a concert with the Dane Bridge Choir on 31 October. All are warmly welcomed.



Top: Revd David Leese organised a walk in the countryside near the chapel retracing the steps of Hugh Bourne visiting some of the farmhouses where he preached and stopping en route to read extracts from his journal.

Below: The 200th anniversary exhibition

Further details are available at [www.danetrentmethodist.org.uk](http://www.danetrentmethodist.org.uk).  
**Linda Ashbrook**, Cloud Methodist Chapel

## Wesley Memorial Methodist Church Heritage Week

In May, Wesley Memorial Methodist Church in Oxford celebrated its history by holding a Heritage Week. It was an opportunity for the congregation and wider community to learn more about the story of Methodism in Oxford and Wesley Memorial’s contribution to the life of the city over three centuries.

The week began with a commemorative Sunday morning service. Sue Goodwin and

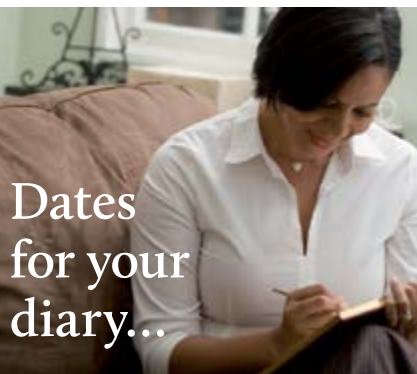
Katharine Onion (descendants of the Nix family, which donated the Rose Window when the church was built in 1878) joined the congregation. A lecture series was held; amongst the lectures given was one by Professor Alister McGrath, who reflected on the life of former Methodist Vice-President Professor Charles Coulson and the wider faith and science debate. Professor Bill Gibson spoke on Samuel Wesley and Dr Geoffrey Tyack examined Victorian gothic architecture and the context in which Wesley Memorial was built.

“Wesley Memorial’s Heritage Week was a fantastic opportunity for the church and wider

community to engage with the fascinating and diverse history of Methodism in Oxford,” said Lay Worker Rob Thompson. “The stories studied and shared will serve to inspire us as we face the future, continuing and developing good work in this city.”



Bill Gibson lecturing on Samuel Wesley



## Dates for your diary...

Group Leisure Travel Trade Show

SEE US AT  
NEC BIRMINGHAM  
22ND OCTOBER  
2015  
leisureshow.com



### Hall 8 – see us on ‘Travel Row’

The UK's number one exhibition for people who organise group trips. Register for free at: [leisureshow.com/#sthash.mxZ3a98.dpuf](http://leisureshow.com/#sthash.mxZ3a98.dpuf)

### Churches Visitor & Tourism Association AGM

Saturday 14 November, 10.00am-4.00pm  
St. Chad's Church, Shrewsbury  
See [cvta.org.uk](http://cvta.org.uk) for details and booking

### Oxford-Manchester Methodist Studies Seminars

Saturday 5 December  
Manchester Wesley Research Centre,  
Nazarene Theological College, Dene Road,  
Didsbury, Manchester M20 2GU  
For further details and other MWRC  
programmes: [www.mwrc.ac.uk](http://www.mwrc.ac.uk)

### SAVE THE DATE Work and Chapel: Black Country Methodism

Saturday 9 April 2016  
Asbury 200th Anniversary Connexional  
Launch Event  
Family Fun Day at Black Country Living  
Museum, Tipton Road, Dudley DY1 4SQ  
Commemorate the 200th anniversary  
of Bishop Francis Asbury, the Black  
Country apprentice who became first Joint  
Superintendent Methodist minister in  
America. Updates and tickets (from February):  
[www.methodistheritage.org.uk](http://www.methodistheritage.org.uk)

**BLACK COUNTRY  
LIVING  
MUSEUM**

## Who Do You Think You Are?

In April, 13,000 visitors streamed into the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham, for *Who Do You Think You Are? Live*. Once again Methodist Heritage was there. Moving the show from London inevitably attracted a new audience, with visitors from west and south-west England, Wales and Ireland.

For Methodist Heritage, this relocation was providential. We were celebrating the 200th anniversary of the founding of the Bible Christian movement in Devon and Cornwall, and promoting our newest community archive, *My Bible Christian Ancestors* ([www.mybiblechristians.org.uk](http://www.mybiblechristians.org.uk)). We were delighted to promote resources from Devon Family History Society, and also a new book by former British Methodist minister, the Revd Ted Curnow, *Bible Christian Chapels in New South Wales* (see page 3). Our first visitor brought a digital copy of a Victorian Bible Christian baptism party picture.

She recalled visiting the baby in the picture when the 'baby' was by then a very elderly lady. The next visitor was a descendant of the founder of the Bible Christians, William O'Bryan!

We talked to around 1,000 visitors and handed out nearly 700 handbooks. In response to enquiries about contemporary Methodism, we offered copies of *the connexion* and *Make a Journey of Faith*.

Geoff Dickinson, volunteer editor for the *My Primitive Methodist Ancestors* community archive, said: "Although physically demanding, *Who Do You Think You Are? Live* gives us the opportunity to speak to many people about Methodism and faith matters through the 'neutral' medium of family history. Whilst many of our discussions may appear 'routine', I am sure the gems make it worthwhile and we are sowing seeds that others may be able to cultivate."

**Jo Hibbard**



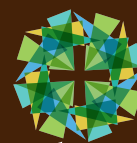
Congratulations to the New Room on receiving a Certificate of Excellence from Trip Advisor for the second year running.

The deadline for submission of articles for the Spring 2016 newsletter is 4 January 2016. Please send your ideas to: **Jo Hibbard, Director of Engagement, 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**