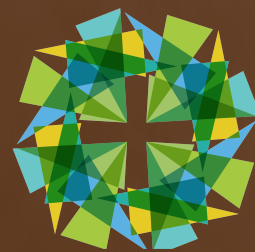


Methodist Heritage News



Spring 2017

*Dear Sir; am your own daughter in God
mariah price*

Signature of Mariah Price (1740), letter writer.

Writing to Wesley

We are delighted to launch a new project with our partners at the John Rylands Library, University of Manchester.

Among the thousands of documents held in the Methodist Archives and Research Centre at the Library is a collection of 153 letters. Unlike other letters in the Archives, these were written by ordinary people who joined the Methodist movement in its earliest years. They date from the 1730s-1780s and are particularly significant as they were mainly written by women; these are rarely heard voices, captured in their own hand.

These letters were sent to Charles Wesley, who had requested testimonies that could be shared to exhort others to faith. They are full of rapture and visions, anguish and yearning. Although steeped in the language of the period, the Bible and preaching of the day, they reveal real people, with recognisable doubts and problems, as well as lives transformed by their experience of God. They give us a glimpse of the first people called Methodists.

Academics have studied the letters for many years, but most people in the Methodist Church will not know that they exist. Now digitised and available online, they can be difficult to read as they are PDFs of the original letters. This is where you come in!

We want to transcribe the letters, and need volunteers to become transcribers. There are lots of opportunities; we need at least three transcripts of every letter, because different people may be able to make out different words.

Reading the letters of the first Methodists connects us directly to the fiery fervour of the early movement, giving off sparks we can still catch today.

If you would like to know how to get involved, go to www.methodistheritage.org.uk/earlymethodistvolume.htm or contact Owen Roberts, Methodist Heritage Officer (see page 8 for details).

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The life of the itinerant heritage officer

I have been in post for seven months now, and the time has flown. I have spent most of that time an itinerant, visiting all our four accredited museums, many of our heritage sites across the country, attending numerous conferences, countless meetings, two Heritage Network Days in York and Salisbury... and, occasionally, I have even been in the office!

Highlights of the past seven months have included a tour of Scotland's main heritage sites at Arbroath, Dunbar, Paisley and Central Edinburgh Methodist Church (grateful thanks to the excellent choir there for tolerating my efforts in the tenor section during their rehearsal), the Asbury celebrations at Pill, seeing the original manuscript of *Hark How*

All The Welkin Rings at John Rylands Library and finding an extensive collection of Woodsware china at Wesley Memorial Church in Oxford (in both Beryl and Iris ranges). Most recently, the bracing Pennine air of Mount Zion in January was a great way to start the New Year, blowing out the cobwebs of 2016 with gale force strength!

This year I am looking forward to developing a new edition of the Methodist Heritage Handbook – we are currently contacting sites for updates as I write – and reviewing the Methodist Heritage website.

We are also launching the Methodist Missionary Register, which gives detailed records of nineteenth-century missionaries across the different branches of



UPDATE

Methodism, more information about which will feature in the next edition of Heritage News. Look out for our stall at *Who Do You Think You Are? Live!* in Birmingham in April (see *Dates for your Diary* on p. 8). I'm sure we are all eagerly anticipating the opening of the new museum at the New Room Bristol later in the spring – a recent hard-hat tour of which was very exciting, seeing the shape of the new facilities emerging and a glimpse of some of the new interpretation materials.

If I haven't visited you or your area yet (and I know that is many of you), I look forward to meeting you eventually!

Owen Roberts, Methodist Heritage Officer



Iris cup and saucer at Wesley Memorial Church, Oxford.

We were much saddened to hear of the death of *David Cowling*, a champion of Methodist Heritage for many years. Well known in Scotland and throughout our network, he will be much missed. We send our condolences to Beryl and their family and hold them in our prayers.

Englesea Brook wins funding from Royal Society to tell the story of 'Local Hero' Hugh Bourne (1772-1852): Pioneer of Science for All!

Englesea Brook Chapel and Museum is one of fifteen museums and galleries selected to take part in the Royal Society's Local Heroes scheme, for exhibitions and events that tell the stories of local science heroes across the UK.

Hugh Bourne is well known in North Staffordshire and South Cheshire as the founder of the Primitive Methodist Church. What is far less well known is his deep interest in science and his desire to promote a scientific understanding within working-class labourers and artisans, and their families. Bourne was particularly interested in education, teaching reading, writing

and arithmetic in Sunday schools, and 'science' in the monthly *Primitive Methodist Children's Magazine*, of which he was editor (1824-1843). He was a man ahead of his time, leading children to observe the world around them and question what they saw. Bourne drew on his own experience in his science lessons for children, looking at air pressure and water pressure, steam mills and steam ships, the manufacture of cloth from wool, and natural history. He always combined his teaching with awe, wonder and a sense of God's goodness and blessing for us through the natural world.

Largely self-educated, at the age of 16 Bourne started working for his uncle, William Sherratt of Milton, an engineer and millwright. This introduced him to mechanics, hydrostatics, hydraulics, pneumatics, optics, and the various applications of wind, water, and steam, to mills, engines and machinery. He applied his knowledge to engineering projects that had a considerable impact on the Staffordshire Potteries at a key time of industrial change.

Interested in the workings of the human body, Hugh Bourne was inspired by John Wesley's *Primitive*

Physic, which he reprinted on the printing press at Bemersley Farm. In 1826, Bourne published his own *Family Receipts* (sold for a penny), drawing on herbal remedies and the scientific knowledge of his day to provide cures for common ailments. He used local examples, including his mother's breast ointment, and how to cure a cow choking on a turnip! He had a questioning mind and scientific interest, and was keen to educate people to improve their quality of life.

Hugh Bourne's passion for new technology led him to become a 'railway pioneer' in Staffordshire, building a tramway from Stonetrough Colliery, where he worked about 1802-1803. When someone once said to him, "I think, Mr. Bourne, the railway between Manchester and Liverpool was the first in the kingdom," he replied, "Oh no... Nothing of the sort; I had made one myself long before that!"

A new display will be unveiled at Englesea Brook in April. On Saturday 8 July, Englesea Brook will host a study day celebrating Hugh Bourne's life, with talks and experiments. See www.englesea-brook-museum.org.uk/news.asp for details.



Bust of Hugh Bourne on display at Englesea Brook Museum. Image by TimEPhotography © TMCP

Nothing More than the Dawn

the stories behind the Richmond College boards

James Wayte began his training as a Wesleyan Methodist Minister in 1844, at Richmond College.

In October 1845 he volunteered to fill a missionary vacancy in Sierra Leone. By mid-January 1846 he was dead, just 23 years old, a victim of “violent fever”. He was the first of 125 missionaries commemorated on four large boards that used to hang in the entrance hall of the college until it closed in 1972, and which now hang in the Richmond Room at Methodist Church House.

Ever since the Revd Dr Philip Richter (Ministry Development Officer in the Connexional Team) first saw the “Richmond boards”, he has been fascinated by them. He used a recent sabbatical to discover more about some of the names commemorated on these boards. Many of the missionaries listed died soon after arrival at their mission stations. Most died from some form of fever, such as malaria or yellow fever, although one died from drowning and one from a fall from his horse. Not every student at Richmond College was training to go abroad, but for those who were in missionary training the names and statistics on the Richmond College boards will have reinforced the students’ sense of the risks they were likely to face.

Overwhelming joy

James Wayte had specified that he would prefer western Africa to any other part of the mission field. He volunteered to go to Sierra Leone with just a few days’ notice. He took his leave of his parents, two of his brothers and several friends at Gravesend before joining his ship. It was reported that this was “affecting to all who witnessed it”.

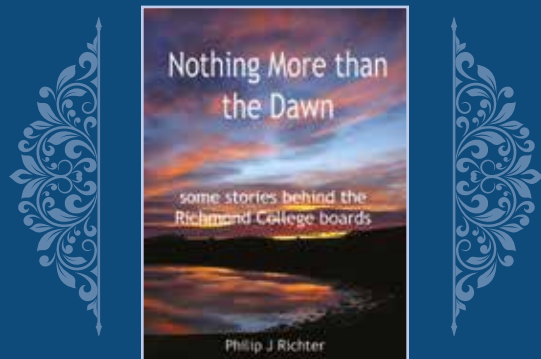
When James first caught sight of the mountains of Sierra Leone he was filled with overwhelming joy: it was said that “he felt that he was for the first time actually looking upon the scene that had often been portrayed by his imagination, and fixing his eyes upon the land that had long been the residence of his heart”. There was something quintessentially English about James Wayte’s arrival in Freetown; apparently, it was only after “partaking of a cup of tea” that he proceeded to the chapel to preach!

“A prophecy and not a history”

James was the first of many missionaries from Richmond College who died tragically young. It was said of another young missionary, Romilly Ingram, that he “died with a prophecy and not a history ... there was nothing more than the dawn, for the sun went down ere the day had well begun”.

Tragically, some of these premature deaths might have been avoided. Bearing in mind that at least four of our missionary deaths were caused by malaria, it would have been important for missionaries in affected areas to take quinine, not only when infected by malaria but also, crucially, as a prophylactic. The efficacy of quinine against malaria had been known from at least the seventeenth century. However, quinine’s bitter taste and unpleasant side effects may have caused some people to stop taking it, sometimes with fatal consequences. In retrospect, ability to tolerate quinine might usefully have formed part of the missionary screening process.

Until recently, the Richmond College boards have just been a list of faceless names. Don’t we owe it to these young men who “saw nothing more than the dawn” to keep remembering and retelling their stories?



Philip Richter’s book, *Nothing More than the Dawn*, is available as an e-book from www.methodist.org.uk/nothingmorethanthedawn – along with details for ordering a hard copy version. You can also access a recording of Claire Rakich performing *The Chalk Cliffs of England* from this webpage.



An archive photo of Surrey, which was the location of Richmond College.
© Oxford Centre



Two of the four Richmond College boards hanging in the entrance hall of Methodist Church House, Surrey.
© Oxford Centre

awn – ege boards



Photograph of the Wesleyan Theological College, Richmond, was the original home of the missionary memorial boards for Methodism and Church History, Oxford Brookes University.



boards now hanging in the Richmond Room at Methodist Marylebone Road, London. Each board lists past missionaries who served overseas in America and Australasia, the Pacific and Africa.

This folk song was inspired by one of the missionaries: Alfred Clegg, previously a grocer, who entered Richmond College in 1883, arrived in the Gambia in October 1885 and died on 23 January 1886, aged 27. Just prior to leaving Britain, Clegg saw the “white cliffs of Old England” for the first time.



Alfred Clegg

The Chalk Cliffs of England

The first time I stood on the chalk cliffs of England
And stared at the whiteness God pulled from the clay,
I knew they'd been there since the star and the stable
I knew they'd be standing upon Judgement Day.

God built a realm on the chalk cliffs of England
He masoned a crown for our sovereigns to claim
He hewed our ancestors from dust from the rock face
And made sure that England remembered his name.

God made me too from the chalk cliffs of England
He fashioned a servant as steadfast as stone
He made the cold winds blow my ship out of harbour
To a land where I'd serve him that's far from my own.

But all that remains of the chalk cliffs of England
In the strange burning land that they call white man's grave
Is a man sent for mission who walks through the churchyard
Past bones of the others that God did not save.

I tell people here of the chalk cliffs of England
I tell them how God built and shaped its terrain
But they know him only through sun and through ocean
Although he's still here, he's no longer the same.

If I could return to the chalk cliffs of England
And feel the firm ground once again through my shoes
Strength would flow through me like girders of iron
And I would stop grieving for what I will lose.

For I cannot find them, the chalk cliffs of England
No matter how often I search on this shore
And though I'm the same as I was on the outside,
I know that I'm turning to dust at the core.

So bury this piece of the chalk cliffs of England
Alongside its brothers in Gambian land
And chip one more piece from the chalk cliffs of England
And send it here too to be turned into sand.

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'My Prims' website nets unique treasure for Englesea Brook: the Canadian journal of the Revd John Davison

In August 2016 Englesea Brook received an email from a dealer in Texas, offering us the manuscript journal of the Revd John Davison, a Primitive Methodist minister. The dealer discovered us via the *My Primitive Methodist Ancestors* website, which has an entry for Davison, who was born in Newcastle in 1799, and in 1825 married the stepdaughter of William Clowes, one of the founders of Primitive Methodism (PM).

This was potentially a very significant discovery – but was it an internet scam? After receiving further information we accepted, and a few days later a parcel arrived. It was not as good as we had hoped – it was immeasurably better than we could possibly have imagined! The package included several loose inserts, one of which was a handbill for the opening of Mill Street Chapel, Hull, in 1819.

Davison itinerated in England for 23 years and then went to Canada in 1847. The journal begins with his preparations for departure with his wife and their six children (including the poignant entry “Went to Hull to see Father and Mother Clowes for the last time”) and covers the 37 years they spent in Canada. He gives vivid details of the traumatic journey across the Atlantic. Their ship suffered severe damage on only the second day, and 4 of the 136 passengers died during the voyage. Davison conducted services on board:

At 11 o'clock the quarter deck was arranged for public worship, the bell was rung and the passengers and sailors assembled, it was a very gracious time. The vessel in full sail like a bird on the wing, the bright sunny skies over us, the passengers from different parts of Europe and officers and sailors dressed in their Sunday garb, I had several reasons to believe that God did confirm his own word proclaimed in the bosom of the vast Atlantic three thousand miles from land.

Hull handbill, 1819.

A former Primitive Methodist Chapel near Toronto.

John Davison's Gravestone, Mount Pleasant Cemetery, Toronto.



The crossing from Liverpool to New York took 40 days. Eight days later, they reached Toronto. Three days after arriving in Toronto, Davison preached in Bay Street Chapel – the first Primitive Methodist chapel in Canada. He endured many hardships during his missionary journeys:

Very ill this morning, but the appointments being given out I felt anxious to be at them. I was so ill that I had to be lifted on horseback, and I could hardly bear to ride over the rough roads, the agony increased to such a degree that I had to slide off the horse and lie down on the road, a little relieved I walked nearly double and finally got on horseback. When I got to the place one of the trustees of the school house had put a lock on the door, being at issue with one of the members, we therefore adjourned to a neighbouring house and had a good meeting.

In 1856, Davison was elected the third President of the independent Canadian PM Conference – an office he held again in 1865. In 1869, “Venerable Father Davison” made his only return trip to England, as representative to the English Conference in Grimsby. Afterwards, during a visit to London, he wrote to his wife; this letter survives with the journal. Davison died in 1884, just three months before Methodist Union in Canada. A full account of the journal will appear in the official journal of the friends of Englesea Brook, *the Ranter's Digest*.

Randle Knight, Museum Curator at Englesea Brook



News from the Heritage Committee

New Committee members

The Methodist Heritage Committee has very recently welcomed new members the Revd Dr Tim Woolley and Dr Peter Forsaith. Both are Methodist historians well known to many in the Heritage Network. We will feature more detailed introductions to them in the next edition.

Collections Policy approved

The Methodist Heritage Committee is delighted to report that in October 2016, the Methodist Council Meeting approved the Collections Policy. The policy confirms arrangements for receiving and depositing archives and records created by the Church, including our relationship with our academic partners at the University of Manchester John Rylands Library and SOAS. Full details of the policy may be found on the Methodist Church website here: bit.ly/heritagecommittee1016



Group Leisure and Travel Show, Birmingham, 20 October 2016

Heritage Officer Owen Roberts and Sanya Strachan, Marketing Executive from the Connexional Team, represented Methodist Heritage sites at the annual Group Leisure and Travel Show at Birmingham NEC. The show is to promote visitor attractions for coach trips, and draws hundreds of people. A busy day was spent giving



out leaflets and copies of the *Heritage Handbook*, and talking to prospective visitors about our sites.

Heritage Network Days – October/November 2016

Nearly 100 Methodist Heritage enthusiasts attended the two Network Days across two magnificent historic churches in York and Salisbury. Little did we know that Central Methodist Church in York had recently featured in ITV's *Victoria* series – rivalling Bristol New Room's starring role in *Poldark*! Participants explored a wide range of workshops looking at different aspects of heritage: Methodist pilgrimage, Wesley's politics, using historic church objects and artefacts

for mission, different approaches to chapel anniversaries, the wealth of Methodist archive collections and where to find them, and the scope and range of family history resources.

There was also a lot of time for talking and sharing ideas – plus refreshments! Our thanks go to Central Methodist Church in York and Salisbury Methodist Church for superb hospitality and inspiring us with the different ways they are using their wonderful buildings and rich heritage to make a difference to their communities.

Dates for your diary...

**Manchester Wesley Research Centre
Methodist Studies Seminar: *Methodism
and the Legacy of the Reformation***

Monday 24 April, Wesley House, Cambridge
www.mwrc.ac.uk/methodist-studies-seminars/
for details.

Then 'til Now - *Quilts Past and Present*

11-14 May, Englesea Brook Chapel & Museum
A quilt exhibition, including a talk by Jackie Smith (a textile artist and member of Sew Spiritual) on the Saturday and a quilting workshop on the Friday. See engleseabrook-museum.org.uk/news.asp for details.

***My Heart Strangely Warmed: conference
on Moravian, Methodist and Lutheran
hymnody***

**Saturday 20 May, Fulneck Moravian Church,
West Yorkshire**

A joint event between the Methodist Church, the Council of Lutheran Churches and the Moravian Church in Great Britain and Ireland. For tickets, see www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/my-heart-strangely-warmed-tickets-28327863402

**The Best of All God is With Us:
Wesleyana exhibition**

5 May-31 July, Newcastle City Library
A joint project between Brunswick Methodist Church and Newcastle City Council.

**Rededication Service and *Behind the
Scenes at the New Room***

9-10 June, The New Room, Bristol
A special event for the Methodist Heritage Network. Places will be limited; for details contact Owen Roberts robertso@methodistchurch.org.uk

**Manchester Wesley Research Centre
Annual Lecture**

**Tuesday 13 June, JB Mclagan Chapel, Nazarene
Theological College, Didsbury**
Works of Grace and Providence: the Structure of John Wesley's Theology, given by Professor Howard A Snyder. This will be streamed live online. www.mwrc.ac.uk/mwrc-annual-lecture/

**Wesley Historical Society Annual
Lecture and AGM**

Saturday 1 July, Kingswood School, Bristol
wesleyhistoricalsociety.org.uk/events.html

NEW from Methodist Heritage



COME
AND SEE US
AT STAND 188

Methodist Missionary Register

Did your ancestors preach the gospel to all the world?

Test our new Methodist Missionary Register at

Who Do You Think You Are? Live 2017

- Explore 6,500 records of nineteenth-century missionaries sent across the world by the Methodist Church's missionary societies.
- Learn how generations of families travelled overseas.
- Discover where they went.
- Find other information sources for your family's history.

"Understanding how my ancestors grew up helps me to understand my grandparents' attitudes [and] religious beliefs."

Family researcher after using our heritage websites



**6-8 April,
Birmingham
NEC
(Stand 188)**

www.whodoyouthinkyouarelive.com

ABOVE IMAGE: Madras (Tamil Nadu) District Synod, c1899

For more Methodist research resources, and to share your family's stories and pictures, visit our family history websites:

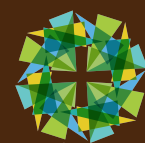
www.mymethodisthistory.org.uk • www.myprimitivemethodists.org.uk
www.mywesleyanmethodists.org.uk • www.mybiblechristians.org.uk

The deadline for submission of articles for the Autumn 2017 newsletter is 3 July 2017. Please send your ideas to: **Owen Roberts, Methodist Heritage Officer, Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR**
Tel: 020 7467 5164 Email: robertso@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.



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