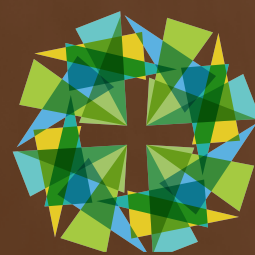


# Methodist Heritage News



Spring 2018



The Revd Steph Jenner (front left) and Vice-President Jill Baker (front right) at the 2017 Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival and Rally. © TOCT

Right: The Old Chapel prior to emergency repairs. © TOCT



## Some little disturbance...

*On Tuesday last, a Methodist Chapel was opened in the village of Tolpuddle, Dorset ... During the evening service, when the chapel was much crowded, some little disturbance was made on the outside...*

Extract from the *Salisbury Journal*, 19 October 1818

As Tolpuddle Methodists celebrate the bicentenary of their original chapel this year, their minister, the Revd Steph Jenner, tells us about the mob violence that marked its opening and how the chapel is commemorating the bicentenary. We also have pictures of the building being transformed today.

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Welcome to our spring newsletter, in which you will find features on the new developments at Tolpuddle, our new Liaison Officer for Methodist Archives, and an update on the 'Writing to Wesley' project, which we launched in last year's spring edition.

Owen Roberts,  
Methodist  
Heritage  
Officer

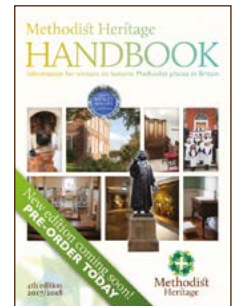


## Editorial

In the last *Heritage News*, Jo made a welcome return to this column while I finalised the new *Methodist Heritage Handbook*. I hope you will have all seen the updated edition by now. If you haven't, you can order a copy FREE by emailing [orders@norwichbooksandmusic.co.uk](mailto:orders@norwichbooksandmusic.co.uk) or calling 0845 017 8220. Remember, if you support a local heritage site or historic chapel, you can order (and re-order) a large stock to make sure you have plenty to give to all your visitors, and you can order a stand to display the handbooks in. As a special offer for 2018, all orders received before 31 December will be delivered with free postage, regardless of quantity.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the launch of the Methodist Heritage strategy. To celebrate this, the Heritage Committee is planning a special event in Oxford on 18 August.

More details will follow, but if you would like to participate, contact me at [robertso@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:robertso@methodistchurch.org.uk)



## Introducing Jon Purcell, the new Liaison Officer for Methodist Archives

My new involvement with Methodist Archives is my dream job! As a History graduate, I have always been interested in the history and heritage aspects of my faith. Archives have always been part of my working life, both as a student and in my career as a librarian.

Before retirement in July 2017, I was University Librarian and Director of Library Services at Durham University, where my responsibilities included the strategic management and curation of three amazing historic archive collections: Durham Cathedral, Durham University and Ushaw College (the first post-Reformation Roman Catholic seminary in England, founded in 1808). I am really looking forward to my new voluntary post in the service of the Methodist Church. Philip Thornborow, my predecessor, will be a hard act to follow. I am grateful for his hard work and enthusiasm in promoting Methodist archives.

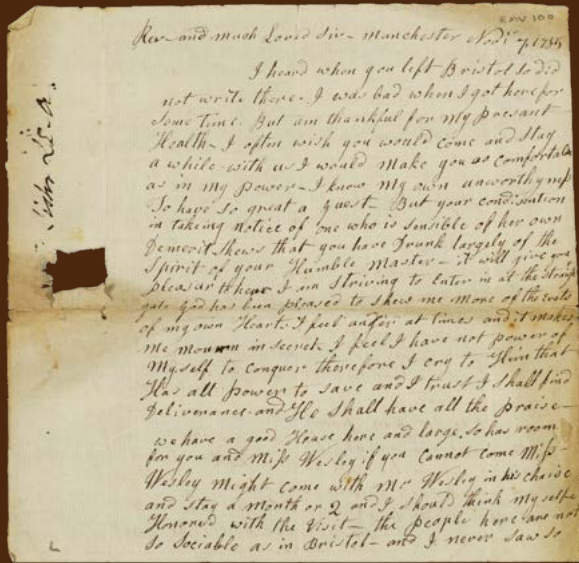
I come from a long-established Methodist family in Northern Ireland. I grew up in the Church, was a Sunday school teacher, involved in youth and church history projects, and am a member of the Waveney Valley Ecumenical Partnership in beautiful East Anglia. My home church is Emmanuel Church in Bungay.

Archives play such an amazing role in the missional, social and heritage imperatives of the Church. They reveal who we were as people called Methodists, who we are, and who we aspire to be. I look forward to meeting all the district archivists and other individuals who do so much to preserve and promote

Methodist heritage through their work with both our archives and our current records. You can contact me by email at [LOMAJP18@gmail.com](mailto:LOMAJP18@gmail.com) or on 07377 705149.



# Writing to Wesley



A letter to Charles Wesley from Mary Lee dated July 1785, is just one of the many letters that have been transcribed.

“The old-fashioned handwriting, the gushing emotion, the idiosyncratic use of capitals in phrases like ‘the Bright Beams of thy mercy’, all brought the text alive.” - Sue Eedle

“Reading the handwritten letters of the early Methodists is a rare privilege, revealing their close encounters with a personal God and demonstrating how faith and assurance so often challenged hardship and poverty in a world of frequently untreatable illness and early death.” - Peter Brophy

“...they throw light on the faith of the early Methodists, sometimes on their disagreements, and also their personal attachment to Charles Wesley and his family. But what impressed me most was the opportunity to listen to the kind of English written and spoken by ordinary men and women a couple of generations before Jane Austen.” - Paul Ellingworth

“Such a privilege to be part of this project, to hear the voice of a real woman from the past through words written by her own hand. It is a very moving and illuminating experience ... it continues to be absolutely fascinating - and is giving me so much to think about!” - Cynthia Park

Readers may recall the launch of this project last year (see the Spring 2017 edition). Since then, more than 60 people have tried their hand at transcribing these letters. We asked some of them how they had found the experience.

Christine Jones from Bristol has transcribed over 30 letters and cross-referenced them with many other contemporary sources. “The challenges of transcribing the letters to Charles Wesley are not merely the eighteenth-century handwriting, the faded ink, the non-existent punctuation and the unusual spelling, but also the subject matter,” Christine says.

“Several of the letters describe the deaths of Christians, their dying weeks, days and hours in great detail. Several use the phrase ‘it pleased God to afflict her’ while many others use similar words. How many people still believe that God sends pain and suffering? It is vital that we continue to proclaim that God is love, that pain and suffering do not please him, and that he calls Christians to alleviate suffering in all its forms in his name.

“John Colmer writes of his daughter’s death, but fails to mention her name. He does mention that John Wesley is going to preach her funeral sermon at the New Room Bristol and gives the date. From *Wesley’s Journal* it was possible to trace her as Sarah, wife of William Bulgin, a printer of Bristol, and then to find that William wrote an account of Sarah’s life, which was serialised in the *Arminian Magazine*.

“John Hutchinson’s letters read like a teenager idolising a pop star and one wonders what Sally Wesley made of his extravagant expressions of love towards her husband!

“Thomas Butts, one of the first Book Stewards, wrote of accompanying three prisoners from Newgate to their place of execution at Tyburn. Using the website [www.capitalpunishmentuk.org/tyburn1735.html](http://www.capitalpunishmentuk.org/tyburn1735.html) it was possible to trace the names of all 10 malefactors

hanged on 12 April 1743. Searching by name using the website [www.oldbaileyonline.org](http://www.oldbaileyonline.org) it was possible to read accounts of their trials. From this, we know that those Thomas Butt ministered to were Michael Bewley and James Smith, both convicted of housebreaking, and Thomas Dennis, convicted of horse theft.

“These examples show something of the richness of the letters and that transcription can become much more than a mechanical task. Comparing the letters with other sources places them in their eighteenth-century context, gives a better sense of the lives the writers led, and adds to our understanding of the place of Methodists in wider society.”

There are still plenty more letters to transcribe, so if you would like to join the project, see [www.methodistheritage.org.uk/earlymethodistvolume.htm](http://www.methodistheritage.org.uk/earlymethodistvolume.htm)

4 From stone throwing to stone laying:  
**new beginnings  
 at Tolpuddle**



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2.



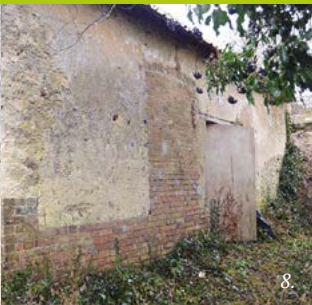
3.



4.



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8.



6.



9.



7.

1. A plaque at Dorchester Old Crown Court commemorates the Martyrs
2. The old chapel before emergency repairs
3. A view of the west side of the old chapel
4. The interior of the old chapel following emergency repairs
5. An existing old window

**T**olpuddle is rightly famous for its Martyrs, iconic figures in the history of trade unionism. In 1834, a group of farm workers in west Dorset had formed a trade union. Although unions were lawful, six of its leaders were arrested and sentenced to seven years' transportation to Australia for taking an oath of secrecy. A massive protest swept across the country; thousands of people marched through London and many more organised petitions and protest meetings to demand their freedom. All but one of the Martyrs were members

of the chapel; some even worked on its construction. Their 1818 building was replaced by a new chapel across the road in the 1860s. The Tolpuddle Old Chapel Trust bought the derelict property in 2015, and are successfully fundraising for its renovation as "a quiet place in the heart of the village" – a community space that will also tell the story of the Martyrs and their Methodist faith. The Revd Steph Jenner described how this heritage is celebrated each year, and why 2018 will be special. "At the Martyrs' Festival weekend

(21-22 July), some 10,000 activists and enthusiasts gather to celebrate the Martyrs' legacy, and to hear speakers and music," she said. "We have a presence in the main tent where we will engage with people on issues of faith and social justice. We also have guides at both chapel buildings to tell our story and answer questions. On the Sunday a Methodist representative addresses the crowd from the stage before leading the wreath-laying on James Hammett's grave (the only Martyr buried in the village) and then all march in a great procession,

During the evening service, when the chapel was much crowded, some little disturbance was made on the outside ... a mob of about 100 persons were found assembled near a chaise and another carriage ... These persons behaved in a most turbulent manner. A lady belonging to the Ministers' party, before she could get into the chaise, was pushed down a bank into the road; the horses were much frightened by the tumult and noise, and the driver was for a considerable time unable to proceed. The ladies were under the necessity of walking a great distance, exposed to the most brutal insults. For more than two miles, in a very bad road, the drivers, horses, and carriages were pelted with stones, mud &c.; the windows of the chaise were broken, and even the side of the chaise was pierced by a stone; one lady who rode by the side of the driver had a severe blow on her head...

Extract from the *Salisbury Journal*, 19 October 1818



6. The old chapel's original cobbled floor  
 7. A bricked-up arched window  
 8. and 9. A closer look at how the elements have left their mark on the old chapel's walls over the years  
 10. The old chapel's old roof rafters  
 11. Andrew McCarthy, the chairman of the Tolpuddle Old Chapel Trust, inside the building

12. This stable door was part of the later agricultural phase of the building  
 13. The old chapel after emergency repairs in 2015  
 14. An artist's impression of how the old chapel will look when all the work is complete

banners high, to the chapel at the far end of the village and back again.

“At 5pm we have a service at the new(er) chapel, which last year required outside seating to accommodate everyone. It has been a great privilege in 2016 and 2017 to have the Vice-President of the Conference with us, and I am delighted to say that Bala Gnanapragasam has eagerly taken up our invitation for 2018. On 13 and 14 October, we are celebrating the opening of the old chapel, remembering the violence of that first opening and looking forward to the

future. On the Saturday there will be events showcasing the transformation of the old chapel. On the Sunday, we shall celebrate with an afternoon service starting at the old chapel and moving onto the new(er) chapel. We are inviting everyone who comes to bring a small stone – not to throw, but to be added to the new construction as a sign of our reconciliation, our ecumenism and moving forward together as a village community. Anyone is welcome to join us. We hope to re-create the much crowded chapel full of people praising God.”

For further information, see:  
[www.tolpuddleoldchapeltrust.org](http://www.tolpuddleoldchapeltrust.org)  
[www.tolpuddlemethodists.org.uk](http://www.tolpuddlemethodists.org.uk)  
[www.tolpuddlemartyrs.org.uk/festival](http://www.tolpuddlemartyrs.org.uk/festival)



Photos: 1 TMCP, 2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,12 Keystone Historic Building Consultants, 14 Tolpuddle Old Chapel Trust, 11, 13 © Tom Wren/BNPS.

# Relaunch of Society of Cirplanologists

The Society of Cirplanologists, established in 1955, has recently been relaunched with a new team of officers. From its inception, the Society's purpose has been to "bring together for study, research and fellowship those people interested in any aspect of circuit plans, especially those plans printed before 1970, and to encourage the deposit of such plans in the nearest Record Office or Archives Centre".

Plans have always been a key source of information for those undertaking key historical Methodist research. They contain vital information about activity at the local circuit and society level. They also record vast 'change', particularly during the last 50 years: the amalgamation of circuits, the failure of some societies, and the growth of new activity. In a world where society has changed at an accelerating pace, and with an impact on the Church that has been quite dramatic, the circuit plan records both 'winners and losers' and gives an insight not

just into 'ancient history' but also into far more recent events.

With this in mind, the Society decided to actively collect circuit plans up to the year 2000. The new officers are: the Revd Dr Stephen Hatcher (President), the Revd David Leese (Secretary), David Leyshon (Editor) and Nicholas Page (Treasurer).

The annual subscription to the Society is £5, for which members receive two copies of a bulletin. To subscribe to the bulletin, send a cheque made payable to the 'Society of Cirplanologists' to Nicholas Page,

1 Park Lane, Wilberfoss, York YO41 5PW. You can also write to Nicholas for further information about membership, or you can email him at [strayorganist@gmail.com](mailto:strayorganist@gmail.com)



Old circuit plans like this are of great interest to people researching Methodist history.

Photo: Stephen Hatcher

## 1918–2018 Remembrance 100

### 100 days of prayer and peacemaking

More people than ever are expected to observe Remembrance Sunday on 11 November this year, on the hundredth anniversary of the end of World War I.

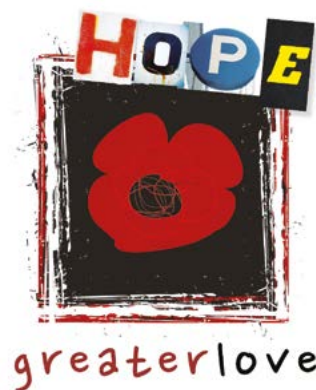
The Methodist Church has been involved with many other partners under the umbrella of ecumenical organisation HOPE, in developing a programme of activities and resources collectively called 'Remembrance 100'. Together we are encouraging 100 days of prayer and peacemaking activity, from 4 August (the anniversary of the start of the war in 1914) to 11 November (Armistice Day).

There will be many ways in which you, your community, church or school can get involved. Those of you who support heritage sites or historic chapels with war memorials may be opening in September for

Heritage Open Days (known as 'Open Doors' in some places), and will want to make the connection to this anniversary and promote peace at other points in 2018. Why not end your 'Open' days or church anniversary with a 'peace party'? The young men on your church roll of honour are likely to be in the 1911 census. Who were they in life and what did they do before the war? Add them to our family history website [www.mymethodisthistory.org.uk](http://www.mymethodisthistory.org.uk). These men were often very young and their stories are an engaging way into this subject for children and discussion of how we can 'make peace in the playground'.



Lots of organisations are working hard to provide the resources you need to stage a local event or to engage with a local school. As details become available, HOPE will be posting links to all the resources at: [www.remembrance100.co.uk](http://www.remembrance100.co.uk)



# Stories on the Mantelpiece

Just as no chapel vestry wall was complete without a print of Henry Perlee Parker's painting *The Rescue of John Wesley from the Epworth Rectory Fire*, no Victorian middle-class Methodist mantelpiece was complete without a Wesley bust or figurine.



Collector Stephen Duckworth's new book covers this phenomenon and its wider context. *Stories on the Mantelpiece* is the subtitle, and the name of an accompanying exhibition at the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery in Stoke-on-Trent. This is the first published work on Victorian domestic religious figures in the context of their times. It provides an illustrated catalogue of more than 200 figures, with assessment of their date and rarity. There are also chapters on the historic context: the religious background, the demographics of the buyers, the Victorian home and its furnishings. The figures themselves and their popularity reflect the religious diversity of the period. These figures were found widely in Roman Catholic and Protestant homes, although their type varied according to the affiliation of the household.

*Victorian Staffordshire Pottery Religious Figures: Stories on the Mantelpiece* by Stephen Duckworth is published by ACC Publishing Group, 2017. ISBN 978-1-851-49871-0. [www.accpublishinggroup.com/uk](http://www.accpublishinggroup.com/uk)

Exhibition at the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent, 24 March – 1 July 2018  
[www.stokemuseums.org.uk/](http://www.stokemuseums.org.uk/)

*Victorian Staffordshire figurines of John Wesley (1) and Jesus Christ (2).*

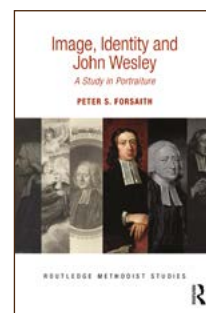
## John Wesley, man of many faces

Dr Peter Forsaith, Research Fellow of the Oxford Centre for Methodism and Church History, Oxford Brookes University, and member of the Methodist Heritage Committee, is better acquainted with the many depictions of John Wesley than most. His new book, *Image, Identity and John Wesley: a Study in Portraiture*, is not just about portraits, but a critical study of the image(s) of Wesley; how these originated, how they were used and how they were seen.

The book sheds light on the question of a 'lost' portrait by Joshua Reynolds, the number of portraits from the final decade of Wesley's life and the continued portraits after his death, with analysis of how these images evolved and developed heroic stereotypes; the majestic 'scene paintings', including the famous rescue from the Epworth Rectory fire (by Henry Perlee Parker, who had also painted the similarly iconic Grace Darling lifeboat rescue

of the shipwrecked *SS Forfarshire*). It also provides a survey of the many prints of Wesley, and notes how he managed to emerge largely unscathed from an age vivid in satirical cartoons. Concluding chapters look at Wesley's (ambiguous) attitude to art, and at how what we recognise as accepted pictures of Wesley came to be where and how they are. A full appendix lists all the pictures Forsaith has been able to track down over more than 25 years.

*Image, Identity and John Wesley: a Study in Portraiture* by Peter Forsaith is published by Routledge, 2017. ISBN 978-1-138-20789-9.



## Diary dates

### Book launch on *Methodist Conscientious Objectors in Staffordshire and the Black Country*

14 April, Englesea Brook Chapel & Museum,  
10.30am-3pm

See [engleseabrook.org.uk/special-events/](http://engleseabrook.org.uk/special-events/) for details.

### Third Annual Methodist Research Conference

19 April, John Rylands Library, University of Manchester,  
10am-4pm

[www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/learning/scholarship-research-and-innovation/conferences-study-tours-lectures/](http://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/learning/scholarship-research-and-innovation/conferences-study-tours-lectures/)

### Methodism and Politics Conference

22-23 June, Wesley House, Cambridge

Organised in conjunction with the Wesley Historical Society. For ticket details, see [www.methodist.org.uk/sriconferences](http://www.methodist.org.uk/sriconferences)

### Wesley Memorial Lecture

12 July, Wesley Memorial Church, Oxford, 7.30pm

Dame Helen Ghosh, former Director General of the National Trust, in conversation with Carole Souter CBE, former Chief Executive of the Heritage Lottery Fund. Now Masters of Balliol and St Cross Colleges respectively, Ghosh, named by *The Tablet* as one of Britain's most influential Roman Catholics, and Souter, lay canon of Salisbury Cathedral, will discuss the relationship between the heritage and mission of the Church.

### More Light, Less Heat

14 July, Englesea Brook Chapel & Museum, 10.30pm-4pm

Did the acceptance of biblical criticism and adaptation of tradition to modern insight help Methodism forward, or merely drive the first nails into its coffin? See [engleseabrook.org.uk/special-events/](http://engleseabrook.org.uk/special-events/) for details.

### Charles Wesley Society Annual Meeting

9-11 August, The New Room, Bristol

For details, contact Dr Clive Norris at [cjpr\\_norris@hotmail.com](mailto:cjpr_norris@hotmail.com)

### Methodist Heritage anniversary event

18 August, Wesley Memorial Church, Oxford

A special event to celebrate 10 years of the Methodist Heritage strategy. For more information, contact [robertso@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:robertso@methodistchurch.org.uk)

### Methodist Philatelic Society Annual Meeting

29 September, Wesley's Chapel, London

Members and non-members welcome. Contact the Secretary, Sheila Kent, at [sheilakent4@btinternet.com](mailto:sheilakent4@btinternet.com)

## Wesleyan package tours? Get away!

It is well known that travel agent Thomas Cook started out as a Baptist tour guide and organiser for temperance and Sunday school excursions. However, it is less well known that Lunn Poly, now part of TUI UK (formerly Thomson), had similar origins. Sir Henry Lunn was ordained a Wesleyan minister in 1886 and served as a missionary in India. He went on to develop what would become one of Britain's largest travel companies.



In 1899, Yorkshireman Harry Gill, a local preacher and class leader, left Nidderdale for one of Lunn's package tours to Greece, the Holy Land and Egypt. The tour was dominated by Wesleyan ministers and took in all the sights Harry had read about in his Bible. His travels are charmingly documented in letters he wrote to his then fiancée Maggie, and in 70 beautiful photographs put in an album still cherished by Sue McGeever, their granddaughter.

Harry brought back water from the River Jordan, lace from Malta, pressed flowers from the Garden of Gethsemane and even some locusts to show to Maggie on his return. Maggie and Harry married on 31 August 1899 and the water from the River Jordan was used to baptize their six children and some of their grandchildren.

The Gill family has kept the album and letters, and Sue often gives talks about her grandfather's adventures. One of the most vivid stories is of being unable to land on the island of Patmos. To compensate, a group of ministers and preachers took turns to read the whole of the book of Revelation aloud on board deck, with the island in their sight!

You can read more about Harry's travels and see his photos on our community website: [www.mywesleyanmethodists.org.uk/](http://www.mywesleyanmethodists.org.uk/)

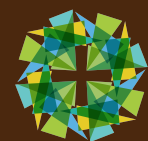
*Photo: Harry and Maggie Gill reproduced courtesy of the Gill family*

The deadline for submission of articles for the autumn 2018 newsletter is 2 July 2018. 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](mailto:robertso@methodistchurch.org.uk)

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).



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The **Methodist Church**