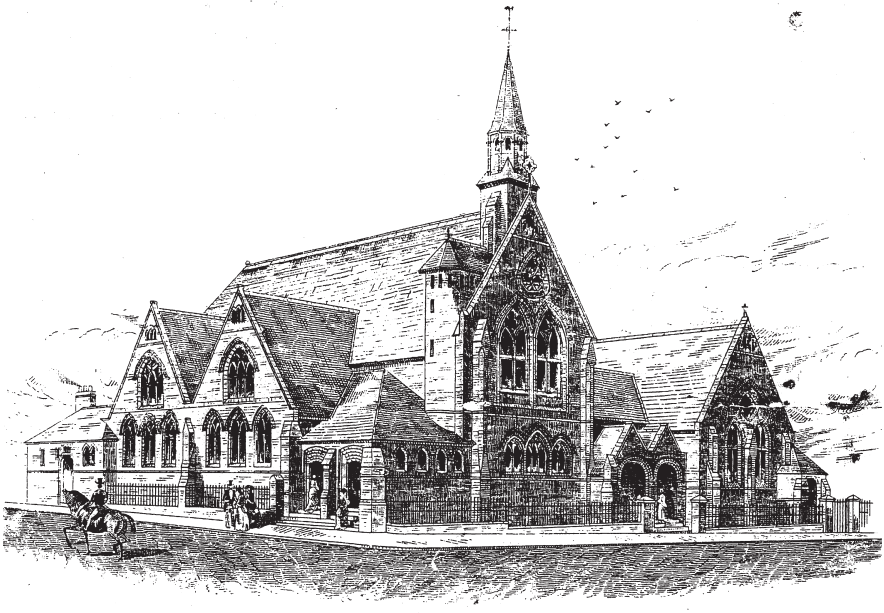
THE CHAPELS SOCIETY

Newsletter 43 January 2010



New Baptist Chapel, Westgate Road, Newcastle upon Tyne
(from the order of service for the laying of the foundation stone, May 1885)

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ADDRESS BOOK

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NOTICEBOARD

CHAPELS SOCIETY VISITS

17 April 2010	Buckinghamshire (Alan Petford/Julian Hunt
July 2010	London — Notting Hill (Andrew Worth)
October 2010	Rugby area (John Anderson)
29 April–2 May 2011	Isle of Man trip (to be confirmed)

DAY CONFERENCE

8 May 2010	*The shaping of Nonconformist architecture* (Dr Williams's Library)

EDITORIAL

In this edition it has been good not only to be able to provide information about historic chapels but also to give details of a new building as well as well-designed and thoughtful improvements to existing buildings. I would be glad to hear of other new chapels and refurbishments of chapels which come to the attention of members.

The Society is still looking for a volunteer with experience of maintaining websites to take over the care of our website from our membership secretary, Robin Phillips. If you feel you might be able to help in this way, please contact the Editor or another officer [see contact details above].

PROCEEDINGS

VISIT TO NEWCASTLE, 10 OCTOBER 2009

As the morning mists lifted over Newcastle upon Tyne, twenty-three members and guests assembled at Westgate Road Baptist Chapel for a fine day of chapel visits meticulously organised by Nigel McMurray with the help of three Newcastle City Guides — Lynne Redhead, Olive Taylor and Sheila Wilson. Newcastle is famed for its early-nineteenth-century town planning undertaken by the Methodist developer, Richard Grainger, and his 'architect', John Dobson, but we were to learn also that it was a centre of good quality stained glass production by the firms of Atkinson, Baguley and Wailes. Six chapels were visited during the day, five of which are still in use as places of worship. Additionally, walking in four small guided groups, we were shown *en route* several other features of the city associated with its rich Nonconformist and Methodist past.

The first chapel was Westgate Road Baptist, a Grade II listed building designed by James Cubitt and opened in 1886. Built on a difficult, sloping site, it is externally slightly unbalanced, with its original entrance between the chapel and the smaller mission hall: Clyde Binfield has called it 'unassuming'. Inside the chapel has all the features one would expect of Cubitt, presenting a large, open worship space framed in four great arch spans with only two pillars which might potentially come between the faithful pew-holder and the pulpit. But it is no longer quite the chapel described and photographed by Binfield in his 2001 Chapels Society publication (*The Contexting of a Chapel Architect. James Cubitt 1836–1912*, p. 73). The combination of a lively church and an aging building led to a major re-development plan in 1995, resulting in the removal of the pews, the destruction of the stone pulpit and the creation of a new foyer and entrance directly from the street. In compensation the marble sunken baptistery is now more visible, despite its 'health and safety' rails, the mission hall false ceiling has been removed to restore the view of the fine roof timbers above and the whole fabric looks fit for purpose and the needs of a thriving modern church. An exhibition of original drawings and printed ephemera connected with the chapel was on display, much to the delight of all but the professional archivists among us!

The former Wesleyan Westgate Hall showing the large windows on the first floor which light the mission hall (photograph copyright Edward Royle)

We then walked in our small groups down Westgate Road, past the overgrown

and neglected unconsecrated cemetery to a prominent road junction dominated by a triangular building with an octagonal, domed clock tower. This was the former Wesleyan Westgate Hall, designed in an Art Nouveau style by Crouch and Butler of Birmingham and opened in 1902. When forsaken by the Methodists in 1974, the building fell into disrepair but was rescued by Pastors Tom and Miriam Leighton of the Prudhoe Street Mission, who were waiting to greet us. The Mission had been served with a compulsory purchase order when the centre of Newcastle around Eldon Square was 're-developed' (others might say 'vandalised') in the 1970s and so the Leightons had moved the mile up the hill to rescue and re-open the hall. Now the downstairs school rooms provide a refreshment room and a prayer room, while upstairs the mission hall, its tip-up seats replaced by chairs, has recently been restored to something like its original Edwardian state — except for its organ, which the Methodists took with them. The ornate plaster ceiling and under-gallery is picked out in the green, red and gold beloved of theatre and music hall designers of the time. The building is at once a reminder of the era of central halls and the home of a modern, thriving mission for the twenty-first century.

A short bus ride then brought us into the centre of the modern, bustling city of Newcastle where, at the heart of the Dobson-Grainger development, just behind Grey's Monument and hemmed in by Fenwick's department store, we slipped into Brunswick Place and visited Brunswick Wesleyan Chapel. Built in 1820 to the designs of George Spoor, this is an elegantly restrained rectangular Georgian brick building with a five-bayed pedimented front. To meet the needs of modern missionary work, when Sunday is their least busy day, the Methodists have inserted a floor at gallery level to create an upstairs worship area, retaining the gallery pews and the rostrum and preserving the height and proportions of a still-elegant worship space, although the pleasantly decorated plaster ceiling dates back only to the aftermath of a flood in 1958. The former ground floor of the chapel has been completely cleared and excavated by about three feet to create a pleasantly spacious hall with kitchen, where we ate our lunches. For the third time in the morning we were able to enjoy a chapel which had been modernised without total destruction and to learn, this time from Deaconess Eunice Attwood, about the important Christian mission work being conducted in the city.

At Brunswick we were shown a display of loving cups and other ceramics, and documents relating to the early Methodism in Newcastle, including the wall clock from John Wesley's 1743 Orphan House and the document conveying its site in what is now Northumberland Street. All that now remains there is a blue plaque on the wall of a modern shop, still owned by the Brunswick trustees although they are trying to sell the site. This was never an orphanage but a multi-purpose place of worship and mission rather like the New Room at Bristol. We then hastened on by diverse routes, past a group kneeling on the pavement in prayer for healing, and through the University of Northumbria to Northumberland Road. This area of the city, which once contained elegant squares, has now been carved through by new roads (one of them ironically named after John Dobson) and peppered with new buildings erected in an apparently *ad hoc* fashion as university

A loving cup in the ceramics collection at Brunswick Methodist Church (photograph copyright Edward Royle)

needs arose and funding permitted. Northumberland Road is a shadow of its former self but still contains some fine buildings — we noted the former Medical School, paid for by the Wesleyan ship-builder Sir Arthur Munro Sutherland, and the former headquarters of the Northumberland Miners' Association, named after its general secretary, the Primitive Methodist Thomas Burt. For our purposes there were also three churches/chapels once gracing this street. One, the Primitive Methodists', has gone; one, the former Trinity Presbyterian Church of England, is now used by Northumbria University as a library and digital resources room; and one, St James's Congregational, is now the URC.

First we visited Trinity (Marshall & Dick, 1885), where we were welcomed by the former Session Clerk and enthusiastically shown by Nigel McMurray its very fine (and one not-so-fine) stained glass windows — one advantage of a church being floored at gallery level is that one can get close to the glass. We then made our way though the Northumbria Campus to the remnants of Ellison Place where the Unitarian Church of the Divine Unity (Cacket, Burns, Dick & Mackellar) was opened in 1940.

Despite its tower, added to appease those who wanted the building to look not unlike the former Anglican church that had stood on the site, this is a stark rectangular building in the late Art Deco style, though there are hints also of Frank Lloyd Wright's modernism about it. We were welcomed by a member of the congregation who had arranged a small exhibition of plans and other memorabilia, including the now never-used communion plate.

Finally, we retraced our steps, noting on the way the birth place of Cardinal Archbishop Basil Hume, to Northumberland Road and St James's URC. This

Church of the Divine Unity (photograph copyright Edward Royle)

building, by T. Lewis Banks (who will be the subject of an essay by Clyde Binfield in the next Chapels Society *Miscellany*), comprises a lantern tower over a square central space each side of which is flanked by a further square to create an open (but still pewed) worship area not unlike that which we had seen at the start of the day at Cubitt's Westgate Baptist. Following refurbishment and a thorough cleaning about fifteen years ago, this building is now really breath-taking and once again we saw some good stained glass — the minister, who greeted us and informed us about his church with clarity and humour, modestly refused to call it excellent. One can only hope that the church's isolation from any resident congregation and the threatened closure of Northumberland Road will not imperil its future. Our senses full of the uplifting joys of good chapel architecture, we then settled to an equally satisfying chapel tea before departing our several ways. Your reporter walked to the station past the monument to the Rev. Dr John Hunter Rutherford, whose memorial window we had seen in passing, re-erected in the foyer of the Northumbria University Ellison Building. Rutherford was a leading Congregational Minister and pioneer of education in Newcastle. The words around the monument clearly read: 'Erected by the Band of Hope Union in Memory of Dr J. H. Rutherford AD 1894'. And a group of youths on their way to a night out in the city lurched merrily by.

Edward Royle

A LITTLE BIT OF SWITZERLAND IN ENDELL STREET

AN ARTICLE BY TONY REDMAN

The corpus of work of the London based architect George Vulliamy is fairly limited. The dolphin lamp standards on the Embankment, the bronze serpents adorning Cleopatra's needle and the laying out of the Victoria Embankment Gardens are his most worthy; some nondescript buildings for the former Metropolitan Board of Works north of the Thames his most common; and the Swiss Church in Endell Street his largest.

Vulliamy was articled at one time to Sir Charles Barry but left his office to join his uncle, Lewis Vulliamy, whose successful architectural practice was based on designs for new churches and domestic commissions from Swiss expatriates working in the city. Lewis's older cousin, François Vulliamy, another watchmaker, founded the Swiss Calvinist chapel in Stidwell Street in Soho in 1775 and the church moved to its present premises in Endell Street in 1855. *The Builder* in March of that year reported that the new chapel boasted 325 free seats, 65 in the gallery and 260 in the main body of the church.

Pevsner describes the chapel façade as 'incorrect Palladian', which is probably fair but in mitigation the site was restricted and the plan form awkwardly angled. The front elevation reflects this, although Vulliamy embellished it with rolling waves and some perspective changing devices which did not really fit the classical façade very well. Vulliamy also designed number 81 next door, probably intended to be the minister's house. Although attributed to George Vulliamy, the likelihood is that the more accomplished church architect, and Palladian specialist, Lewis Vulliamy, had a significant hand in the design. After this commission, George left to join the Metropolitan Board of Works as their surveyor, a post he retained for the rest of this life.

By 2005 the church was run down.* The paint was peeling inside and out, the facilities were looking distinctly tired, the heating was on its last legs, and so an appeal was launched. The 'consistoire' (governing body) initially appointed Herzog and de Meuron, who had recently completed the Tate Modern, and then young Swiss architects Christ and Gantenbein who produced a scheme to turn it into a community facility for the 21st century. Emanuel Christ and his team (Victoria Easton and Stephanie Hirschvogel) suggested replacing the gallery with a faceted glass-fronted concrete edifice which seemingly floats over the entrance lobby supported by the lift shaft and two slender columns. A diverse range of rooms on a mezzanine and upper floor levels creates flexible accommodation behind a new pipe organ.

The architect's scheme achieves a high degree of transparency using glazed walls internally enabling the whole of the interior to be read as one from the

* members visited the church during the London visit in May 2006

The new gallery and entrance lobby of the Swiss Church (photograph copyright Whitworth Co-Partnership)

ground floor. Finishes are minimalist: concrete and glass, with honed down screen framing in European oak, oiled to create a 'limed oak' appearance, in harmony with the white glazed floor finishes and white plastered walls. The screen walling glazing to the upper floors is partly clear and partly mirrored glass, which in its faceted plan form creates a diffracted pattern enabling some surprising reflections back into the body of the church, including some original architectural details. The winding concrete staircase, reusing the original stone cantilever stairs down to the new basement, introduces a domestic element into what could otherwise be a clinical environment and this is further helped by domestic standard floor-to-ceiling heights. The feeling of openness continues externally: the 1960s railings have been removed and the obscured glass in the windows replaced with clear glass.

The completed scheme looks deceptively simple. Natural materials have been used honestly throughout, natural wooden finishes reinstated in the main chapel, glass and concrete with translucent decorative finishes used for the new interventions. The ground floor has been lowered to make the building more easily accessible, and a lift installed to enable access to all floors. In the basement, a new catering kitchen, toilets and storage have been installed. At the liturgical east end, the apse has been remodelled and the staging brought forward into the chapel

space. Liturgical symbolism is apparent, even if muted and possibly unintentional: a sacred airy space full of light, transparency and reflective surfaces, Cistercian-style ascetic detailing and muted colours, with nothing detracting from the centrality of the cross but an inclusive space in which all might feel welcomed and respected. The resulting building is a minor triumph of process, which has involved everybody in melding understated Swiss design style and precision with English building techniques.

Expatriate communities who own listed buildings face some special issues. Not least of these are conflicting areas of heritage significance, some items having Swiss significance unrecognised by local descriptions, and others English significance lost on the Swiss community. In this respect the quality of the wall memorials was noted in the listing, and respected in the final scheme. Communities of expatriates seldom benefit from the continuity of membership necessary to enable a significant project to be completed, and this can result in the buildings they occupy being less altered than those of indigenous communities, or altered cheaply. The Swiss church community is no exception to such problems of continuity and the completion of the project has meant a significant burden being taken on a very small core group of rooted people. The support they have received in fund-raising is in no small way a tribute to the remembered affinity with the building felt by a now widely-scattered diaspora.

We have in this scheme an uncompromisingly contemporary intervention which is at the same time elegant and complementary to its original surroundings. Chapels for expatriate communities need to work harder than ordinary chapels. To begin with they become community centres with greater demands on space for non-liturgical uses. They often become cultural centres as well as places of worship. They have to cater for folk gathered from a wider social and ecclesiastical background, which tends to soften the liturgical focus down to a common level of acceptability. In the case of the Swiss Chapel, there is an additional issue of language, some in the community speak English and German and some English and French. How to label the apse and doors was settled by the consistoire, comprising mainly German speakers: the biblical text in the apse is in French, and all other labels in English. Such breadth of approach often leads to a conservative attitude to new work. In the case of the Swiss church the new works are dynamic and pragmatic, clean and warm.

The Whitworth Co-Partnership (Mark Cleveland, Neil Cleveland and Tony Redman: www.wcp-architects.com) were engaged as conservation surveyors and architects handling conservation, repairs and site design issues. The two million pound project has included full internal and external repair based on a thorough understanding of the repairs history and materials used in order to specify repairs appropriate to the building. A good working relationship was established early on between all members of the design team, and with the local authority. The team have been conscious all the way through of the need for integrity and respect towards the existing structural elements, now more apparent with the stripping away of later interventions. The good humour maintained within the team and with the client and builder throughout the project has resulted in a scheme of great elegance and poise completed within budget.

WORSHIP SPACES FOCUS ON LIGHT

Two recent projects by the London architects Theis and Khan have created interesting worship spaces within existing buildings. In what are essentially outreach projects, they have created structures which utilise natural light both structurally and symbolically. The most striking is at the former Regent Square URC in Bloomsbury where a 1960s church sits on the site of a bomb-damaged 1820s Gothic chapel. The existing small congregation wanted to reach out to the local community and create a building which could have a variety of uses. The initial brief was for the installation of a café and improved disabled access but the congregation were clearly open to a wider redesign and the resulting building has a new entrance, offices, multi-use spaces and a courtyard garden wrapped round the existing church. The church is now divided and dominated by a rendered polystyrene cone which resembles a solidified ray of light, as in an annunciation, leading from roof to floor. Within the cone is a small circular non-denominational sacred space lit from above by natural light enhanced by three roof-mounted spotlights for evening use. The cone leads to a standard double-glazed rooflight set between the existing concrete beams but stops just short of the rooflight so that illumination within the church can spill over into the sacred space.

On the street side of the cone is the new café, lit by an enlarged plain glass window decorated by bronze geometric tracery designed by artist Rona Smith, the pattern resembling a pine cone. The liturgical east end holds the sanctuary, centred on the table with above it a resited stained-glass window designed in 1966 by Pierre Fourmaintraux. The congregation has renamed itself Lumen URC and more details are available at http://www.lumenurc.org.uk/.

At Friends House, on the Euston Road, the changes are less dramatic. The old bookshop and adjacent offices have been combined to form a Quaker Centre combining bookshop, café, research and meeting area and a circular worship space. A new glass-walled entrance and fittings in architectural plywood make the whole space light and airy. This time the worship space has natural light filtered in from one side and reflected artificial light from the ceiling. There is bench seating round the walls and room for a circle of chairs. Although

The cone at Lumen URC seen from the liturgical east end (photograph copyright Theis and Khan)

The Worship space at Friends House (photograph copyright Chris Skidmore)

its floor area is only some 40% greater than the space at Lumen, this seems by far the larger space.

Light has been a central spiritual metaphor for Quakers from the beginning but only in the last century has this been incorporated into architectural design, most notably by the Quaker artist James Turrell in his 'skyspaces', which use framed views of the sky and the reflections created, as a central meditative focus. These two projects give light a much less dominant role than does Turrell but follow a similar aesthetic. In both cases they have used a simple modernist approach to produce striking change within the constraints of two very different twentieth century buildings.

Chris Skidmore

INSPIRED OR UNINSPIRED

A COMMENT BY IAN SERJEANT

The article by D. Colin Dews in *Newsletter 42* poses a number of interesting questions which are worthy of debate. My comments here are written from a personal viewpoint rather than from my position as Conservation Officer for the Methodist Church.

The present arrangement between the Methodist Church and English Heritage is for all potential new listings or regradings to be referred to me so that I can give an overview. This is a fairly recent arrangement resulting from my concern about some spot-listing in recent years. Perhaps this is recognition that they do need some external guidance. It is a valuable arrangement which I hope is beneficial to all parties because I can bring some sort of national perspective even if I cannot by any means claim to know all there is to know about Methodist architecture. It seems clear from this that English Heritage is willing to engage and to listen.

With regard to *Diversity and Vitality: the Methodist and Nonconformist chapels of Cornwall*, I am well aware of the criticisms, some unfounded, some

not. I don't think it is used for the determination of the criteria for assessing potential listing but this would be for English Heritage to comment. Is Cornwall typical of the rest of the country? I would argue that it probably is. After all, 12% of all listed Methodist chapels are in Cornwall and examples of most building types can be seen. The only non-representative examples I can think of are the cob and thatch chapels of Gwithian and Roseworthy (the latter rebuilt in replica as a house). The only absent type is the large Central Hall.

Pevsner's prejudices are well known but he was not consistent. In the first volume, *The Buildings of England: Cornwall*, published in 1951, he was very rude about Coinagehall Street, Helston and Chapel Street, Penzance, but complementary about Wesley, Newquay. The later editions (not written by Pevsner) have done much to redress the balance with many nonconformist chapels being acknowledged as of significance in architectural and historic terms.

It seems to me that Methodist chapels in particular are underrepresented in the lists. There will be no new thematic survey, however, and new listings will only occur where requests are made and the examples meet the criteria. It is vital therefore that such criteria are clear and agreed by the relevant parties. May the debate continue!

CASEWORK REPORT

Whitefield's Tabernacle, Kingswood, Bristol (*Grade I, 1741, Gloucestershire p. 85*). A local architect contacted the Society with his concerns about the neglected state of the building. We have since been in touch with the local authority and have been supporting their proposal to serve an 'urgent works notice' in attempt to secure much needed maintenance and repairs. We are still hopeful that the long term deterioration of this important building can be halted.

Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, Braunston, Northamptonshire (*Not listed, 1797 & 1875, Northamptonshire & Oxfordshire p. 137*). A series of applications for the part demolition of the outbuildings and the conversion of this derelict former Methodist chapel to domestic use have been submitted during the course of the year. Although the Society has accepted the principle of conversion we had significant concerns about the applicant's approach to the repair of the buildings. All the applications have been refused to date.

Trafalgar Street Evangelical Church, Kingston-upon-Hull (*Grade II, 1906, Baines and Son*). A revised planning application for conversion to restaurant/cabaret bar use was granted permission despite objections being raised by the Chapels Society, the Victorian Society and the Ancient Monuments Society.

Etruria Methodist Church aka Etruria Wedgwood Chapel, Stoke-on-Trent (*Grade II, 1820, Jesse Shirley, Shropshire & Staffordshire p. 219*). This long-running case concerns the proposed conversion of this former church into a restaurant. The Society wrote to the local authority recommending the refusal of the current application as it was lacking in detail and did not allow a proper assessment of the scheme to be made. Once again we took the view that the principle

of conversion might be acceptable but lamented the proposed removal of almost all of the ground floor pews.

The New Room, Broadmead, Bristol (*Grade I, 1739, George Tully?, Gloucestershire p. 68*). Earlier this year the warden submitted a proposal to lift and relay the setted alley along with other associated alterations to the landscaping of the courtyard. The Bristol Conservation Advisory Panel was deeply concerned and submitted a strong objection to the works. The Chapels Society shared some of their concerns and is now pleased to note that the original proposals have been modified. It seems that car parking in the courtyard will no longer be allowed and that approval has been granted for a degree of alteration to the planting, seating and pavements.

Proposals for Listing. During the course of the year the Society has received a number of requests for guidance with regard to the potential for currently unlisted chapels to be put forward for listing. This is a difficult issue as a refusal can be deeply disheartening to a congregation trying to ensure the long-term survival of their building. Therefore, the best advice we can offer is to suggest that organisations considering this option study English Heritage's '*Principles of Selection for Designating Buildings*' carefully. This document can be obtained from the English Heritage website at http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.8833 where you can also download a copy of the specific guidance relating to places of worship (including Nonconformist chapels).

Sara Hill

NEWS

Our first conference . . .

The conference on *The shaping of Nonconformist architecture* which has been jointly organised by the Society and Dr Williams Centre for Dissenting Studies is the subject of a flyer contained with this issue of the *Newsletter*, which gives full details. Since places are limited, early application is advised.

. . . and ADHSCL's fourth

The fourth conference of the Association of Denominational History Societies and Cognate Libraries (ADHSCL) will be held at Luther King House, Manchester, on 7–9 September 2010. The subject is *Protestant Nonconformity and Christian Missions*, commemorating the centenary of the 1910 Edinburgh World Missionary Conference. Further details will be obtainable from the website at http://www.adhscl.org.uk/.

. . . and another centenary!

The Baptist Historical Society is celebrating the centenary of Hampstead Garden Suburb Free Church with a meeting at the church on Saturday 22 May 2010. This

will include a lecture by Clyde Binfield with some local ecclesiastical heritage walks in the afternoon. Further details will be available in the next *Newsletter*.

Invitation to a chapel crawl

Our colleagues in Capel, the Chapels Heritage Society in Wales, have let us know that members are welcome to join them for their 2010 Autumn visit to Wrexham, which will be taking place on 9 October 2010. Further information and a booking form will be available later in the year from the Revd Peter Jennings, 5 Cuffnell Close, Liddell Park, Llandudno LL30 1UX (tel: 01492 860449; e-mail: obadiah1@btinternet.com).

The memoirs of an Italian Protestant Pastor

Anthony Earl writes

Members may recall that the Society undertook a long weekend stay in the Waldensian Valleys of Piedmont in October 2004 and was able to see some of the extremely interesting *templi* (protestant parish churches) in that area. Most are still vigorously in use, and are built in distinctive architectural styles.

Achille Deodato was a distinguished minister of the Waldensian Church, who took a strong role in sustaining his people through the war years, and subsequently worked both pastorally and as a fundraiser to ensure the post war survival of the *Valdesi*, who are today respected members, in the Presbyterian tradition, of the World Council of Churches.

Achille Deodato was educated at the denominational college (today the Liceo) in Torre Pellice, served in the Alpine Regiment and then accepted the call to the ministry. In the Second World War, he stood out firmly against fascism, and made valuable contact with the army chaplains and other personnel who were numerous in Southern Italy in the war years. As Moderator, he was widely respected in Europe and America, and made it his goal to make a future for Protestantism and for religious liberty in Italy. He travelled extensively but never lost his contacts with the faithful folk of the valleys. There are about 30 *templi* in the valleys and another 70 parishes throughout Italy.

The Church is recognised as a beacon of integrity and liberty in the modern Italian state, and concentrates some of its present work on the problems of immigrants. It is respected for its intellectual standards, and Deodato, in that respect, is an iconic figure.

Deodato's autobiography — *The Things that are Behind* — has recently been translated by Margaret Neil and is available from the Treasurer of the Waldensian Fellowship, 4 St Anne's Road, Manchester M21 8TD [cost including post and packing £21.60].

The Chapel Teaware Collection at Little Baddow History Centre

Sir Alastair Stewart writes

Our collection continues to grow, with details of recent additions below.

A lovely selection of teaware from Grundisburgh Baptist Church, Suffolk by the kind generosity of Pastor Colin Grimwood and his congregation. Colin heard

about us from an article I wrote in the Strict Baptist Historical Society's newsletter some time ago.

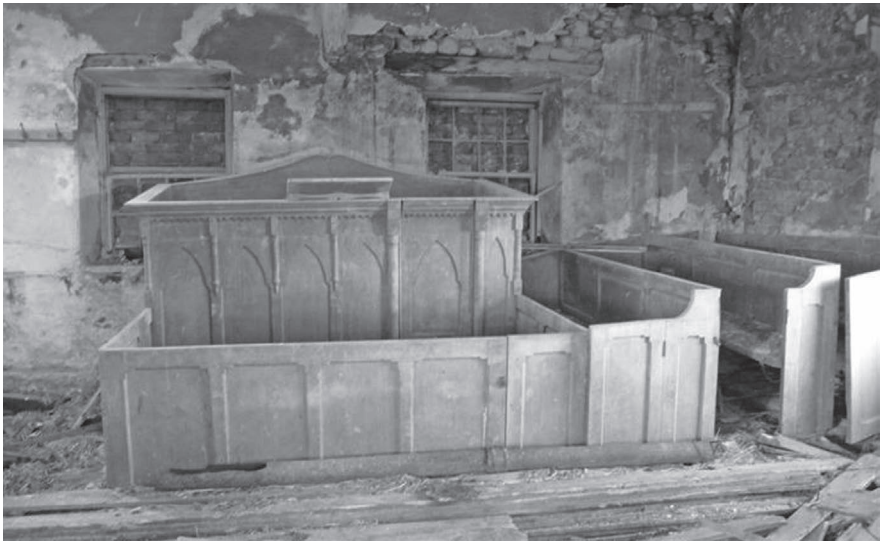
Following a discussion I had last year with Mr and Mrs Michael Deedman of Hockley, Essex we have been given three plates made for Hockley Wesleyan Church. We are always particularly pleased to have specimens from our own County of Essex.

Our very good friend and benefactor Pastor David Oldham of Stamford has been putting the word round and personally delivered to the Centre a cup, saucer and teaplate, the latter dated 1928, from Hope Chapel Sunday School, Rochdale. Also a handsome, if well-worn, cake plate from Salem Baptist School, Accrington. Both these items were sourced by Mrs Sylvia Hills of Heywood, Lancashire, a friend of the Oldhams.

A warm 'thank you' to all our donors. Any enquiries about the collection or to visit us just telephone either Alastair Stewart (01245 222445) or my colleague and neighbour Alison Harker (01245 223042).

Manx chapel for conversion

The Society has written to comment on a planning application for Leodest Chapel (pronounced 'loudest') in Andreas, Isle of Man: the application is to convert to domestic use this derelict single-storied Primitive Methodist Chapel of 1835. As you will see from the photograph, many of the internal fittings still survive, although damaged. We recommended that the building should be properly recorded and studied so that its place within the history of Nonconformity on the Isle of Man was properly understood.



The gothic desk and pews from Leodest Chapel

Good news from Gravesend

SAVE Britain's Heritage was successful in a recent legal challenge which preserved from demolition a Victorian chapel in Gravesend, formerly Milton Congregational Church, most recently in use as a Sikh Gurdwara. The building was designed by Sir John Sulman (1849-1934) and is in a conservation area. Despite the building being unlisted, SAVE were able to argue that it was a landmark building which made a positive contribution to the conservation area and that its loss would not be outweighed by the public benefits of the new development. Further information is available on the SAVE website at http://www.savebritainsheritage.org/.

HCT take on another chapel

The Historic Chapels Trust continues to add to its portfolio of chapels with the transfer into its hands of the grade II* listed Westgate Methodist Chapel in Upper Weardale of 1871, together with the attached schoolroom and living accommodation. This chapel retains its Victorian layout complete with full gallery, pews and original windows and has high quality decorative detailing in the metal and plasterwork.

New Salvation Army Citadel for Chelmsford

This photograph shows part of the striking zinc shingle-faced exterior of the new Salvation Army citadel at Chelmsford designed by Anthony Hudson of Hudson Architects. The structure, which replaces a single-storey 1970s building, is of cross-laminated timber panels and contains a worship hall seating 300, a smaller meeting room, a multi-functional hall which is used for sports, a day-care lounge and offices, all leading out of a foyer café. The two principal facades extend, following the kerb line, to enclose a courtyard.

NOTES AND QUERIES

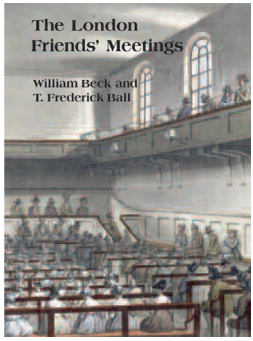
The editor has received a query from Stephen Best of Nottingham about the object illustrated below, which is in his possession. It is a cast metal object on four stub feet (possibly a teapot stand) with 'SHAKESPEARE STREET CHAPEL BAZAAR FEBRUARY 1896' inscribed round the edge of a relief of a chapel, presumably that named. Shakespeare Street Chapel, Nottingham was the head of the Nottingham circuit of the United Methodist Free Churches: it opened in 1854 and closed in 1953.

On the centre of the reverse is engraved 'MINISTER / 1890-1896 / REV.T.J.DICKINSON' with at the bottom the initials 'S.D. / C.J.H'.

Is any member aware of any similar commemorative item, which seems a rather permanent way of marking a bazaar? Or does anyone know any more about the Revd T.J. Dickinson and the church?

BOOK REVIEWS

The London Friends' Meetings . . . by William Beck and T. Frederick Ball. Reprint of 1869 edition, with new introduction by Simon Dixon and Peter Daniels. Pronoun Press, London, 2009. xxxvi + 461 pp, paperback. ISBN 978-0-9556183-5-2. £24 (also hardback).



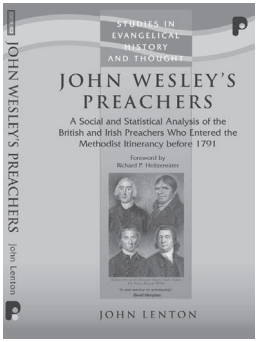
This invaluable and much quoted work on the history of the Society of Friends in London has long been an essential source for the development of Quaker meetings in London and the buildings and burial-grounds which served their needs. In this reprint the whole of the original text has been reproduced photographically retaining the same pagination although the text area has been slightly enlarged which much improves its legibility.

While retaining the preface to the first edition the editors have provided an additional and most informative Introduction which includes short biographies as well as portraits of the authors, the architecturally trained William Beck and the somewhat fiscally challenged T. F. Ball. An extensive Bibliography has now been added which should prove very helpful to future users as well as an Index which was formerly noticeably absent.

Perhaps the most striking feature of this new edition is the numerous pages of illustrations which have been cleverly introduced without disturbing the pagination. These include several pictures which will be familiar from other publications, such as 'The Quaker's Synod' and photographs from Hubert Lidbetter's collections. There are also two plans to show the locations of the London sites and many other photographs and drawings which bring these long-lost meeting houses back to life which no mere verbal description could hope to achieve.

The reprinting of a 'rare' text must always be a perilous undertaking so that we must be particularly grateful for this new edition of 'Beck and Ball' which should delight all who come to it anew and give fresh life to an old and still much valued source.

Christopher Stell



John Wesley's Preachers: a social and statistical analysis of the British and Irish preachers who entered the Methodist itinerancy before 1791 by John Lenton. Paternoster Press, 2009. 506 pp, paperback. ISBN 978-1-84227-625-9. £34.99

In an extraordinary re-writing of history the Revd Jabez Bunting reputedly altered the original inscription on the memorial to John Wesley at Wesley's Chapel in London in 1823. Composed by Dr John Whitehead, Wesley's doctor, executor and biographer, the original inscription had eulogised Wesley as the 'patron and friend of the lay

preachers'. Bunting's revised text, however, extolled Wesley as 'the chief promoter and patron of the plan of itinerant preaching' thereby, John Lenton maintains in this revisionist study, 'removing the emphasis on layness while dramatising the itinerancy'. In subsequent Methodist historiography Bunting's influence has generally held sway and despite the late Dr Frank Baker's recognition of the need to redress the balance by identifying as many of the lay preachers as he could from available sources half a century ago and the publication of a symposium to mark the bicentenary of the general introduction of Methodist local preachers' quarterly meetings in 1995, Lenton's book is the first full-length systematic study of a dynamic movement which shaped the distinctive character of Methodism in the eighteenth century and continues to sustain the Methodist church in the twenty-first century.

Lenton's study explores, in as far as the evidence allows, virtually every conceivable dimension of the domestic and religious life of some 802 mainly lay itinerants, over a hundred more than those identified by Baker. It ranges from their social, educational and religious backgrounds, their marriages and family lives, demonstrating that more were married than has 'sometimes been assumed' to their retirements, deaths and burials, though the redoubtable William Grimshaw of Haworth was not buried in his 'parish graveyard' but that of the neighbouring parish of Halifax at Luddenden where his wife had been buried. Crucially, however, despite Lenton's revisionist emphasis on the role of the preachers, the picture of John Wesley himself that emerges from this study reaffirms Whitehead's assessment of Wesley as 'the patron and friend of lay preachers'. This book is on balance more reaffirming of the centrality of Wesley's contribution to the dynamic of the movement than that offered by some other recent more broad brush analyses or recent comparisons of the respective roles of John and Charles Wesley in the Methodist mission. It acknowledges specifically that while lay preaching pre-dated the Methodist revival and was opposed initially by John Wesley, he soon recognised its potential in stimulating and sustaining the Methodist revival, providing evidence of Wesley's strategic vision, his organising genius, his indefatigable practical application and his effective pastoral concern for the successive cohorts of preachers that sustained his remarkable mission during his lifetime.

Lenton has utilised a wide range of documentary, printed and on-line sources to support his analysis. He also provides glimpses of the physical world in which his preachers fulfilled their calling, with references to numerous unspecified cottages, farmhouse kitchens, lofts, barns, taverns, shops, factories, foundries and outdoor venues such as Gwennap Pit in Cornwall which were utilised for open-air preaching before the construction of the later preaching houses 'whether octagon or rectangle' such as the New Room at Bristol. For example, John Nelson, one of four Methodist preachers illustrated on the book's cover, is recorded as having preached at Alpraham in Cheshire under a pear tree in a friend's garden. However, there is no reference to the surviving, if dilapidated, and unprepossessing, mid-eighteenth century brick-built study in the grounds of the former Wesleyan Chapel at Birstall in West Yorkshire, in whose confines he prayed and in whose doorway he preached probably still wearing his mason's

apron with his hammer and chisel protruding from his pouch. This is one of the most remarkable extant monuments to the Methodist revival in its northern heartland, which Lenton identifies as stretching 'from Preston to the Yorkshire coast'.

Nor is there any reference to Nelson's well-preserved table tomb in the nearby parish churchyard of St Peter's, Birstall, with its supplementary inscription identifying Nelson as 'coadjutor of John Wesley and the pioneer of Methodism in Yorkshire' added in 1910 and incidentally revealing an early twentieth century recognition of the significance of lay preachers in the Methodist mission. Similarly neglected is the tomb of that other great revivalist preacher William Bramwell in the nearby overgrown, sealed and abandoned Methodist graveyard of the former Westgate Hill Methodist church which closed in 1971 across the fields from Tong village, which I recently had to scale a wall to view and which remains at risk or the gravestones removed from the South Parade Wesleyan Chapel at Halifax now resting in a corner of the municipal cemetery of Stoney Royd. The better preserved early Methodist graveyards at Greetland (1778) and Mount Zion (1779) together with the accommodation used by preachers in their lifetimes at Trewint on Bodmin Moor and the celebrated 'Prophet's Chamber' at Mount Zion, Ogden, are briefly described and convey with these other surviving physical remains more vividly even than statistical data a real sense of the world in which Wesley's preachers lived, toiled and died.

Hanging on the vestry wall of Mount Zion Methodist Church, Ogden, near Halifax is a framed contemporary print of the diminutive, frail and elderly founder of Methodism being physically supported by Dr James Hamilton, a lay preacher, on his right and Joseph Cole, a travelling preacher, on his left, in Edinburgh a month after he had preached his final sermon at Halifax. It symbolises not only the love and respect in which Wesley himself was held by his preachers, which Dr John Whitehead had also recalled in his memorial tribute to Wesley in London, but also the twin strengths of Methodism's lay and clerical leadership, which John Lenton has ably reconstructed during the period of Wesley's lifetime in this well-researched, informative study.

John A. Hargreaves

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