

May 2010



ISSN 1357-3276

THE 22nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE CHAPELS SOCIETY

will be held at Bayswater U.R.C., Newton Road, W2
on 3 July 2010, at 12.30 pm

AGENDA

1. Welcome and apologies for absence.
2. Approval of the minutes of the previous AGM held in Oakham on 4th July 2009.
3. Annual Report & Accounts for 2009 (sent to all members with *Newsletter 44*).
 - i) Brief reports will be presented by the President, the Hon. Secretary, the Hon. Treasurer, the Hon. Editor and the Hon. Visits Secretary.
 - ii) Adoption of the Annual Report & accounts for 2009.
4. Election of trustees:

The President, Christopher Wakeling, has reached the end of his first term of office but is willing to stand for a further term of office. The Treasurer, Andrew Worth, wishes to stand down.

Current officers willing to stand for re-election:

President: Christopher Wakeling (proposed by Celia Gibbs, seconded by Alan Petford)

Secretary: Sara Crofts (proposed by Christopher Wakeling, seconded by Paul Gardner)

Editor: Chris Skidmore (proposed by Sara Crofts, seconded by Alan Petford)

Visits Secretary: Tim Grass (proposed by David Quick, seconded by Alan Petford)

One nomination has been received for the post of Treasurer David R. Watts (proposed by Chris Skidmore, seconded by Tim Grass)

We have six elected members of Council each serving three-year terms. John Anderson and Celia Gibbs will reach the end of their second three-year term in 2010.

Current members willing to continue serving:

Alan Petford (until 2012)

David Quick (until 2012)

Current members eligible and willing to stand for re-election until 2013:

Paul Gardner (proposed by John Anderson, seconded by Celia Gibbs)

Roger Thorne (proposed by Paul Gardner, seconded by David Quick)

Nominations for election to the Council received to date:

Alan Rose (proposed by Roger Thorne, seconded by Tim Grass)

Further nominations are sought for Council members.

5. Appointment of Independent Financial Examiner.

- i) Cedric Hallam passed away in January 2010 and the Council therefore agreed to appoint John Bussey to examine the Accounts for 2009 (proposed by Roger Thorne, seconded by Christopher Wakeling). The AGM is asked to ratify this decision.
 - ii) John Bussey has also been nominated to examine the Accounts for 2010 (proposed by David Quick, seconded by Sara Crofts). The AGM is asked to approve this nomination.
- 6. Any other business.
 - 7. Closing remarks from the President.

Nominations, or any items of business members wish to table for discussion at the Annual General Meeting, should be sent in writing or by email to the Honorary Secretary, Sara Crofts, 47 Salisbury Drive, Midway, Swadlincote, DE11 7LD (ChapelsSociety@googlemail.com) to arrive by **Saturday 19 June 2010**. If making a nomination please include the name of the proposer and seconder, and confirmation of the candidate's agreement to stand for election. Copies of the Agenda, the minutes of the 2009 AGM and the Annual Report & Accounts can be downloaded from the Society's website at www.britarch.ac.uk/chapelsoc/index.shtml. A limited number of copies will also be available at the meeting.

[Registered with the Charity Commission (No. 1014207)]

EDITORIAL

From a focus on modern refurbishment of chapels in the last *Newsletter*, this issue seems to be concentrating on more modest buildings. Our book reviews however cover Catholic churches in England, chapels and churches of the Isle of Man and the far from modest Bethesda Methodist Chapel Hanley. Your editor trusts that this amalgam gives something for everyone to enjoy.

Along with this issue you will receive the Annual Report and Accounts, a swansong for our retiring Treasurer. I am sure that you will wish to join with the Council in thanking Andrew Worth for his husbanding of our resources over recent years. And we look forward to his continuing exploration of London chapels, with the next instalment in July!

All statements and views published in this newsletter are those of the contributor alone. Neither the editor nor the Society may be held responsible.

A MEETINGHOUSE ON THE AMERICAN GREAT PLAINS

AN ARTICLE BY KEITH SPRUNGER



The ‘1877 Meetinghouse’ at Newton, Kansas (photograph above) is a simple wood-frame structure, illustrative of the austere Protestant architecture that arose on the American frontier of the nineteenth century. It began as a Baptist meetinghouse. There was no architect or master builder. Members of the new congregation simply pitched in with their own labour. Work began in November of 1877 and the dedication was on 27 January 1878, just in time to accommodate a new batch of members. Powerful evangelistic meetings of that time brought in new converts who were immediately baptized in the cold winter waters of Sand Creek.

The city of Newton was established in 1871 as station of the Acheson, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad. The early years were wild and woolly, with lots of cowboys, cattle drives, and buffaloes. The town was the railhead for shipping out long-horn cattle driven up the Chisholm Trail from Texas. Buffalo Bill Cody, legendary hunter of the plains, knew Newton well; he called it ‘the toughest, cussedest, wild west town I ever knew’. Plenty of ‘depravity and recklessness’. Soon ‘civilizing elements’ prevailed, and Newton turned into a peaceful city with schools and churches. Today Newton, with a population of about 18,000, is a regional centre of agriculture and small industry. The pastor of the 1877 Meetinghouse likes to imagine Buffalo Bill dropping in at the church in those early days for edification and inspiration — who knows?

In 1884 the Baptists built a new, more stylish building, topped with a gothic tower, and sold the old one. Since that time, many congregations have owned or

rented the 'old church', including the Mennonites, German Baptists, Disciples of Christ, Evangelicals, Seventh-Day Adventists, and African-American Methodists and Baptists. These groups, as they prospered, mostly went on to erect more substantial structures of their own.

In 1968 the old meetinghouse was almost lost, when Holsey Chapel, an African-American Methodist congregation, faded out and the site was sold to an auto dealership. Demolition seemed certain. Then, in the nick of time, the People's Bible Baptist Church, led by Pastor Verne Bender, bought the building and moved it across town to a new location. They renamed it the '1877 Meetinghouse'.

The building retains many of its original features. The rectangular structure is an excellent example of a nineteenth-century Protestant meetinghouse of the Great Plains, with some extra Gothic touches (especially the pointed windows with coloured glass), the central pulpit, pews, and pressed metal ceiling.

Today the congregation is independent Baptist and serves a modest section of town, including a large mobile home (caravan) park across the street. Pastor Bender makes a point of reaching out to neighbourhood residents; in times of tornado danger, he always opens the church basement as a place of refuge (Kansas is, after all, 'tornado alley'). The building is a historical monument, perhaps, but Pastor Bender always asserts that this is not a museum but the home of a living congregation. And he adds: 'although our building lacks air-conditioning, it has prayer-conditioning'.



*The meetinghouse at Newton, Kansas has an important community role!
(both photographs copyright Keith Sprunger)*

TWO CUMBRIAN COTTAGE CHAPELS

AN ARTICLE BY CHRIS SKIDMORE

Hawkshead in Cumbria is an ancient township more associated with the tourist trail than nonconformity; with William Wordsworth who was sent to school there and with Beatrix Potter, whose husband, local solicitor William Heelis, had his office in the village. However to the East of the village lies the tiny hamlet of Colthouse which contains one of the oldest Quaker meeting houses in the area. Colthouse has been a centre for Friends since the earliest days: the white-washed meeting house dates from 1688. It sits in its walled enclosure to the north of the now largely derelict farm at Town End, while its walled graveyard lies to the south of the farmyard by the side of the road to Sawrey.

However it is younger buildings which are the focus of this article. The road from Hawkshead to Coniston climbs as it leaves the Ambleside road at the side of the ancient Courthouse and after about a mile turns into the narrow main street of Hawkshead Hill. The last cottage on the right is somewhat different from the rest in that it is clearly attached to a chapel, the walls pierced by two sizeable pointed arched windows alongside a jutting cottage porch. This is Hawkshead Hill Baptist Church. A Victorian stone between the two windows claims that the church dates from 1678 (dubious) and that it was restored in 1876 (more obvious).



The author in front of Hawkshead Hill chapel (photograph copyright Gil Skidmore)



*The entrance to Union Chapel,
Hawkshead (photograph copyright
Gil Skidmore)*

The cause does in fact date from 1678 but was originally founded in Torver, on the other side of Coniston Water, by a group of miners and moved to Hawkshead Hill in 1709 when the cottage, presumably dating back to at least the previous century, was registered as a meeting house. It has had a chequered history, failing several times in the 19th and 20th centuries and was most recently revived in 1977. Andrew and Cath Dodd, the present ministers, live in the adjacent cottage and have developed an open and welcoming atmosphere, more liberal and universalist than many Baptist missions.

Entering the chapel through the porch at the front there are stairs straight ahead which rise to the gallery, now a space for small meetings. On the left the main chapel opens out to a space about 10 by 6 metres, carpeted, bare of pews and well-lit by the large windows. The current gallery clearly dates to the 19th century remodelling and has turned balusters and a relatively low rail — 20th century safety considerations have placed an iron and glass half-height screen behind it. However underneath the present gallery has been preserved a narrow cross beam and two uprights which might well have held up the original gallery. Recent modernisation has converted the vestry and cottage which were behind the chapel when Christopher Stell visited in the 1970s to well appointed accommodation for one or two visitors — which is used for clergy retreats.

The conversion of an existing cottage into a chapel is something we expect of the early period of nonconformist building as at Hawkshead Hill. However the other chapel in Hawkshead village itself is a much later conversion and carries with it a fascinating story.

In the back corner of one of the little squares that make up the centre of the village is an arched doorway bearing the inscription in gold on purple 'Methodist Church'. Entering through the door into a little hallway a half-glazed door straight ahead leads into the chapel while a door on the right leads to a steep staircase lit by an impressive rounded Georgian window. The chapel is again of a very modest size with a curved balcony but seemingly very little changed from the late 19th century. There are pews and a dark carpet and a sanctuary with a rail and a low pulpit, matched on the other side by a venerable but well cared-for harmonium. The balcony, in contrast to the previous chapel, has more delicately turned and white painted balusters backed with a curtain: the gallery is supported by two iron pillars. Again the room is light from three large rounded windows — one to the right of the back wall behind the sanctuary and the other two on the left wall each with a central portrait roundel and borders of stained glass, the main glazing units each having a central emblem in painted glass. Above the communion table hangs a small reproduction of Leonardo's Last Supper and above the pulpit a photograph of the benefactress of Union Chapel, Hawkshead — Mrs Cooke.

Two framed papers hang on the back wall and tell the story. The first begins:

Previous to November 20th 1862, a small congregation of Christian people assembled for worship in an upper room situate to the north of WORDSWORTH's lodgings at HAWKSHEAD. This room being built over other rooms became very cold in the winter.

The story is told by the daughter of one of the worshippers. How her mother, before marriage, had lived with a Quaker widow at Esthwaite Mount in Colthouse and that the lady, Mrs Satterthwaite (a Colthouse Quaker name since the 17th century), had been sympathetic to the plight of the worshipping group and, when a group of cottages came up for sale in Hawkshead, how she bought them and gave the central cottage to the group. The group refurbished the cottage as a chapel and it was opened in November 1862 and named Union Chapel 'so that all denominations could worship there'.

Life had been kind to the group but it was not to be to Mrs Satterthwaite for she soon afterwards married a clergyman, the Revd Henry Cooke, and died shortly after, giving birth to their only daughter. The chapel's ownership then passed to Mr Cooke and, on his death, it was bequeathed to the Free Methodist Church. However the circuit, being far removed, was unwilling to maintain the church and it passed in time (about 1926) to the Wesleyans. Finally the paper reveals that the portrait of Mrs Cooke (formerly Satterthwaite) was given to the chapel on its 50th anniversary in 1912.

The writer of this paper was one of the three unmarried daughters of Mrs Nathan Garnett, who after her sojourn with Mrs Satterthwaite, became wife to the village postmaster. The other framed paper is a certificate of presentation to her and her husband on the occasion of the chapel 50th anniversary of 'the walking stick and the framed photograph' for taking 'such a responsible and deep interest in the work of the Lord in this place'.



*Contrasting balconies —
elegance and utility — Union
Chapel Hawkshead (on the
left) and Hawkshead Hill
Baptist Church (below)
(photographs copyright Gil
Skidmore)*



CASEWORK REPORT

In the last few months proposed alterations to redundant chapels have been the most common type of casework to come to the Society's attention. Converting historic chapels to other uses is rarely an easy task and sadly some of the proposals we see are let down by poor design and a lack of attention to detail. **Dodington United Reformed Church, Whitchurch, Shropshire** (*Grade II, 1813; Stell — Shropshire & Staffordshire p. 206*) falls into this category. In this case the applicants lodged an appeal against an earlier refusal to grant planning permission for alterations to facilitate a change of use to retail, community and domestic use. Christopher Wakeling wrote to the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Chapels Society to express our concerns and subsequently attended the appeal hearing in January.

Although the Society did not object to the conversion in principle, serious issues regarding the detailing and the practicalities of the proposals were raised at the hearing. Despite this, the Planning Inspector allowed the appeal and has granted planning permission and listed building consent.

Towards the end of last year the Chapels Society was notified of the derelict state of **Leodest Chapel at Andreas on the Isle of Man** by a local amateur historian [see the News item in *Newsletter 43*, Ed]. As a result the Society commented on the planning application and registered building consent application for the conversion of the Chapel to domestic use. Although the application for the conversion and extension of the chapel to create one dwelling was granted, we were pleased to note that there is a condition that prior to the commencement of any building works a detailed photographic survey and a set of large scale (1:20) survey drawings of the existing internal and external features of interest are to be prepared in consultation with the Conservation Officer.

The sorry plight of the derelict **Cemetery Chapels at Ince Cemetery in Wigan** (*Grade II, 1855–7, Alfred Waterhouse*) was brought to the Society's attention by Andrew Lomax, Chairman of the Save Wigan Heritage Group. He wrote to the Society to ask for help with regard to the Cemetery Chapels, which are owned by Wigan Council but have been neglected for some years. The Society was able to provide initial guidance and suggest a number of potential sources of advice and support.

The question of a sustainable future for **Providence Chapel, Stone Street, Cranbrook** (*Grade II*, 1795*) continues to rumble on as its condition continues to deteriorate. It seems that officers from Tunbridge Wells Borough Council have been in contact with the owners of the Chapel and have made it clear that the condition of the building is now cause for serious concern. We understand that the Council has subsequently recently received proposals for the reuse of the building and that a site meeting with the owners and English Heritage is imminent. If this meeting does not generate some positive progress, it is possible that the local authority will pursue enforcement action in order to secure the necessary repairs. We therefore hope that there may a positive outcome.

And finally, the Society was asked if it might oppose the proposal to demolish **Canterbury Baptist Church** (*Unlisted, 1863*) in order that a new facility can be

built on the site. Those who attended the Canterbury visit in October 2008 will recall the general view that the Chapel was unfortunately not of sufficient architectural merit to be worth preserving. The Society therefore decided that it would not be appropriate to comment on the planning application.

Sara Crofts

NOTES AND QUERIES

The Revd T. J. Dickinson and Shakespeare Street Chapel, Nottingham

Thomas James Dickinson (1854–1932) was born at Burton on Trent and spent 47 years in active ministry in the Free Methodist and then United Methodist churches in Burnley, Darlington, Lincoln, London, Redruth, Rochdale, St Ives and Southport as well as Nottingham. He was Connexional Secretary of the United Methodist Free Churches 1903-05 and President in 1905. His special interest was pastoral visitation and it was therefore fitting that he died while engaged in such a visit. He was, said an obituary, ‘a man that those who knew him delighted to honour’. The 1896 teapot stand, of which there is no further news to bring you, must have been one of the more unusual of those honours!

‘Festival of Britain’ chapels

Karen Muldoon of Wandsworth, a student on the Post Graduate Certificate in Architectural History at Oxford University, is writing a dissertation on post World War II chapels. She asks whether members can point out to her any extant or demolished examples of the ‘Festival of Britain’ chapels. Please send information via the editor.

NEWS

Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme

This major source of funding is due to end on 31 March 2011. It currently enables listed places of worship to claim back 100% of the VAT incurred on repairs and maintenance to the building and other fixtures such as bells and organs and has paid out over £100 million to places of worship across the UK since April 2001. There is currently a campaign to extend the scheme which has its own website at www.savetherefund.info. Members are encouraged to get involved by writing to their MP (a sample letter is on the Save the Refund website) or by signing the electronic petition on the No 10 website at <http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/VAT-refundscheme/>.

Places of Worship at risk

On 30 June, English Heritage will announce the results of a sample survey into the condition of England’s listed religious heritage: it is hoped to be able to highlight how many religious buildings are at serious risk of decay. The old Buildings at Risk Register previously more or less excluded places of worship and this new exercise is hoped to provide the information in order to lobby Government for more resources for religious heritage.

In order to widen its research English Heritage is inviting anyone with an interest in their local historic chapel or other place of worship to tell them of their challenges and successes at www.english-heritage.org.uk/powar where they will be asked to answer a few on line questions. Based on this research it is hoped to publish a practical guide bringing basic information on caring for your building into a single leaflet useful for all faiths.

Chapels and chapel people

There have been some delays in the publication of Miscellany 2, with the title *Chapels and Chapel People*. We now hope that it will be published in June.



The chapel at Turnham Green erected in 1875 for the congregationalist Thomas Slade Jones and sketched by his young assistant Vincent Van Gogh. This is appended at the end of a letter to his brother Theo written from Slade Jones' school in Isleworth on 25 November 1876. The connection between Van Gogh and Turnham Green is one of the many intriguing links to be found in Clyde Binfield's article on T Lewis Banks in the forthcoming Chapels Society Miscellany 2 (image from the website vangoghletters.org devised by the Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam and the Huygens Instituut)

New planning policy set out

The Government has set out its planning policies on the conservation of the historic environment in PPS5 (*Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment*). This replaces PPG15 of September 1994 as well as PPG16, the planning guidelines for archaeological sites. PPS5 can be downloaded from www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/pps5 and English Heritage's Practice Guide is available from www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.21136.

Edgar Wood celebrations

2011 marks the 150th anniversary of the birth of ‘that remarkable Manchester architect...’ Edgar Wood (1860–1935). This is being celebrated by an exhibition ‘The life and works of Edgar Wood’ at the Middleton Arena M24 1AG from May to September, together with a programme of events which are advertised on the web at www.edgarwood.com.

Reformation Pilgrimage 2010

2010 is also the 450th anniversary of the Scottish Reformation and Anthony Earl with colleague Dr Ken Carleton, plans to run another trip in the series of Reformation Pilgrimages in which members have taken part in recent years. Previous such pilgrimages (holiday weeks combining a serious approach to church history with enjoyment) have included the Waldensian Valleys, In the Steps of Martin Luther, and later of Calvin, Reformation Hungary and those parts of France and Switzerland linked to Erasmus and Zwingli.

This year is the turn of John Knox. The journey will be to the Scottish Churches House, in Dunblane, from 4–10 September. In church government, Knox replaced episcopacy with presbyterianism. In terms of architecture, the turn of events caused the development of the classic T shape of Scottish churches. Cost will be about £370, plus travel. Further details can be had from Anthony Earl (anthonyjearl@googlemail.com) and application should be made as soon as possible. Places are strictly limited.

Baptist Historical Society

We have received more information about the Baptist Historical Society AGM and Lecture taking place on Saturday 22 May 2010 at Hampstead Garden Suburb Free Church, which is celebrating its centenary this year. The day starts at 11 am with the AGM followed by a lecture by Clyde Binfield on ‘How Free? How New? How Suburban? The Establishment of Dissent in Hampstead Garden Suburb’. Lunch will be followed by a tour of the suburb and the centenary exhibitions. To book contact Stephen Copson, 60 Strathmore Avenue, Hitchin, Herts SG5 1ST (stephen.bhs@dsl.pipex.com).

ADHSCL AGM lecture and conference

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/>.

The ADHSCL AGM is being held this year on Thursday 21 October 2010 at 2.00 pm at Lumen United Reformed Church, 88 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RS. The lecturer will be Chapels Society member Dr John H. Thompson and his subject will be ‘The Nonconformist Padre in the first world war: four accounts of what they did’.

Methodist Heritage Handbook

One of the first public benefits of the appointment of Jo Hibbard as Heritage Officer for the Methodist Church [see article in *Newsletter 41*] is the publication of the new full-colour Methodist Heritage Handbook. This gives details of over 100 different historic houses, monuments, chapels and other places that have shaped the story and identity of the people called Methodists. It is available free of charge by e-mailing Jo Hibbard (hibbardj@methodistchurch.org.uk).

Reusing Churches and Chapels

Bath Preservation Trust is running a conference on Friday 11 June entitled 'Reusing Churches and Chapels' to be held at the Huntingdon Chapel (home of the Building of Bath Collection). This conference will examine architectural and conservation issues relating to the reuse of churches and chapels and highlight, through case studies, creative approaches to the challenges of working in unique and important spaces. It will also feature practical solutions for organisations that have churches and chapels in their care who are seeking to redevelop their buildings. Details from krogers@bptrust.org.uk.

Friends of the Congregational Library Summer Event

This year the event will take place at the Library at 14 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0AR on Saturday 12 June. It starts with a visit through the refurbished premises at 10.30 am and an opportunity to view the Sibree archive and other recent acquisitions. The programme which follows has contributions from Dr David Wykes on the archive of a seventeenth-century Guildford Dissenter and from Dr Susan Whyman on the Bateman and Wilson Correspondence. It culminates in a lecture by the Revd Professor Alan Sell on 'Caleb Ashworth and Daventry Academy'. Booking including £10 (to include lunch and tea) to Rachel Gurney, Bunyan Meeting, Mill Street, Bedford, MK11 1DQ, by 30 May.

Plans for the Isle of Man trip

These are now well advanced and a flyer with further details will appear in the autumn mailing, enabling members to make advance bookings. The weekend is being organised by Tim Grass with the assistance of Frank Cowin of the Manx Methodist Historical Society. Although Methodist and Catholic chapels will be a feature of the visit [see the review later in this issue], other denominations will be included. Some interesting speakers have been lined up for the evenings, who will talk about the architecture, the development, and the musical heritage of Manx dissent.

We have chosen a Bank Holiday weekend to allow us more time: members may also wish to stay on, not least in order to explore the Island's industrial and railway heritage. Sadly, we are not expecting to be able to use the historic trams or the steam railway during our tours! The Isle of Man is easily accessible from all parts of the UK, with a regular ferry service from Liverpool and Heysham, and flights from many airports. If you have any questions about the trip, please contact the Hon. Visits Secretary, Tim Grass.

BOOK REVIEWS

A Glimpse of Heaven: Catholic Churches of England and Wales by Christopher Martin; photographs by Alex Ramsay. English Heritage, 2009. 224 pp, paperback. ISBN 978-1905624-62-1. £20 (hardback £25).



This informative and beautifully illustrated book first appeared in 2006. A reprint with corrections came out in 2007, and a version incorporating considerable revisions, mostly by clergy and local parishioners, was produced last year, in an encouraging collaboration between English Heritage and the Patrimony Committee of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, and with support from a number of trusts and private donors. There is a DVD to accompany the book available from Gracewing Publishing (www.gracewing.co.uk).

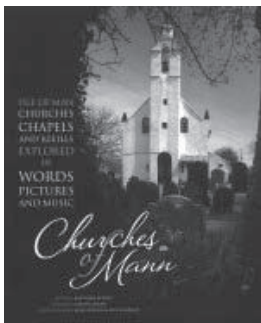
Christopher Martin worked for some years in the BBC's Arts Department, where his over-riding interest was always in architecture; Alex Ramsay specialises in the photography of building interiors. The book traces the history of Catholic church building from pre-Reformation times, including the chapels at Stonor and East Hendred still in use today, up to the present day; the social and cultural context of each period is briefly but helpfully outlined. A key moment of change came with the passing of the 1791 Relief Act, following on from the Catholic Relief Act of 1778, which authorised Catholics again to build places of worship. However, congregations and the all important donors were initially cautious, fearing public reaction: the chapel at Llanarth was built to look like an orangery, that at Lulworth Castle as a mausoleum, while St John's, Wigan, purported to be a shop, and carefully referred to its worshippers as 'customers'. The style of some of these early chapels was almost Protestant in their simplicity.

With the advent of the 19th century, Catholic confidence gradually increased. St John's in Wigan, for example, spent the large sum of £9000 in 1819 on a new church, no longer for 'customers'. A trend towards quasi-mediaeval decoration and ostentation, spearheaded by Pugin, appealed not only to the Catholic gentry, traditional donors of earlier times, but to the influx of Irish immigrants with their fervour and 1d weekly collection contributions. Gradually, the style changed again: the 20th century has seen the building of simpler, streamlined but impressive buildings such as the cathedrals of Clifton (Bristol) and Liverpool. Their shape and approach reflect liturgical change in the church, particularly those stimulated by the Second Vatican Council: Worth Abbey is an especially good example.

This book offers a fascinating overview of the development of Catholic architecture and thought over the centuries, and has much of interest for Catholic and non-Catholic alike. It also boasts an impressive index — sadly not always the norm these days. It is well worth its cover price.

Amanda Arrowsmith and Jill Mortiboys

Churches of Mann: Isle of Man Churches, Chapels and Keeills explored in Words and Music by Jonathan Kewley and others. Lily Publications, Ramsey, Isle of Man, 2009. 168 pp, hardback. ISBN 978-1899602-82-7. £25 (including CD).



Twenty-four years ago, courting a young lady from the Isle of Man, I plucked up my courage to make the ferry crossing (!) in order to ask her father for permission to marry his daughter. One of the first things I discovered about the island was that its heritage is valued as a part of contemporary life in a way that is not always the case elsewhere. That is true of its railways and industrial heritage, as some of you will know; but it is also true of its religious architecture. In an island just thirty-two miles by thirteen, there are literally hundreds of religious buildings, some by nationally-known architects and others showing distinct local

styles. This wealth led me, on becoming Visits Secretary, to work towards arranging a visit by the Society to the Isle of Man. Members will be aware that this is planned for 29 April to 2 May 2011. If you need an appetizer, this book will do the job superbly well, not least because it comes from local people enthused by the subject. A large-format hardback lavishly illustrated in colour, it tells the story of the island's religious architecture from Celtic times to the present with attention to detail as well as to broader architectural trends. The quality of the photography and its reproduction is excellent, and demonstrate that there is much more to see here than might be expected.



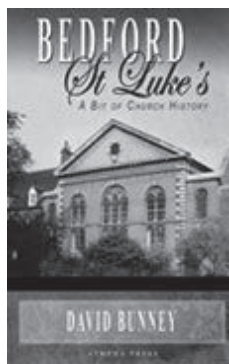
Our Lady Star of the Sea and St Maughold, Ramsey by Giles Gilbert Scott, 1909–10
(photograph copyright Tim Grass).

The author is an architectural historian and registrar for the diocese of Sodor and Man. This may help to explain why the coverage is weighted towards post-Reformation Anglican buildings, but it is not restricted to them by any means; indeed, that would be impossible for an island which at one point during the 19th century had over 110 Methodist chapels functioning at the same time and which today has some noteworthy twentieth-century Catholic churches. Two-thirds of the book is given over to a varied collection of photographs, showing everything from Celtic crosses to modern stained glass, which might lead to you conclude that here the sun always shines! Among the non-Anglican buildings featured are the Catholic churches of St Anthony's, Onchan (1980s), with its etched glass window depicting Christ walking on the water; St Mary of the Isle, Douglas (1859); and Our Lady Star of the Sea and St Maughold, Ramsey (1909–10, designed by Giles Gilbert Scott). Methodist gems include the Primitive chapel at Agneash (1857), which retains its original interior; Peel Centenary Wesleyan (1839), with its original gallery pews; and the remarkable interior of the Primitive chapel at Leodest, probably dating from the 1830s and still largely extant although used as a farm store for at least the last six decades.

A final brief chapter discusses the technical specifications of some of the island's church organs, serving as an introduction to an accompanying CD (sponsored by the Manx Heritage Foundation) which features an hour of music played on various local instruments. This is competently rendered and the reproduction quality seemed good to me as a non-expert, although I did wonder whether some of the instruments were big enough for the pieces played on them.

This book does not claim to be a complete survey or a rigorous academic discussion, and it lacks an index, although I understand that a full account of the island's nonconformist chapels is on the way from another author, and those requiring fuller information may consult the invaluable Manx Notebook website (www.manxnotebook.com). I heartily recommend it, however, and hope that it will encourage members to discover the island's treasures for themselves.

Tim Grass



Bedford St Luke's: a bit of Church History by David Bunney. Athena Press, London, 2010. 92 pp, paperback. ISBN 978-1847486-94-3. £8.99.

The story of a Moravian Church in England is rare and must be of particular interest to society members. This well produced book gives us a picture of a congregation formed early on in the work of this distinct, radical and influential Protestant group in the UK.

The Moravians started to plant congregations in Britain in 1738 and in 1745 established a church in Bedford in response to the call for help by some local Christians during an outbreak of smallpox in the town.

By 1751, they had built a chapel and established houses (buildings that still exist) for the Sisters and the Brothers, communities of believers who worked together

to earn their living. The initial building was enlarged in 1795 and then reconstructed in 1865. It had its own burial ground until 1917. The church ran a Ladies school from 1801 to 1914. A high point of its influence was in 1895 when it planted a large congregation in a growing residential suburb of the town.

World War I began a process of change as the Moravians' German links were not welcome and decline set in a town whose population was moving from the centre and the vicinity of the church to residential suburbs. After World War II however, the church gained new momentum when the Moravians invited the newly-formed Presbyterian Church to share their building. This considerably boosted the amount of activity in the church and enabled major renovations and the building of a hall. A further change came in 1971 when the creation of the United Reformed Church merged the local Congregational congregation into St Luke's.

Subsequently, St Luke's worked hard to continue its distinctive witness through developing its premises to serve the central Bedford community with a range of community uses. By 2008 however, congregations were small, the leadership ageing, the Church was struggling financially and closure was decided. Happily, the building was sold to Bedford School in 2009 and broadly remains intact and items of significant history have been retained.

The story is distinct as an account of what was a very significant and thriving Moravian Church. In quite a short book, one would have wished that the author, the last minister of St Luke's, had focussed more on the life of this interesting and radical Christian sect. Too much space is taken up in explaining the broad context of the three denominations involved, information that can be discovered elsewhere, and in a rather general history of Bedford.

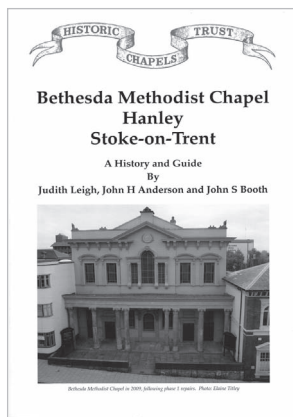
The book has a full chapter on the history of the church organ but no description of its building design, layout or interior which clearly had merit since the structure was grade 2 listed. Given its history, this is an important omission.

Having visited the main church of the Moravians in Salem, North Carolina last year and seen its various communities and the new town it developed, I was delighted to read of one of these Churches in England but feel that the writer could have given us more in what would have been a book of national interest.

David R Watts

[Further details of the church and the organ can be found in *Stell Bedfordshire* (10) — Ed]

Bethesda Methodist Chapel, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent: A History and Guide by Judith Leigh, John H. Anderson and John S. Booth. Historic Chapels Trust, 2010. 24 pp, paperback. £5.00 (from HCT at 55 Alie Street, London E1 8EB).



The period between John Wesley's death in 1791 and the first years of Victoria's reign was one of quite extraordinary growth for Methodism. Membership increased eightfold, and Methodist chapels went up across the land to accommodate the newly gathered congregations. In many places, indeed, chapels were outgrown within a decade or two, and were superseded by yet larger buildings. From Newlyn to Newcastle, Methodism made a signal contribution not only to the spiritual and social life of the country, but also to its architecture.

The first major Methodist building of this generation to be adopted by the Historic Chapels Trust is Bethesda Chapel, Hanley. As such, the hope is that it will stand for future generations as an embodi-

ment of one of the most memorable types of British religious architecture. Bethesda is big: 3,000 people attended the opening service in 1820, and even thirty years later it was claimed to be the largest chapel in England. As a stronghold of the Methodist New Connexion, Bethesda has always enjoyed a national reputation, and as a local monument its history is closely entwined with the political, cultural and economic (as well as religious) life of the Staffordshire Potteries.

The Historic Chapels Trust's new publication rises assuredly to the challenge of dealing with Bethesda's extensive history and explaining its architectural development. Fuller even than the HCT's booklet on Cote Baptist Chapel, there is here sufficient space in which to introduce and illustrate a rich variety of themes. Deftly the authors weave together the lives of Bethesda's founders, their role at the birth of the New Connexion, and the evolution of their Hanley chapel from an adapted coach-house to a building 'equal in elegance and dimensions to any place of worship for Dissenters in the kingdom'. No less adroitly the building's subsequent history is explored, from its role as a venue for Methodist conferences and missions to its closure in 1985 and starring role in the first series of the BBC's *Restoration!* programme in 2003.

Appearing after the HCT's first phase of essential repairs has been completed, this booklet has benefited from new insights into the building's construction and decoration. But this is not a technical report. In fact the authors' chief skill is in bringing each phase of Bethesda's history to life by weaving together the story of the fabric and the lives of those who worshipped there. This applies as much to the section which guides the reader around the chapel as to the earlier, largely chronological, sequence. And in describing the building in its current state (without such luxuries as a ceiling or an organ, and with very limited access to its encircling gallery), the booklet gently underlines the work that lies ahead.

We must hope that the funds will soon be found for the second phase of work, and that in due course a new edition of the booklet will appear, updated to include the completion of the third, and final, phase. For the moment, this publication will serve the serious scholar well and will do much to satisfy the widespread desire to know more about a building whose most recent fame has come through television.

Christopher Wakeling

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| 3 July 2010 | London — Notting Hill (Andrew Worth) and AGM |
| 2 October 2010 | Rugby area (John Anderson) |
| 29 April–2 May 2011 | Isle of Man trip (to be confirmed) |
| 9 July 2010 | Exeter (Roger Thorne) and AGM |

DAY CONFERENCE

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| 8 May 2010 | <i>The shaping of Nonconformist architecture</i> |
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