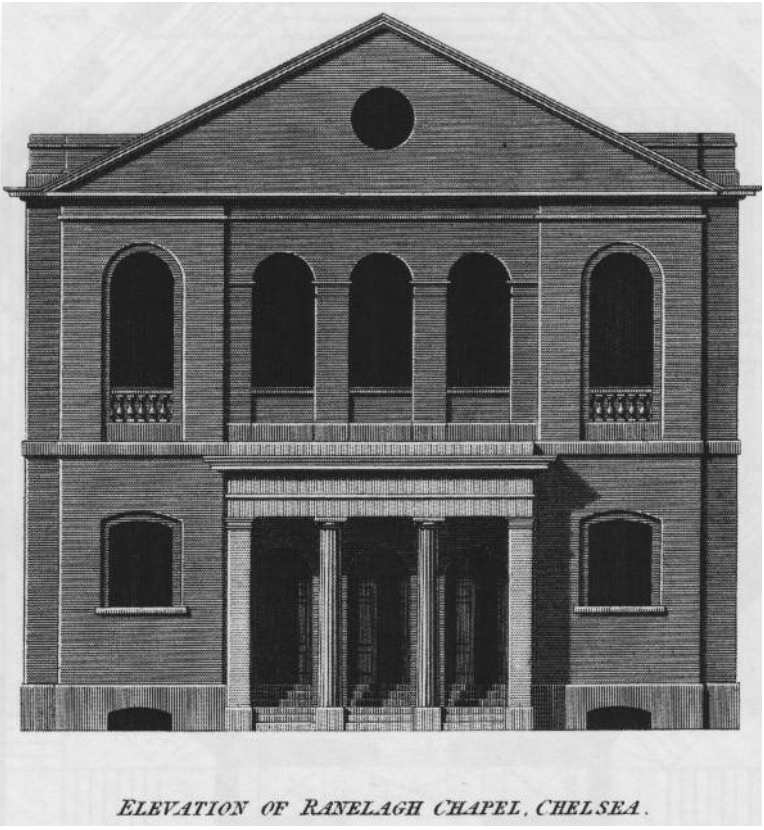
# THE CHAPELS SOCIETY

Newsletter 47 May 2011




*Drawing by W. F. Pocock from his* Designs for Churches and Chapels *(1835)*
*[see review on page 11]*

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# ADDRESS BOOK

The Chapels Society: registered charity number 1014207

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# NOTICEBOARD

## CHAPELS SOCIETY VISITS

| | |
|---|---|
| **9 July 2011** | Exeter (Roger Thorne) and AGM |
| **1 October 2011** | Reading and Henley (Chris Skidmore) |

# EDITORIAL

Following the successful conference in May 2010, Council is close to finalising the details for a conference on the subject of 'seating in chapels'. This is to provide a complementary view from the nonconformist side of a topic which is shortly to be the subject of an Ecclesiological Society publication. A number of speakers have been approached and the conference is likely to take place either in the late autumn of this year or in spring 2012. Further details will be available in the next issue of the *Newsletter*.

# EDWARD JEFFREYS, EVANGELIST OF THE BLACK COUNTRY: HIS MINISTRY AND ITS IMPACT

## AN ARTICLE BY DAVID WATTS

*Introduction*

The Black Country of the West Midlands has a distinct character formed from its manufacturing and coal mining history which has created a highly diverse set of communities and its own characteristic dialects of English. Many observers would regard the sub-region as intensely parochial, proud of its traditions and somewhat suspicious of outsiders.

Nonconformity in the 17th and 18th centuries was not strong but through the bold evangelism of Wesley and his preachers, George Whitefield and the Primitive Methodists, a major transformation took place. At the 1851 religious census, nonconformist churches had over a half of the total church-attending population, dominated by the various streams of Methodism.

As in most industrial areas in Britain, the 20th century brought major changes to the Black Country. After World War I churches were losing energy and church impact was declining, not least as the economy of the area confronted major collapses of the metal and mining industries. By 1930, the Churches and the community were struggling. Into this depressing scene, God brought the powerful evangelistic work of Edward Jeffreys who started a renewal of church life in the Black Country that still makes its mark today.

*Following in father's footsteps*

George and Stephen Jeffreys became Christians in 1904 during the Welsh Revival. In 1910, both had a powerful experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit that led them into a wide ranging ministry of evangelism and spiritual healing. In 1914, George planted his first church in Belfast called Elim and subsequently formed the Elim Pentecostal Alliance as a new movement that sought to preach the gospel, see people baptized in the Holy Spirit, gain gifts of the Spirit and be healed from sickness. Stephen Jeffreys initially worked with his brother but later formed a separate Pentecostal movement — the Assemblies of God.

Edward was the son of Stephen. Born in 1899 in Maesteg in South Wales, he served in the Royal Flying Corps in World War I and then joined his father in the work of evangelism full time in 1926. In 1928, Edward formed his own organization called the Bethel Evangelistic Society following a highly successful campaign at the Colston Hall, Bristol: initially the church was over 500 strong. Edward Jeffreys was appointed pastor but started to develop a team of associate pastors, a Bible college in Bristol to train workers and began to conduct similar missions using tents and town halls around the country.

*The Black Country missions*

From 10th February until 1st March 1930, Jeffreys took Walsall Town Hall for services. The meetings were simple with vigorous singing of hymns and choruses,

a powerful gospel message and then prayer for the sick. His approach entailed a direct appeal to people to follow Christ and a call for the sick to be prayed for. This style was similar to that of Stephen and George Jeffreys and evangelists of his time such as John Lake, Aimee Semple Macpherson and Smith Wigglesworth.

On the first night, 50 attended but by the end newspaper reports record up to 1400 people attending per night and crowds queuing to get in. Between 3rd and 8th March Jeffreys moved to Wednesbury where the same sensational impact took place. He returned to Walsall and then moved around the surrounding towns of Dudley (24th March–7th April), Cradley Heath (26th March), West Bromwich (7th–21st April), Oldbury (21st April–5th May) and Stourbridge (later in May). The grand climax took place in June when a vast canvas tent was pitched on the common at Kinver on the western edge of the area and 3000 people gathered for a huge worship service. During these meetings thousands responded to Christ and hundreds professed healing.

Controversy inevitably followed with a sharp debate both for and against the work of the evangelist particularly with regard to the many instances of physical healing to which people gave testimony. Many people, not least local clergy, took issue with Jeffreys' direct and emotional style. Despite this, significant results in the planting of churches followed.

*The planting of Bethel congregations*

In March 1930 at the end of the Walsall meetings in the town hall, one of Jeffreys' colleagues Matthew Francis was appointed pastor to lead the new **Walsall Bethel Temple**. He proceeded to continue the mass rallies using the Town Hall which led to a continuous stream of converts and people experiencing healing. At one point, 100 people were baptized at Stafford Street Baptist Church. The Temple formed a huge Sunday school (attracting on occasions up to 1500 children), a large youth choir/fellowship and often conducted marches of witness in the town. The congregation bought a disused Wesleyan Methodist Chapel in Queens Street for its services. After considerable renovation work by its new congregation, the building was officially opened on 21st March 1932. In 1964, the lease of the building was ended and the congregation moved to a new building on the Beechdale estate: more recently it has moved back to the centre of Walsall.

Another congregation arising from these meetings was at **Bloxwich** led by Pastor Wright, a Welsh Bethel pastor colleague of Jeffreys. Originally meeting in a rented hall, the congregation built (in 17 weeks) its own building at Stokes Street which was opened in April 1932. It briefly closed on the death of Pastor Wright in 1964 but was reopened by the leaders of the Wolverhampton Temple Street Assemblies of God and now flourishes as Bloxwich Community Church affiliated to the Assemblies of God (AOG).

Services then took place in Dudley Town Hall with many converted: one meeting was formed using rented premises. In addition, a couple converted in the mission, Joseph Giles and Kate Mansell, formed another small church meeting in a hired room. This congregation grew, merging with the other, and a site was acquired at Salop Street, Dudley on which the sixty-strong congregation built its own prefabricated church building in 1949.

*Dudley Christian Fellowship — building built 1976, replacing a wooden hall (photograph copyright the author)*

Another new convert was Caleb Beardsmore, a cobbler who lived in Upper Gornal west of Dudley. He was a member of the Salop Street Church for some time but then felt the call of God to plant a congregation where he lived. Initially meeting in his house, the congregation moved into a hired room above the local bakery in Eve Lane **Upper Gornal**, a site which it acquired in 1939 and built its own building.

Another convert was Anne Brown who established a mission hall called Bethany Temple in Mount Pleasant, **Quarry Bank**. By Summer 1934 a building had been built by friends of the congregation that included a tea room, a garden and had impressive iron gates. This independent mission lasted until 1974.

The **West Bromwich** crusade had an immediate impact as one of the Bethel pastors, Rees Griffiths, was appointed to lead a new congregation with services starting on 29th April in a borrowed Congregational Church. This arrangement did not last and for the summer the Church met in the open air on a field in Bromford Lane, latterly using a tent. By the beginning of October however, they had erected a steel-framed corrugated-iron hall in Gads Lane. The mission was so successful that in 1932 a new congregation with its own timber hall was established in Marsh Lane in the growing Friar Park housing estate north of the town. In 1933 the Church conducted a mission in **Great Bridge** to the west and planted a third congregation. Later Great Bridge merged with Gads Lane. Both Gads Lane and Marsh Lane developed in to large thriving AOG affiliated Churches.


*Bethel Temple, Gads Lane, West Bromwich — built 1930 and refurbished in 1967 and 2007 (photograph copyright the author)*

*Bethel Church, Oldbury, built in 1970 (photograph copyright the author)*

*William Street mission hall — the original home of Amblecote Full Gospel Church (photograph copyright the author)*

Jeffreys' next revival was in **Oldbury** where the Weekly News reported that 'the town hall has been crowded to its greatest capacity each afternoon and evening in connection with Pastor Jeffreys continued revival and faith healing crusade'. It reported that hundreds were turned away and 'the organizers of the campaign claim that remarkable cures have taken place and hundreds of people have testified to the benefits that have come from attending the meetings'. The gathered group of converts formed a congregation meeting in the Town Hall but in August they acquired a site and built their own Church in New Street, Oldbury. It was led by Pastor Richard Lewis, one of the Jeffreys team who came from Dowlais in South Wales and had been converted through the preaching of Stephen Jeffreys. The building cost £400 and was opened on 27th December with Edward preaching. The wooden hall was replaced by a new building in 1970.

A further Bethel Church, led by Pastor Perry, was formed from this crusade at **Blackheath** with a building built at Vicarage Road. Not long after, this congregation split to form a church affiliated to the Assemblies of God located ½ mile away in Beeches Road.

May 1930 brought Jeffreys to Stourbridge and Lye holding meetings in Stourbridge Town Hall. This led to a congregation forming which met in Dial Lane, **Amblecote** and then took over a mission hall built by Holy Trinity Church in 1889 in William Street. This was outgrown and the church took a redundant New Connection Methodist Church in the High Street in 1979 which was redeveloped into the current 500 seater building in 1993.

By the end of 1930 all these congregations, apart from the Quarry Bank mission, became part of the Bethel Evangelistic Society. They were added to by Jeffreys' next extraordinary missions in Stoke (where 9 churches were planted) and in 1934 in Bootle where a further huge impact occurred.

*The final chapters*

For a range of reasons related to Edward Jeffreys' personality and dissension with the other Pentecostal movements, the Bethel Evangelistic Society then

started to disintegrate and during the rest of the decade most of its Churches left — the majority joining the Assemblies of God. The Bethel Evangelistic Society was wound up in 1947. Jeffreys himself left in 1939 to join the short-lived Bible Pattern Church, set up by George and Stephen Jeffreys.

After the war, in a further twist to the tale, Edward took holy orders in the Church of England and was ordained in Chelmsford in 1948. He had a successful ministry in building up what had been a declining parish church in Highams Park, Essex until his retirement in 1965. He died in retirement at Bournemouth in 1974.

*Overview and conclusions*

The work of evangelists always causes controversy not least over the question of their results in the long term. From the 1930 Jeffreys' campaign, however, no fewer than 12 congregations came into being under the banner of the Bethel movement in the hard world of the Black Country at a time when other nonconformist churches were declining or rationalizing.

Accounts of these early converts show that establishing these new congregations was not easy. Most converts were working class with little education and money and few with leadership ability. They had no wealthy supporters or denominational funds. The Pentecostals were regarded by the mainstream Churches as fringe sect. However the churches themselves had zeal, enthusiasm, strong leadership and an eager desire to win people for Christ. The buildings they built were basic, often built by their own hands with funds raised laboriously and sacrificially.

Today most of these churches remain vibrant with good congregations and a wide-ranging witness to their communities. They form part of a growing group of charismatic and evangelical churches working in what is a demanding highly-urbanized region.

*This article has used the following sources:* A life of contrasts — the extraordinary story of Edward Jeffreys *by Robert Mountford (published in Joy Magazine, 1999);* Black Country Chapels — a third selection *by Ned Williams (Sutton Publishing, 2008);* Testifying to the Gospel of Christ — a history of Walsall Independent Evangelical Church *by Will Loescher (2000) and the Golden Jubilee Brochure 1980 of Bethel Temple Church, West Bromwich. Dave is also grateful for the help and interest of Ned Williams of the Black Country Society and Robert Mountford of City Vision Ministries, Stoke, in providing additional material.*

# MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

I do apologise that for various reasons I was not able to send in 2010 my usual note welcoming newly enrolled members. Since my last report in May 2009 we have welcomed into membership the following:

Mr David J. Hall, Cambridge
Mr Patrick L. Johnson, Shirley, Croydon
Darlington St Methodist Centre, School Street, Wolverhampton (corporate)
Chilwell Rd Methodist Church, Beeston, Notts. (corporate)
Ms Victoria Oswald, Chatham, Kent
Mr Steven Leonard, Wakefield
Mr David Leyshon, Wakefield
Mrs Margaret Leyshon, Wakefield
Ms Ruth Watkinson, London SE1
Mr Alexander Calder, Nantwich, Cheshire
Mr M. Goodwill-Hodgson, West Bridgford, Nottingham
Mrs Rebecca Jackson, Madeley, Staffs.
Mrs Pauline J. Johns, Caterham
Revd Roger Quick, Perthshire
Mrs Mary Whitehead, Ashton-under-Lyne

This list is produced mechanically, as it were, from our membership roll, with minimal editing to protect privacy. One can only speculate about the cause of our sudden popularity in Wakefield! The other noticeable feature of this list is corporate membership. Almost always when a congregation joins us it is the result of a personal approach. Increasingly churches organise their charitable giving in such a way that it is regularly reviewed and reflects the interests of the members. At present the corporate subscription rate is the same as that for a couple sharing one address. For the Corporate member the benefits of membership are: you can send one voting representative to any AGM, and can book 2 representatives in to any outing or visit plus, of course, you receive the *Newsletter* and are able if you wish to purchase publications on the same terms as a personal member.

At the moment our total membership is 328, an increase of 22 since May 2009, comprising 28 corporate members and 300 persons, of whom 33 have taken out life membership.

*Robin Phillips*

# NEWS

**Cuts affect Repair Grants for Places of Worship**
The effect of the government cuts has been that English Heritage has withdrawn from funding the Repair Grants for Places of Worship scheme which is now run by them on behalf of the Heritage Lottery Fund. Council were concerned that this will exclude from the scheme congregations with moral objections to receiving funding from the National Lottery. We understand that English Heritage may have set aside some funds for urgent repairs to listed places of worship whose congregations have such scruples.

**Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme**
Members will be interested to know that the details of the continuation of this grant scheme as it will operate from 1 April this year, are available at http://www.lpwscheme.org.uk/. Essentially the scheme will operate with quarterly fixed budgets. Payments will be made once a quarter and the payable rate will depend on the value of the eligible claims within that quarter: each claim will attract a pro-rata payment. Every applicant will therefore receive a payment but the rate may vary. The maximum grant will be 20% of the eligible expenditure (i.e. the full rate of VAT incurred).

**National Churches Trust Survey published**
Monday 18 April saw the publication of the results of the survey conducted last year by the National Churches Trust (formerly the Historic Churches Preservation Trust). The representatives of over 9100 places of worship of an estimated 47,000 churches, chapels and meeting houses engaged with the survey. The survey report can be downloaded from www.nationalchurchestrust.org and provides a wealth of information. At least 30% of those surveyed are estimated to lack toilet facilities and a similar number lack adequate heating: 8% are considered to be in poor or very poor condition. Of those in need of repair, the average cost is estimated to be £80,000: the most commonly required repairs identified as urgent are to roofs, heating and rainwater goods.

**Garrison Church at Chelsea Barracks**
It was announced at the end of March that this building, the only one still standing on the Chelsea Barracks site, has been listed Grade II, after a three-year campaign to prevent its demolition. This means that the church is safe from the developers and that its beautiful interior will be preserved along with the memorial plaques inside which were one of the attributes in listing the church as a military memorial.

**Fishergate Baptist Church, Preston for sale**
The prominent Baptist Church (James Hibbert, 1858) which stands at the junction of Fishergate and Charnley Street in the centre of Preston is on the market for half a million pounds. The congregation has joined with that of Carey Baptist Chapel in Pole Street. The building is Grade II listed and is within a conservation area and on the main shopping street, where the steeple with its

prominent clock is a major landmark. The Society visited the church in September 1996 and the visit report notes that the interior was already much altered. Our member, Roger Holden, believes that any reuse is likely to be acceptable provided it does not alter the exterior and retains the stained glass.

**Tin Tabernacle gains Grade II status**

Following our review of a new book on tin tabernacles in the last issue of the *Newsletter* it is interesting to note that English Heritage in September listed at Grade II St Michael and All Angels' church, Hythe, Kent. This mission church of 1893 is in the Gothic style and was supplied by Messrs Humphries of Croydon (similar to no. 47 in their catalogue) for £300. It comprises a nave with bellcote and porch at the north end, transepts and an apsidal-ended chancel. The reasons for designation are given as: of architectural interest as a fairly elaborate example of a tin tabernacle; it survives substantially intact externally, the interior retains original fittings: relatively few corrugated iron churches of all denominations remain in England, mostly smaller and simpler than this church.

This notable and unusual event was recorded in a Guardian third leader on 3 March this year, entitled 'In praise of tin tabernacles' which contained the following quote:

> No one knows how many such manufactured places of worship still exist, though the number is diminishing. Some were at best rudimentary; too many have grown rusty, shabby, even offensively derelict. Yet the best have an aura and grace you would hardly expect from the work of jobbing construction companies like Dixons of Liverpool, or Humphries of Croydon.

Just so!

**The Association of Denominational Historical Societies and Cognate Libraries**

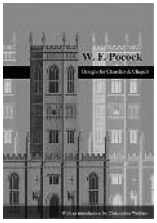
The ADHSCL AGM and annual lecture this year will be held on Thursday 20 October at 2.00 pm at Lumen United Reformed Church, 88 Tavistock Place, London WC1 9RS. The lecture will be given by the Revd Professor John Gwynfor Jones with the title: 'The first Calvinistic Methodist ordination in Wales 1811: The two hundredth anniversary of the secession of Welsh Calvinistic Methodists from the Anglican church.' All are welcome to this lecture which will be followed by light refreshments.

**Wesley Historical Society Annual Lecture**

A related topic will be addressed by the Annual Lecture of the Wesley Historical Society for 2011 which takes place during a study day at the national Gladstone Memorial Library at Hawarden, Flintshire CH5 3DF on Saturday 25 June. The Annual Lecture will begin at 2.30 pm and be given by Dr Eryn White on the subject 'Wesley, Whitefield and Wales': she will be looking again at how the Calvinistic and Wesleyan groups competed in Wales and why it was the Calvinistic Methodists who proved most influential. Also included in the programme at 11.30 am will be a talk by Chapels Society Council member E. Alan Rose who will speak about the history of Methodism in Cheshire and the Welsh borders. Further details of the meeting will be available at www.wesleyhistoricalsociety.org.uk.

# BOOK REVIEWS

*Designs for Churches and Chapels* by W. F. Pocock, first published 1819, with an introduction by Christopher Webster. Spire Books Ltd., Reading, 2010. 36 pp introduction, 28 pp text, 44 plates, hardback. ISBN 978-1-904-965-29-9. £39.35.




The Wesleyan Pocock dynasty, with a cousinhood that included W. G. Grace and the Tent Methodists, produced a number of architects of whom the first was William Fuller Pocock (1779–1849), the son of a cabinet maker. In 1807 he published *Architectural Designs for Rustic Cottages, Picturesque Dwellings, Villas etc*, followed by *Designs for Churches and Chapels* in 1819, and which went to two further identical editions in 1823 and 1835, of which the latter is now reproduced. Targeting both Nonconformists and Anglicans, and using both classical and gothic styles, significantly this was the first English pattern book devoted to church and chapel designs.

In his introduction to the reprint Christopher Webster sets Pocock's pattern book in context, noting its timing was significant in the wake of the Church Building Act, 1818. Webster traces the various possible influences on Pocock, including amongst others the Wesleyan, the Revd William Jenkins' Wesley's Chapel in the City Road and Cockerell's St Martin Outwich, Bishopgate Street. Indeed, Alan Brooks in his recent book *West End Methodism: the story of Hinde Street* (London, 2010, p. 77 — *see review below*) attributes Sloane Terrace Wesleyan Methodist, 1812, to Jenkins, although a history of Chelsea Methodism in 1963 gives Pocock as the architect and this is also implied by Webster. Pocock in his *Designs* includes four plates of 'Ranelagh Chapel, George Street off Sloane Square'. If this is in fact the Sloane Terrace Wesleyan Chapel — it has a 'City Road' arrangement but intriguingly the vestry is marked as a 'Robing Room' — then perhaps the basic Jenkins design was being adopted and adapted by other contemporary architects besides Pocock of Wesleyan chapels and perhaps some attributions to Jenkins may not be fully correct.

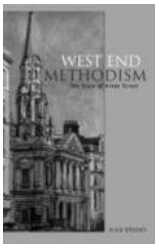
How influential was Pocock on others? His influence is traced in a number of classical designs in the 1820s and 1830s, such as Brunswick Wesleyan, Macclesfield (1823) and Stanhope Street Wesleyan, Liverpool (1827); the gothic Octagon at Wisbech (1826–30) is an obvious adaption. Pocock's influence extended to America where his designs were used in pattern books published there and as an afterthought possibly also by Frinkel in his now demolished Berlin Cathedral (1819–22).

This is a book for the specialist, Pocock's drawings and supportive text being worthy not only of careful study but enabling further examples of the influence of his designs to be identified. There is much to be gleaned from a close study of his plans. The reviewer notes, for example; that he made considerable use of the 'City Road' arrangement — which now only survives there and at Newbury — where the communion area is behind the central pulpit, a design which at the time of the first edition would appeal to both Wesleyans and Anglicans alike but

under the influence of the Ecclesiologists, like so much else in his designs, would within a generation become unacceptable and out-dated.

*D. Colin Dews*

*West End Methodism — The Story of Hinde Street* by Alan Brooks. Northway Publications, London, 2010. 404 pp, hardback. ISBN 978-0-9557888-4-0. £20.00.




Members will remember with affection the visit of The Chapels Society to Hinde Street Chapel in July 2003, as part of one of Andrew Worth's many (and excellent) tours of the London area. That particular tour was entitled 'West End Splendours', an appropriate title for an excellent day walking around the environs of the Oxford Street shopping area. Reading again Andrew's full notes revealed a history bursting with famous names and connections, not one but two purpose-built places of worship on the same site and the differences Hinde Street had with the Methodist West London Mission. All of these topics are brought out in this excellent and comprehensive book, which would grace any library as a source of information and inspiration. Indeed, we had a speaker during our visit, who talked about Hinde Street: his name was Alan Brooks — the author of this book! Hinde Street is one of England's most renowned Methodist places of worship: it is in an area that once knew sickness and hardship but, following slum clearance and the arrival (early in the 20th century) of labour for the new large stores being built in nearby Oxford Street, its neighbourhood has become increasingly well-heeled. The roots of Hinde Street can be traced to 1761 and thus the church will be celebrating, in 2011, 250 years of bringing the Word of God to the people of London's West End — an appropriate timing for the publication of this history!

Hinde Street can be linked to the first Methodist Chapel in London — West Street, near to Seven Dials, a building that exists still but in secular use. Alan Brooks is keen for the reader to be aware that this was the first Methodist Chapel in London that was not a room or a building that had been modified for worship. The West Street building had been a Huguenot Chapel and had, following rental to the Methodists, a visit from John Wesley in 1743. However this building did not continue in Methodist use because, on the lease becoming due for renewal in 1798, the new rental price was considered too high. So the Methodists moved to Great Queen Street, where the building was rebuilt in 1817 and was used until the building of Kingsway Hall in 1912: the West London Mission used Great Queen Street from 1906 onwards. Further west, near to Grosvenor Square, another Methodist cause was formed in 1761 and this gave rise more directly to Hinde Street. By 1791, the congregation had moved to a room above a slaughterhouse just south of Oxford Street and then to Chandler Street (now known as Weighhouse Street): well-known speakers at the latter site included Jabez Bunting.

Chandler Street very quickly proved inadequate and by 1808 they had been given a piece of land on the (new) Hinde Street, despite opposition from the

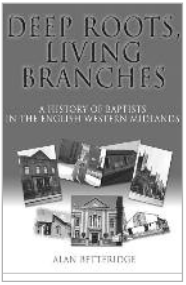
Duke of Portland, who owned a great amount of land in the area. The new Chapel, opened in 1810, was the work of a well-known Methodist, William Jenkins, whose work was to include the aforementioned Great Queen Street. Because of its shape and appearance on a restricted site, it was unkindly referred to by the Revd William Punshon as 'The Dutch Oven', a description that is remembered to this day. It was built of brick, with arched windows and pediment but with a striking Georgian porch. This building eventually too became no longer considered 'fit for purpose' — it was thought outdated and incongruous — and a new building was required. The architect of this building, the one that is in use today, was James Weir and it was opened in 1887. In 1917, no doubt prompted by low membership thanks to the Great War, the Methodist Conference directed that Hinde Street should be joined to the West London Mission. Nevertheless Hinde Street continued to operate independently from the Mission, although its Minister was listed there and Hinde Street attended Circuit Meetings.

As well as photographs, plans and maps to complement the text, Alan Brooks gives full details of life at Hinde Street, details which richly illustrate the work done there for the community; the personalities involved; and the financial and other difficulties encountered. I was interested especially in the number of well-known names associated or connected with Hinde Street, including H. W. Smith (newspaper seller and brother of W. H. Smith) and the Revd George Browne Macdonald, whose daughters gave birth to Rudyard Kipling and Stanley Baldwin. Another name that appears frequently in this history, through his long association with the West London Mission, is that of Methodist minister Donald Soper.

The book not only covers the history of Hinde Street very thoroughly in almost 350 pages but there are also very useful appendices on such topics as ministers at Hinde Street, an interesting summary of the major building works (e.g. gas lighting was installed in the first chapel in 1828), organs and organists plus societies associated with Hinde Street (most of which were created and ceased within a few years or were seceded to another circuit). And to give an idea of the thorough research done by Alan Brooks in writing this book, there is also a five-page bibliography. I enjoyed the detailed way that the author told the story of Hinde Street in a very readable and user-friendly style. This is a definitive church history and is recommended to all those who wish to know more about the history of a London chapel and its works, as well as to those Society members who remember our visit a few years ago with affection and want to learn more about this fascinating place of worship in London's West End. Nor is it just a church history but a comprehensive reference book and this is reflected in the standard of presentation, the work involved and the price of the book. I hope that you benefit from reading this book as much as I did and I am sure that you will not be disappointed by your purchase!

*Paul Gardner*

*Deep Roots Living Branches: a history of Baptists in the English Western Midlands* by the Revd. Alan Betteridge. Troubadour Publishing, Kibworth Beauchamp, 2010. 539 pp, softback. ISBN 978-1848762-770. £15.




This book is a fine example of a 'big picture' account of the history of Baptists in the West Midlands looking at the story from origins to the current time in an area comprising the counties of Staffordshire, Shropshire, Worcestershire, West Midlands and Warwickshire. It seeks to cover all brands of Baptist not just mainstream but also the Strict and Particular denomination and includes recent black groups and American plants.

It is an ambitious and extensive work in scope that tells the story of the evolution of the churches, church planting, secession and change but also develops key themes discussing themes of Baptist life notably

- patterns and styles of worship
- children's education
- ministerial training and appointment
- finance
- Area associations
- social action and political attitudes
- buildings and architecture
- mission into new areas
- overseas mission contribution
- the impact of war

Alan has not just discussed and analysed trends but managed to bring out personal stories that enliven and illustrate the account. In the book, therefore, we encounter some extraordinary and Godly ministers who made major contributions to church and community life. These include Samuel Pearce whose ministry at Cannon Street, Birmingham led to widespread church planting across the region and John Palmer who did the same in Shropshire. George Dawson is another who was a dynamic and unorthodox minister and part of the radical political scene in Birmingham. Another radical was Arthur O'Neil who was a leading Chartist. Others were black ministers George Cozens and Peter Stanford, and the pioneer BMS missionary to central Africa, George Grenfell.

Our members will be particularly interested in the very full material on trends in building of Baptist chapels showing well the changes in layout and architecture through the years and how they relate to the life of the different types of congregations. The author gets round the problem of costly photographs by including in the text very fine line drawings both of existing buildings and a number which are long gone.

This is a labour of love by a minister who knows the Baptist life of the region well from his ministry in Coventry and who has researched his material very thoroughly. He has very well referenced his sources for the reader to follow up individual themes.

The book provides a guide to those interested in the story of Baptist life in the region — where it came from and what it looks like now and is a 'must have' at an amazing cover price!

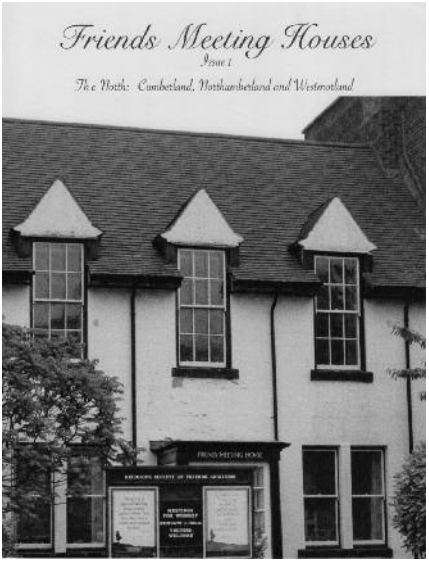
*David R. Watts*

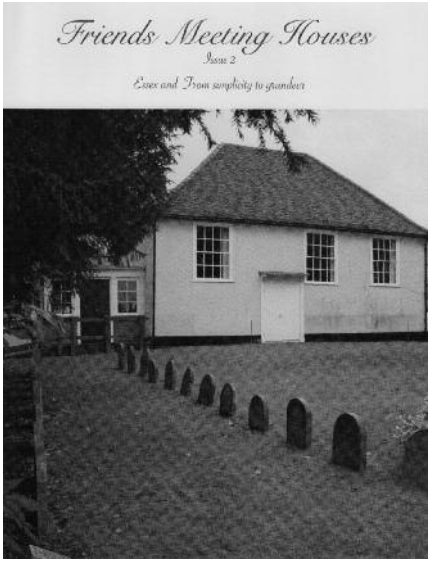
*Friends Meeting Houses*, an occasional magazine by John Hall. Issues 1 and 2, 2011. 28 pp. Obtainable on line at http://www.magcloud.com, $7.50 each in print format or $1.50 as pdf downloads.

This review is based only on the first two numbers of the magazine, without knowing how it is intended to develop, as only the briefest note is offered. John Hall makes it more than simply a picture book, but until I have knowledge of his intentions, I cannot effectively say whether it works for me.

I expect a magazine format to indicate some systematic scheme, as one finds in a book, where the last chapter is as accessible as the first. In issue 1 John tells us that in each issue he will use his photos to illustrate the meeting houses of a county or counties, and he starts with 'The North'. Well and good, he gives us a useful pictorial summary of a part of the country, full of riches. However with issue 2 he goes right off piste, and takes not a district but a theme: 'From simplicity to grandeur'. It is still interesting and well illustrated, but where are we going? I hope that he has plans for a comprehensive index and summary in his final issue to bring it all together, to make the whole set useful.

What John shows us very clearly is that Quaker meeting houses are not all dull and dusty. He uses the magazine as a vehicle for his own careful photos, augmented by some taken by others. They are crisp, clean and bright, and the captions are clear and informative. This work is very much in the tradition of



Kenneth H. Southall's *Our Quaker Heritage* of 1974, and it usefully carries us a generation forward. One might regret the severe cropping of the photos, which loses us any sight of the context of the building. I was particularly sad to see that he had cropped the pavilion wings right off Hoddesdon, they are key to its architectural composition; also his offering of two dull and uninformative photos of the plain-Jane back of Penrith, whose accessible front has an interesting story to tell.

Interspersed in the spaces left between the photos is a text, without introduction, sub-headings or any aids to navigation; we do not even know how long it is to be. So far, it seems to be largely a discussion of some of the many interesting questions set by modern Quakerism and its places of worship. He supports his own words with quotations from the academic papers of others, thereby taking them out of context. I believe that an essay based on his own wide personal experience of Quakerism might have made a more suitable accompaniment to his photos, and he is clear from the start that the photos are paramount. It is particularly regrettable that his arrangement of text and illustrations prevent them from illuminating each other.

Finally, a good and accurate index is crucial when text and pictures are so dissociated by his chosen format. Sadly it is careless: there are index entries to several promising subjects, but they are not where he says. Too often he chooses to index the name of the person who took the photo, but not the architect who designed the building: personally, I take a pretty dim view of such a lack of focus on essentials. Though to redeem his credit somewhat, he does name the architect in the caption.

Buy it for the photos, and enjoy them!

*David M. Butler*

*Members may like to know that this series has now reached its fifth issue, with issue 3 on 'Yorkshire and Minister's stands and galleries', issue 4 on 'Cheshire and Lancashire — Classical and Gothic' and issue 5 on 'The Quaker Peace Testimony' (with meeting houses featured from Cambridgeshire, Durham, Leicestershire, Norfolk, Northampton, Rutland and Suffolk). John's pictures are freely available under a creative commons licence online at www.flickr.com/photos/qmh - Ed.*

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