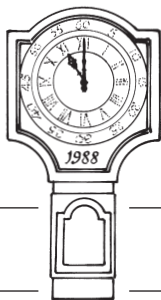


THE CHAPELS SOCIETY



Newsletter 59

May 2015



The Old Baptist Chapel, Tewkesbury (photograph copyright Eirian Evans and licensed for reuse under a Creative Commons Licence)

ISSN 1357-3276

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NOTICEBOARD

CHAPELS SOCIETY EVENTS

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| 2/4 May 2015 | Visit to Edinburgh (Tim Grass/Sara Crofts) |
| 27 June 2015 | Visit to Loughborough and AGM
(Moir and Peter Ackers) |
| 12 September 2015 | Visit to Cleethorpes and Grimsby (Rod Ambler) |

EDITORIAL

With this *Newsletter* you will be receiving information about our AGM and once again there is an opportunity to nominate members to sit on the Society's Council. Nominations should be sent to the Secretary by Saturday 13 June. This year we need in addition to find a replacement for our Honorary Secretary, a role which has been carried out with exemplary care by Sara Crofts over recent years. Anyone who might feel able to take on this role should contact our president Tim Grass in the first instance.

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

ALAN J. PETFORD (1953–2015)

Members of the Chapels Society will be saddened to learn of the untimely death of Alan J. Petford, a long standing member of the Chapels Society, having joined the society by 1997, who also served as a member of Council from 2006 to 2012. After treatment for cancer from which he appeared to have recovered during the last year, he suffered an unexpected recurrence of the disease and died suddenly on 11 February 2015 at the age of sixty-one.



(photograph copyright Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, Blackburn)

Alan was born at Uppermill, Saddleworth and attended St Chad's Primary School, Uppermill and Hulme Grammar School Oldham, leaving in 1972 to read History at University College Oxford. He then proceeded to teach history at a succession of grammar schools in the north of England at Blackburn, Hipperholme and Lancaster before retiring early to escape the increasing bureaucracy, he often maintained. He subsequently became an extra mural lecturer in local and regional history at the University of Leeds and a history lecturer with the WEA, initially at Saddleworth and later in West Yorkshire and at the time of his death was researching a new history of St Chad's Saddleworth to commemorate the 800th anniversary of Christian worship on the site of the church, near to which he was buried.

He had become a founder member of the Saddleworth History Society at the age of thirteen and developed an enthusiasm for local history, which he was keen to share with others. After Oxford he had completed an MA at the Department of English Local History at the University of Leicester with a dissertation on 'Saddleworth: the enclosure of an upland parish' in 1978 and his interests lay predominantly in landscape and architectural history. In his lectures and guided walks he often focused strongly upon features which particularly interested him. These included ridge and furrow farming systems which he was adept at identifying on fieldwork expeditions; medieval misericords, wryly entitling one of his talks: 'The World Turned Upside Down — Medieval Misericords in the North of England'; ecclesiastical stained glass, one of his most consuming interests; and chapel interiors, especially galleries. He was regarded as a gifted lecturer speaking authoritatively but also with a lightness of touch which helped to make some of his more recondite subjects accessible. He was invariably attired in his trademark schoolmaster's tweed jackets, one of which he had reputedly worn for forty years, arriving at his speaking destinations in a 1950s Rover, which he largely maintained himself and on outdoor trips carrying a 1940s rucksack to which he was closely attached.

In Nonconformist architecture he was particularly interested in the emergence of Gothic styles which was the subject of his article in the Chapels Society's

second miscellany entitled ‘*Horribile dictu*: Unitarians and ecclesiology in northern England’ and led his first tour for the Chapels Society of the chapels of the Upper Calder Valley including Todmorden Unitarian Church, which he found particularly impressive. More recently he led a tour for the Chapels Society of seven South Buckinghamshire Chapels with the help of a friend who lived in the area. At the outset of the tour he focused upon the Amersham Martyrs Memorial of 1931 to chart the history of Dissent in the district including its links with Lollardy and the ejections of 1662. In his accompanying notes without a hint of irony he waxed lyrical even when describing the 1962 replacement for the Amersham Free Church. He noted that the exterior was in a more self-effacing style than its Victorian predecessor with a long row of clerestory windows on the south wall and a small tower at the west end. Internally, he continued, ‘the chapel is an impressive essay in laminated timber construction with a series of parabolic arches supporting the roof’ and at the east end ‘a large wooden cross on the otherwise blank east wall’.

Inclined to reticence about his own religious faith, his choice of the Order for the Burial of the Dead as contained in the Book of Common Prayer of 1662 and a lengthy extract from I Corinthians chapter xv, verses 20–58 affirmed his resurrection faith. It was also revealed that during his final illness, whilst he was cared for by his sister and her family in Norfolk, he had drawn strength from reading on alternate days the prayer book liturgies for morning and evening prayer. As well as a rendering of Jerusalem by the large congregation present, there were also short readings of extracts from the poetry of John Donne and the Pennine dialect poet Ammon Wrigley, whose exhortation to his contemporaries to ‘go laughing through the hours to the setting sun’ preceded the final blessing and an organ rendering of Sir Edward Elgar’s ‘Nimrod Variations’ as the cortege left the church.

John A. Hargreaves

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Paul Gardner, Membership Secretary writes

It is with sadness that we report the death of the following members:

Steven Leonard, Wakefield

Alan J Petford, Hipperholme, Halifax

Mr E T Wildman, Thurleigh, Bedford

We have pleasure in welcoming the following new personal members to the Society:

Duncan Gray, London N10

Ian Holland, Ayr, Scotland

Kenneth Paul Isler, Paradise Valley, Arizona, USA

Michael Mackintosh, London SW19

Fiona Rosen, Portsmouth, Hants

I ask that you get in touch with me if you have moved house or any of your contact details have changed recently. Many thanks.

ARCHITECTURE AND THE CATHOLIC APOSTOLIC CHURCH

AN ARTICLE BY TIM GRASS

Perhaps unexpectedly for a body which professed belief in the near approach of the Second Advent, the Catholic Apostolic Church rapidly developed an interest in architecture. Several architects belonged to the church,* and at least one of the twelve apostles who led the church wrote on the concepts governing ecclesiastical architecture. Moreover, several well-known ecclesiastical architects worked on Catholic Apostolic projects. The extent to which the church was drawing on parallel movements within Anglicanism cannot be determined, but the results certainly helped to make it an attractive worship option for those influenced by aesthetic considerations. This article introduces the church's thinking about architecture. Space does not, unfortunately, permit consideration of the internal layout of these buildings, which gave expression to the church's distinctive thinking about worship.

The first purpose-built Catholic Apostolic church was opened in 1835 at Islington (now demolished). Several others were erected across England in the next few years, and by the late 1830s a church was being built at Albury, Surrey, where the apostles were based. This was the country seat of the apostle, banker and sometime MP Henry Drummond (1786–1860), and he appears to have funded the church's construction. The church is thought to have been designed



The Chapter House at the Chapel of the Great King, Albury

by William McIntosh Brookes, and was consecrated on 4 September 1840; a rose window at the east end is said to have been designed by A. W. Pugin. From contemporary records, however, it appears that Drummond's constant interference in the design and construction processes was regarded as something of a nuisance, not the only aspect of the movement's life in which his dilettante approach caused tensions. The church is untypical of Catholic Apostolic buildings, as befits its unique status: it was not so much the home of a local congregation as the centre of the movement as a whole. Hence it is known as the 'Apostles' Chapel' or the 'Chapel of the Great King'. The Chapter House appears to have been completed a couple of years before the church itself, which may say something about the urgency in Drummond's mind of providing a formal meeting-place for the apostles.

It would be going too far to say that there was a coherent Catholic Apostolic architectural theory which was always followed, but Drummond dabbled in this field as in many others, ranging from prison reform through agricultural policy to fine art. His *Principles of Ecclesiastical Buildings and Ornaments* (1851) includes a number of engravings drawn from the work of A. W. Pugin, although its focus is more on matters relating to church interiors.

After some early use of Classical designs, as at Bristol (1839–43; now Roman Catholic), and the Norman Revival church at Bath (1841), the apostles appear to have settled on Gothic as generally the most suitable form of ecclesiastical architecture. However, they avoided the detailed prescriptions being made by some of the Ecclesiologists, and the result was a family of styles rather than one particular form of Gothic clearly governing the external appearance of the denomination's buildings. Examples of Catholic Apostolic Gothic may also be found abroad, although 1950s German replacements for war-destroyed buildings have, as might be expected, felt free to abandon it. Given that the church showed a marked homogeneity in its thinking about most aspects of church life, its flexible attitude regarding architectural styles is noteworthy. Perhaps the apostles, who were often quite practically-minded, were conscious that a congregation would not give towards a building whose design it was unwilling to 'own'.

The most impressive Catholic Apostolic building in England is undoubtedly J.R. Brandon's massive church in London's Gordon Square (1853). This was intended as the venue for monthly gatherings of the Seven Churches in London, and thus saw exceptionally large congregations on a regular basis. However, it never received its intended spire, nor a planned two-bay extension at the west end. Part at least of the motivation for such a splendid building seems to have been apologetic, at a time when Victorian engineering was producing ever more impressive results. In a sermon preached in 1850 (*On Building a Church for Divine Worship: By one of the Deacons of the Central Church*) one of the church's deacons, the portrait painter and secretary of the Royal Academy, John Prescott Knight, told the congregation that there had been nothing to compare with monuments to Mammon, such as ships and railways, but that in building the church they would show the world that God had a people. On the other hand, the chief of the apostles, J. B. Cardale, in his *Discourse on the Occasion of Consecrating the Altar, and Opening the Church for Public Worship* (1853) warned against a



*J. R. Brandon's Catholic Apostolic Church in Gordon Square,
Bloomsbury from the south.*

spirit of pride or emulation, and downplayed the building's prominence and significance. It would have been impossible to secure the site, he claimed, unless the planned building 'had been of some architectural pretension'. As far as theory was concerned, the main points are contained in *General Rubrics; or, Rules for the Celebration of the Divine Offices, etc.* (1852). Appendix IV provided 'Notes on the Architectural and Ecclesiastical Divisions of a Church, with the Fittings and Furniture of the same'. It was desirable (although not essential) to have a church located on an east-west axis. The building was divisible into three — the sanctuary (where the altar was located), the upper choir, and the nave and lower choir, the first two approximating to a chancel. An apse was frequently used for the sanctuary, often being combined with the upper choir, but a clear threefold division is evident externally in the church at Bath (1841).

The process of building a church was dealt with in the *Book of Regulations* (1878). Although intended to govern church life in England, its underlying principles were probably seen as generally applicable. Sections 758–74 (which began life as a pamphlet in 1863) are headed 'Regulations as to the Building and Repairing of Churches'. The primary objective was to ensure that local congregations did not take on projects which they could not finance. The church's social conservatism is evident in the requirement that 'In choosing a site and obtaining plans for a new building, it should be remembered that the character and external aspect of the building ought not to be inconsistent with the social and civil position of the congregation' (§762). Permission to build had to be obtained from the apostle, and a majority of the church's elders and deacons, and of the body of communicants, had also to express general approval of the project. The procedure for securing approval, and for obtaining and assessing plans, contracts

and specifications, is set out in considerable detail, indicating that problems had occurred in this area. Such stipulations thus minimised the risk of an individual financing a building which would be regarded as eccentric or out of character with the movement's ethos — arguably exactly what Drummond had done!

The church's architectural vision is perhaps summed up in a pamphlet by the priest A.M. Willis, probably from around 1900, *The Spirit of Church Architecture*. Theologically, the church universal is progressing towards perfection, and church buildings should express this, 'each succeeding age surpassing the former . . . in truth and perfection of architecture'. God is honoured in a work as we employ the gifts he has given for doing it, so only the best architects should be used. Among them were Brandon, Robert Rowand Anderson, whose 1876 Romanesque building at Edinburgh replaced an earlier Classical edifice further up Broughton Street, and John Loughborough Pearson, whose imposing Early English building for the Paddington congregation (begun 1891) fronts the Regent's Canal.

Many buildings, here as abroad, are small and perhaps insignificant (e.g. those in many modest provincial towns), but among them were a few 'tin tabernacles', e.g. Leamington Spa (now gone) and Romford (in use by the Brethren). At the other end of the scale, some buildings are of sufficient merit to have been listed. A trawl of the British Listed Buildings website produced the following in England: Grade I, Paddington and Gordon Square; Grade II*, Albury and Bristol (1st church); Grade II, Bath, Birmingham, Sheffield, and Preston (originally



*The former Catholic Apostolic Church in Thomas Holden Street, Bolton,
now a Hindu Temple.*

Particular Baptist). The only listed buildings in Scotland are both in Edinburgh, the first church being Grade B, and the second Grade A.

As the denomination declined through the twentieth century, its generous policy regarding buildings meant that a number passed to other denominations. Among those to benefit were the Brethren (Buxton and Romford), Lutherans (Dublin), Roman Catholics (Bradford and others), Pentecostals (Newcastle — now gone — and Wolverhampton), and Greek Orthodox (Birmingham, Bishops-gate, Kentish Town, Southwark and Wood Green). I recall worshipping in the narthex of the Edinburgh church, in use by Reformed Baptists during the late 1970s. The Anglicans long wanted Gordon Square, and after three decades of use by the University of London chaplaincy it is now part-occupied by the traditionalist movement Forward in Faith. Paddington is the last Catholic Apostolic church in Britain to be used for regular Sunday worship. Albury continues to be maintained in expectation of its use at the Second Coming. The Grade II listed Liverpool building was a casualty of vandalism and arson in the 1990s, and others have also disappeared, such as Belfast and Glasgow. Sadly, some which remain are showing signs of decay, notably Birkenhead; it is to be hoped that efforts will be made to conserve, or at the very least record, these buildings and their interiors, because of the way they express the Catholic Apostolic Church's theology and polity.

*They included Thomas Rickman (1776–1841), John Belcher (1841–1913) and Philip Mainwaring Johnston (1865–1936)

NEWS AND NOTES

PLACES OF INDUSTRY TRANSFORMED INTO PLACES OF PRAYER



The passing of church buildings from one group of believers to another is, and has been for four centuries now, a common affair as populations shift, church attendances fluctuate and theological trends change. A second trend has seen disused church buildings being purchased for other uses and transformed into offices, housing and even pubs. A third trend has seen other faith groups acquiring disused churches and using them for their own ceremonies. A more recent, but as yet under researched, trend has seen a number of church groups purchasing buildings built for, and previously used for, commercial purposes and using them for worship. These groups are often, but by no means exclusively, linked to overseas ministries/groups. I am currently involved in a research project which aims to map all churches who meet in converted commercial premises in Birmingham — a hard task due to Birmingham's very fluid church scene. At the time of writing I have currently discovered ten in Birmingham City Centre alone, with seven others in inner-city suburbs. Two of these, the Cathedral Revival Church and Winners' Chapel, are illustrated here. For more information, or if you are aware of such churches, please feel free to contact me — ian.mcdonald@bcu.ac.uk / @IanCMcD

Ian McDonald



Was there a Quaker Meeting House in Ecclesfield?

John Hall, who runs a website of photos of Quaker meeting houses at <http://bit.ly/qmhouse>, has come across a reference on-line to the existence of a Quaker Meeting House, now converted to housing, in Ecclesfield, near Sheffield. There appears to be no reference to this in David Butler's *Quaker Meeting Houses in Britain* nor in local Quaker records. The building at SK3511093988 is

marked on the first edition Ordnance Survey map as a Methodist New Connexion Chapel: it lies on Town End Road about half a mile from the centre of Ecclesfield. The story is that when the Methodist New Connexion Chapel closed the building was sold to Quakers.

John is eager to find out further information about the building and its history. If members believe they can help they can contact him by telephone at 01255 850 353 or email hall1885@btinternet.com

Hull chapel falls victim to fire

The George Lamb Memorial Chapel on Lambert Street, Hull was gutted by fire on the night of 15 April. The façade remains but there are doubts about its structural integrity. The Primitive Methodist chapel of 1894, grade II listed, had been unused for twenty years and, despite planning applications, had failed to be redeveloped: it is rumoured that it was about to be compulsorily purchased.

The chapel was designed by Alfred Gelder in a Renaissance style and was built at a cost of £6,000.

Tewkesbury Old Baptist Chapel to get a ‘facelift’

The Old Baptist Chapel at Tewkesbury, thought to be the earliest Baptist meeting house in the UK, has recently received almost two hundred thousand pounds from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This will be to bring the chapel back into use for the community and visitors.

The Chapel was originally a late mediaeval hall house which was adapted for use as a meeting house. The John Moore Museum has recently taken over the management of the Old Baptist Chapel. At present the access to this enigmatic building is run separately to the rest of the museum and viewing is subject to staff availability and therefore requires an appointment. A tour can be possible with as little as five minutes notice, Tuesday to Saturday, 10 am to 1 pm and 2 pm to 5 pm (see <http://www.johnmooremuseum.org/>).

Further funds for Bristol New Room

The Heritage Lottery Fund is donating £2.5 million to add to £1.4 million from the Bristol Methodist District to create a new building on the courtyard which leads from The Horsefair to John Wesley’s Chapel (The New Room). This will feature a shop and a café together with library, lecture room and archive facilities. The current museum will also be revamped but no changes will be made to the interior of the chapel.

These proposals have been contentious as they radically change the surroundings of the New Room. Members might also like to reflect that the equally historic Whitefield’s Tabernacle buildings in Kingswood, also grade I listed, are still derelict and remain on the ‘Heritage at risk’ register despite having appeared on the BBC Restoration programme in 2013. Curiously I can find no reference to these buildings on the Methodist Heritage website!

‘Mission-shaped Heritage’

A conference aimed at anyone interested in the theory and practice of preserving and extending the use of Methodist Church heritage is to be held at Cliff College, Derbyshire on 16–18 July. Further details can be obtained from Diane Foster, Heritage administrator at fosterd@methodistchurch.org.uk.

ADHSCL Lecture and AGM

This year the AGM and Annual Lecture of the Association of Denominational History Societies and Cognate Libraries will take place at Dr Williams’s Library on Thursday 15 October at 2.00 pm. The Revd Dr David Ceri Jones, the new convenor of the group will be the lecturer and his subject the life of George Whitefield.

Capel Lecture

The Capel Eisteddfod Lecture will be delivered on the National Eisteddfod site on Friday 7 August at 12 noon. The lecturer will be Nia Rhosier and the topic ‘Restoration of John Hughes Chapel in Pontrobert’.

Database of 20th Century churches

The 20th Century Society has launched an on-line database of 20th century UK churches at www.c20society.org.uk/c20-society-churches-database/. This was compiled with the help of a grant from Historic England and should be a valuable resource for anyone interested in church architecture. The database is a work in progress and website@c20society.org.uk would be pleased to hear from anyone who has additional information, corrections or images they would like to share.

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