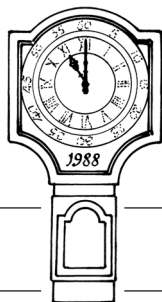
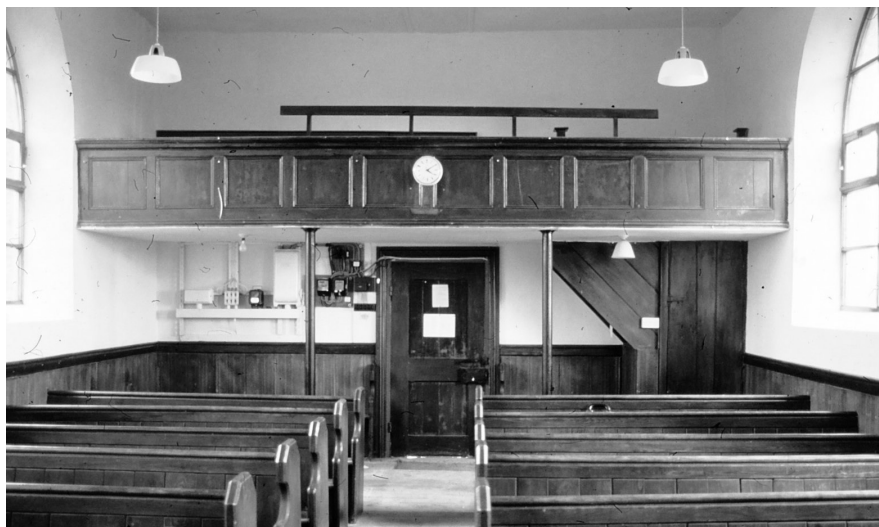


THE CHAPELS SOCIETY



Newsletter 61

January 2016



The interior of Peniel Bible Christian chapel in Stable Green, Winkleigh, Devon showing the inserted gallery at the rear (photograph copyright Roger Thorne).

ADDRESS BOOK

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Editor: Chris Skidmore, 46 Princes Drive, Skipton BD23 1HL; e-mail: chrisskidmore@waitrose.com; phone: 01756 790056 (correspondence *re* the *Newsletter* and other Society publications). **Copy for the next (May 2016) *Newsletter* needs to reach the Editor by 31 March 2016, please.**

NOTICEBOARD

CHAPELS SOCIETY EVENTS

23 April 2016	Visit to North Cumbria (Michael Atkinson)
16 July 2016	AGM in London with tour (Chris Skidmore)
16/17 September 2016	Conference (jointly with ADHSCL) on <i>Nonconformist attitudes to war and peace in the long twentieth century</i> at Friends House, London
8 October 2016	Visit to Leicester

EDITORIAL

This is the first issue of our *Newsletter* since issue 21 in December 1999 not to be produced by Oblong Creative and their team under Derek Brown. This indicates no loss of confidence in their skills, as we shall continue to work with them to produce *The Chapels Society Journal*, the next issue of which is currently in production. It is merely an acknowledgement that printing from plates, as opposed to a process related to xerography, has become too expensive for a relatively ephemeral production like the *Newsletter*. We are confident that there will be little loss of quality in the change of production method, but are sure that you will not hesitate to let us know if you feel differently!

The Editor apologises that *The Chapels Society Journal* will not be sent out to members until the May mailing.

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

PROCEEDINGS

VISIT TO CLEETHORPES AND GRIMSBY, 12 SEPTEMBER 2015

A grey morning in Cleethorpes turned into an afternoon of sunny periods which surprised and gratified the 21 members of the Chapels Society almost as much as the rich diversity of chapels discovered for us by our guides, Rod and Margaret Ambler. Aided by a skilful and knowledgeable coach driver we were able to negotiate the narrow back-streets of Grimsby to visit six places of worship and see the exteriors of several more. Rod's extensive notes on the background to Grimsby's social, economic and religious history enhanced our enjoyment of the day (and greatly helped with this report).



*Beaconthorpe Methodist Church, Cleethorpes
(all photographs copyright the author).*

Grimsby was once the greatest fishing port in England (some say, the world) but with the decline in the fishing industry since the 1960s the economy has depended on food processing. Now much of that has also gone, leaving a town of closed shops, derelict buildings, abandoned brown-field sites and obvious social deprivation. In these circumstances we found vibrant church activity and commitment to making old, new and converted buildings serve the present age. Cleethorpes and Grimsby merge seamlessly together. We began in the former, at Beacontorpe Methodist Church, where we were welcomed with tea, coffee and biscuits in the Sunday School building of 1932 where we were given an introductory talk by one of the members, Mr Greg Brooke. The church itself, opened in 1914, is a single room with pleasingly curved rows of pews facing a central pulpit backed by choir stalls and organ in a liturgically-west arched recess. The style in red brick (architect: Henry Harper) has been described as ‘Free Gothic’ with ‘Arts and Crafts’ touches, not least in the angled buttress-like features to the tower and external walls which gives them a slightly tapered appearance. Our coach then took us to Grimsby where we explored the streets of terraced housing occupying land from the Heneage family estate and the freemen’s former grazing land on the East Marsh – a history spelt out in the names of the roads and streets.



St Mary on the Sea Catholic Church Grimsby with (left) the chancel and high altar and (above) the detail of the Nativity scene with Thomas Charlton, mayor.

Our first stop was the Roman Catholic church of St Mary On The Sea, where we were warmly welcomed by Nanette Brown, Vice-Chair of Parish Pastoral Council. St Mary's was begun in 1879, built by the local Catholic gentry to serve the growing Irish community who had initially arrived to help build the docks. The brick exterior, unremarkable in itself and masked by trees, did nothing to prepare us for the splendour of the interior – tall, light, colourful, and speaking more of North Germany than of Grimsby (architect: M.E. Hadfield). The decorated chancel arch leads the eye to the great east window, partly hidden behind the richly decorated reredos, with two wall paintings to each side: angels above and nativity scenes below: on the left, kneeling at the birth of Christ is Thomas Charlton, shipbuilder, in his mayoral robes, while on the right the figures in the Epiphany scene have the faces of his children, who gave the paintings in his memory. Of all the stained glass windows the one which attracted most attention was the Peace Window (John Hardman & Co), depicting Christ and the miraculous haul of fishes ('Fear not from henceforth thou shalt catch men'), offered as a Thanksgiving for Peace in 1945. There was so much to see in this magnificent church: the carved German pulpit and statues of Mary and Joseph; the altar of the Sacred Heart Chapel by Pugin & Pugin; and, tucked away in the south-western corner under the gallery stairs, a curious surviving remnant of a painted dado frieze showing all (or so we are told) the fishes of the world. In Grimsby we were never to find ourselves far from the sea, fishermen and the perils of the deep.

Across the road from St Mary's we saw the exterior of the Sir Moses Montefiore Synagogue, opened in 1888 and still active but surrounded by decay and overgrown weeds and trees, its rare ritual bath to the rear, built in 1916, now unsafe and 'at risk'. The most remarkable feature of the exterior of the synagogue, though, was the War Memorial, 1914–1918, to six members of the Jewish community. Then on the coach again and off to lunch at the Ice House. Again the exterior did not prepare us for the interior. The Ice House is a former ice factory and layer fish processing plant and cold store. From the car park we saw a long, two-storey austere rectangular wall, covered in pebble-dash and pierced by a few modern-looking windows and a diminutive entrance doorway. A large noticeboard proclaimed this to be the 'Ice House Christian Centre'. Inside the fittings were modern, comfortable, warm and welcoming, offering Christian service to the deprived community around but no Sunday services – its work being supplementary to that of the places of worship of the various religions and denominations of the town. The Ice House offers a lending library, an extensive Christian bookshop, a café, meeting rooms and a warm welcome to groups such as ourselves. We ate our lunches and then those who chose were led by Mark, assistant to the Centre manager, who gave us a conducted tour of the upper floor comprising suites of rooms, some untenanted, some let to various businesses and charitable concerns, and then up again to the penthouse floor (added to the Ice House in the 1970s) where we saw the disused 700-seater auditorium.



The former Methodist Central Hall, Grimsby.

The coach next brought us to the former Methodist Central Hall (1934; architect: Arthur Brocklehurst), still a Methodist property but let to a Trust who manage it as a secular community centre. We were greeted by the Manager, Howard Mills. In one of the Hall's side rooms we found another of the hidden gems sought out for us by the Amblers – the Fisherman's Chapel, which is at once a museum, a memorial, a place of remembrance and a place which speaks of the dedication of men who gave their lives, in war and peace, to bring home the fish and to keep Britain safe. Since 1966 the former Quiet Room of the Central Mission has been home to artefacts from the Bethel Mission of the East Coast Mission and Sailors' Orphans Homes. Here are stained glass windows originally created for a church in Immingham as a memorial to members of the Merchant Navy who were killed in the First World War, and recovered after several adventures from a church in Dunkirk; a ship's binnacle, reworked as a font; a ship's wheel on the face of the pulpit, and the battered bell recovered from the wreck of the 'Laforey' off Norway and now hung on the chapel wall. In the windows the stained glass commemorates the loss of three ships and their crews. Impressively on the wall a memorial has been reinstated to the dozens of ships and 1,230 men who lost their lives in the First World War. Equally impressive and moving were the lists of ships and the names of over 3,000 men lost at sea between 1920 and 1991 who have no known grave.

Outside the Central Hall and a few yards down the road we were able to glimpse behind a modern shop frontage the former United Methodist Free Churches chapel of 1869 and, on a nearby corner and most interesting to me was the former Secularist Hall of Science of 1873, one of only a handful of such halls to be built by the Secularists themselves and possibly one of only two (the other is in Leicester) to survive. The Secularists were in the main atheists but in those days even unbelief wore the outward trappings of belief. From here we walked the short distance to the Salvation Army citadel or barracks, opened in 1888, before taking the coach past the former Spring Congregational Church to the former Welholme Congregational Church (built 1907; architects: Bell, Withers and Meredith, though Charles Bell had died in 1899) and the earlier Mission Church and Sunday school of 1894 (architect: H.C. Scaping), founded from the Spring church. The church is now a museum store. By now we were in the leafier suburbs of Grimsby, with larger villas and loftier social aspirations. This was also evident at our next stop, St Columba's Presbyterian Church, now URC, opened in 1931 at a cost of about £10,000 (architects: Morter & Dobie of Liverpool). Here we were greeted by the minister, the Revd Hamish Temple, who was a direct descendant of the last surviving member of the original Presbyterian church in Grimsby at Victor Street and who, as such, had opened the present church. The key used on the occasion was now in a display case behind the Communion Table. There was also a curious memorial stone set in the church wall recording various members of the Smelle family born in the 18th century, including the Revd William Smelle (1758–1828) who had taken the local Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion congregation into Independency. With this double sense of continuity we explored the capacious premises adjoining this well-appointed 'Arts and Crafts' style building before returning to the coach for the final leg of our journey and tea at St Christopher's Methodist Church at the other end of Welholme Road from the former Congregational church.

This brought us back into the meaner streets of Victorian Grimsby, though the terrace houses here still bear signs of aspirations to respectability with moulded carvings on the door-heads, decorative floor tiles on the front door thresholds, and small front gardens. A Primitive Methodist school chapel was opened in Welholme Road East in 1897. The congregation meeting at the former Wesleyan Heneage chapel, which was destroyed by a bomb in 1940, joined the Welholme church in 1955 and a new church was opened in 1959 next to the old schoolroom. Three arson attacks in 1997 destroyed the school and damaged the new church so it was decided to demolish the remnants of the school building and refurbish the church as a multi-purpose hall. This was the smart and modern building which greeted us, with chairs for the Sunday congregation stacked to one side and neat tables set out for a traditional ham and salad chapel tea, followed by sticky chocolate cake with strawberries and cream laid on by Angela Wilson and her team, including the minister, the Revd Jade Bath.



St Christopher's Methodist Church, Welholme Road, Grimsby.

And so we returned to Cleethorpes station by coach, following a generously structured timetable of arrivals and departures kept punctually throughout the day, marshalled by Margaret. We had seen much to inform us, surprises to delight us and sights to sadden us, but we had also heard stories to uplift us. The sterling social work and community care being undertaken by the churches we had visited in visibly deprived areas was uplifting; the sight of so much urban decay, not least the vacant Birds Eye factory site over the wall from Welholme Methodist was painful and depressing. The closure of this 1929 factory in 2005 with the loss of 650 jobs symbolised the difficulties of modern Grimsby. But we left on an upbeat note, delighted by St Mary On The Sea and moved by the Seaman's Chapel. Rod and Margaret fully deserved our thanks for another splendid Chapels Society visit.

Edward Royle

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Our Membership Secretary writes

We have pleasure in welcoming the following new personal member to the Society – Neil Crutchley, Houghton-On-The-Hill, Leicestershire

Can 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.

Paul Gardner

THE BICENTENARY OF THE BIBLE CHRISTIANS (1815–1907)

AN ARTICLE BY ROGER F. S. THORNE

From 1857 until 1907 there were five Wesleyan-type, Methodist denominations in Britain. The smallest was the awkwardly named, 'Bible Christians'. Its official printed Minutes described itself as 'The People denominated Bible Christians', which is equally awkward and in this article the denomination is taken to be singular. In 1907 the BCs united with the other two smallest bodies to form 'The United Methodist Church'.

The Bible Christians were founded by William O'Bryan, an erratic but gifted evangelist, who spent some time as a preacher with the Wesleyans. He chafed at authority and left to follow an independent preaching tour, starting in October 1815. This was in the economically poor, border parishes of North West Devon and North East Cornwall. In his first week he visited and established small Methodist-type groups in Week St Mary, Cornwall and in Shebbear, Devon. 200 years later there are still chapels with congregations in these places. In Shebbear he gained the support of the Thorne family, who played a prominent part in nurturing the growth of this tiny denomination.

The heartland of the denomination was always the three South Western counties – Cornwall, Devon and Somerset. Also it established a significant presence along the South Coast, in South Wales, in London, and as far north as Barrow and Bolton. These chapel buildings and their congregations reflected the areas where they were. There was a very early mission to London, which resulted in a circuit in 1823. In reality this circuit was a frequently changing series of rented rooms. A list dated Midsummer 1827 describes the 'circuit property' held in eleven rooms: forms (some with backs), pulpits, candlesticks, 'sacrament furniture' etc., with a total 'supposed value' of £42.5.6d. By 1907 they were well established in London with 10 chapels, distributed around the suburbs but mostly operating as pastorates. At Waterloo they bought a former Baptist chapel, near the eponymous station. Around 1900 they hired the Old Vic down the road for Sunday evening mission services in the winter months. These were crowded out by residents of the local slums, grateful for warmth and light but it was a far cry from the heartland.

In 1851, the year of the Ecclesiastical Census, there were 443 BC chapels nationally. In 1907, on the eve of Union, there were 622 chapels nationally plus 6 chapels in their China Mission. Devon had 166 chapels.

BC chapels are often stereotyped as 'Zions and Bethels' but taking Devon as an example, there was a wide range of names. I know the names of about a third of Devon's 1907 chapels and these include Bethany, Bethel, Bethesda, Bethlehem and Beulah with William Reed Memorial, Zion and Zoar at the other end. Thorne Memorial in Bear Street, Barnstaple was named for James Thorne but

in recent years it became Central and now Christ Church. Mercifully a plaque on the church still commemorates James Thorne's contribution to 'the spread of pure religion'.

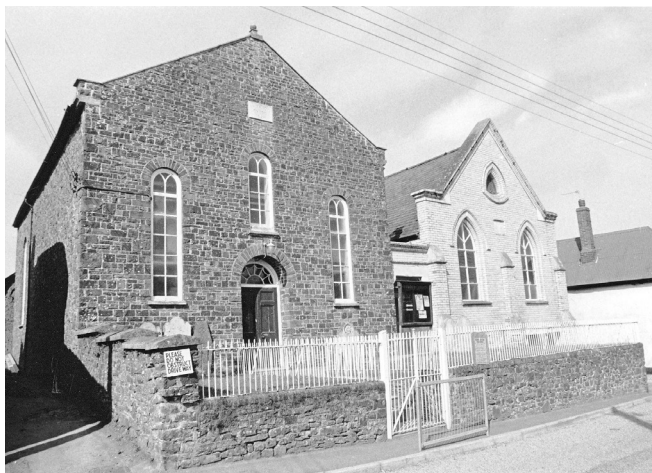
Even today there is a folk memory of the succession of places used by a congregation, starting usually with a rented room or a converted cottage. Early buildings were small and simple, to the point of being primitive and none are known to have survived. Where older chapels have survived they have been altered, often several times by raising walls and inserting windows with arched tops. Forms were replaced by heavy, stained and varnished wooden interiors, complete with rostrum pulpits, singers' seats and a small pipe organ or harmonium. Communion was usually received in the pews so communion rails are more recent. The modern antipathy to pews has resulted in many being replaced by chairs, so today a fully fitted interior is rare. A typical feature of Bible Christian chapels is an arched recess behind the pulpit, perhaps nine inches or so deep and with a painted text. When a congregation grew, a gallery might be inserted, usually with an awkward staircase. A number of chapels had a 'burying ground', which was used by neighbouring chapels. A variety of people were responsible for designing the chapels: Ministers, local builders, local members and in a few later cases, a professional. In prosperous Yelverton, near Plymouth, Beddoe Rees designed an elaborate and untypical building. This opened very shortly before the 1907 Methodist Union and was the very last Bible Christian chapel to be opened.

These are very brief notes on chapels in three different types of location in Devon. I have preached in them all. The BCs held their annual conference in chapels of some significance at the time.



ROADSIDE: 'Salem', Thornhillhead, Buckland Brewer, SS 414.165 (see p. 10).

A pretty, roadside, colour-washed chapel of 1830 has an open porch and a slate roof. It is surrounded by a large burying ground, from which there are wide ranging views. The chapel was enlarged in 1863 and a small hall of tactful design was added in 1980. Electricity arrived in 1961.



VILLAGE: 'Emmanuel', Morchard Bishop, SS 768.077 (see above).

A masonry chapel, of 1846 with a rather severe appearance. The adjacent Sunday school, of 1928, is faced with pale brick. BC Conference was held here 1854. James Way of the parish became a BC minister in 1826 and in 1847 President. His son, Samuel, became Lord Chief Justice of South Australia and was knighted. This was and is a source of great satisfaction locally.



CITY: Greenbank, Greenbank Rd, Plymouth (see p. 11).

Regarded as the leading chapel of the denomination. Built 1884 with extensive rooms, comprising a large limestone block with freestone dressings in a Romanesque style. Closed 1976 and demolished. Flats are now on the site. BC Conference held here 1891 & 1901. Situated amongst villa residences in the higher part of the town. It was a church-plant by Zion Chapel, which opened in 1847 in the lower part of the town. It lost 95 members to the new Greenbank. Members of three Methodist churches destroyed in the war, including Zion, transferred here. In 1933 a hall was built adjacent instead of the projected manse.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NEWRY

AN ARTICLE BY ANGUS MCCORMICK



I grew up in a Protestant Dissenting home in County Down where we spoke of going to worship in our ‘meeting house’. I recalled this when I saw the words ‘Christians’ meeting house’ recently on a Chapels Society visit to Loughborough Churches of Christ. Our meeting house was a new building at Killinchy, built for the Remonstrant Presbyterians and officially opened in 1846 following the split from other Presbyterians who kept the old meeting house. The style of the meeting house was plain and rectangular without elaborate decoration inside or out though it had a classical appearance unlike the old meeting house. Still we retained the term ‘meeting house’: the church was the place where the Anglicans worshipped.

On 17 July 1853 in Newry the first Protestant Dissenting meeting house in the Gothic style in Ireland was opened for worship. The members of Newry church comprised of some wealthy people as well as the poor. The new church was paid for and like Killinchy, although in a different style, remains a gem architecturally among the new places of worship built in the nineteenth century.

Newry church is made of local granite, cruciform, with tower and spire nearly reaching 100 feet. The moulded arch heads on the tower are filled with louvres. Inside is an open timber roof with arched ribs and carved hammer beams. The low square pulpit is in the centre with the organ behind and a small gallery. During my ministry (1971–77) tables were set out in the aisles for communion for members to sit around.

Newry used the description church for the new building. Some have said that with the new Gothic style something was lost from the old meeting house style but whatever the views on this may be the usage of meeting house and church coexist in the Nonsubscribing Presbyterian congregations.

These were those Presbyterians who became ‘Remonstrants’ after 1830 under the leadership of the Revd Dr Henry Montgomery of the Dunmurry congregation: they were a minority within the general Presbyterian body. The Revd John Mitchel, minister of Newry, wrote in 1828 that ‘I believe all the scriptures teach of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost as three distinct persons and yet I reject the unscriptural denomination of trinitarian’.

It was in 1840 that the Revd Henry Alexander was called from Lancaster Presbyterian (Unitarian) church to be minister in Newry and during his ministry the new church was decided upon and opened. Dr Montgomery had established relationships with English Unitarians and had preached in several Unitarian churches in 1828 and 1829. There developed an interchange of ministry with the English Unitarian body. Certainly there are ample trust deeds and other evidences of these Remonstrants being happy to call themselves Unitarians and Newry church was well known as the Unitarian Church in Newry.

The previous meeting house in Newry had been within the walls of the Poor Clare’s convent where there was a number of graves in what was referred to in my time as the old meeting house green. That building was in the old conventicle style, ‘an ungainly model even for a farmyard barn’.*

The young architect of Newry church, William J. Barre, had an imagination for something new that would attract others to desire the same style, a style supported by those who belonged to the modern and wealthy section of society. He was to go on to design many public buildings, including in Belfast the Albert memorial clock tower and the Ulster Hall. He died, aged 37, in 1867.

Sources consulted include Newry congregation records 1803–1884 (PRO Northern Ireland) and Christian Life 1889.

* Durham Dunlop, *A memoir of the professional life of W.J.Barre*. Belfast, 1868.

NEWS AND NOTES

Listed Places of Worship Roof Repair Fund - Round 2 Grants

The Listed Places of Worship Roof Repair Fund is now open for a second round of grants, with a budget of £25million to be awarded in 2016. The closing date for applications will be Friday 26 February at 12 noon with decisions to be announced in June 2016. The details are on the website <http://www.lpowroof.org.uk/>

There are some changes to the scheme since the first round, the main one being that the repair work should be identified in a recent condition survey as being needed within the next two years rather than five years as previously.

Ride and Stride is worth the effort!

Final figures announced recently revealed that £1,396,154 was raised to help fund repairs to England's churches, chapels and meeting houses on Ride+Stride Saturday in 2014. The total was an increase of just under £24,000 compared to the 2013 total of £1,372,281.

Faith groups and the planning system

The Faith and Place Network (FPN) has issued a briefing document with this title. The FPN was formed due to awareness of changing religious demographics and the challenges this presents both for faith communities in search of premises and for planners with responsibility for regulating the use and development of land. The document can be downloaded from the FPN website at <http://faithandplacenetwork.org/>

Pugin Chapel under threat

The 1868 former Convent of the Holy Child in St Leonards East Sussex is a major work by the Victorian architect Edward Welby Pugin, and also contains work by his two architect brothers Peter-Paul and Cuthbert. It is especially notable for the intactness of its fittings in what English Heritage described as 'an intact High Victorian Gothic interior of outstanding quality'. The Victorian Society and the Pugin Society are asking Hastings Borough Council to take action to prevent further damage to the Grade II* listed chapel which was first noted as in deteriorating condition in 2005. Historic England is currently considering adding the chapel to their Heritage at Risk Register.

Meeting houses and churches win architectural awards

Art+Christianity Enquiry (ACE: <http://acetrust.org>) together with the RIBA gave their award for religious architecture jointly to Tectus Architects for Kingston

Quaker Centre and W.H.R. Pattisson for the Chapel at Shepherds Law, an Anglican hermitage in Northumberland. Kingston Quakers had worshipped in the centre of the town in Eden Street since 1673. Following compulsory purchase for a redevelopment they have built their new Quaker Centre a few hundred yards to the east in Fairfield East. The building has been built to utilise as much natural light as possible.



The Meeting Room in the new Kingston Quaker Centre

There are two medals awarded jointly for church architecture by the Ecclesiastical Architects and Surveyors Association and the National Churches Trust – the President's Medal and the King of Prussia Gold Medal. The reordering of Newbury Methodist church by MEB Design Ltd was shortlisted for the King of Prussia Gold Medal. The aim of this development was to stabilise the structure (particularly the organ loft – a later addition) and to provide a more welcoming, comfortable, flexible and inspirational sacred space for all. A few pews have been retained and a level access glazed entrance lobby now provides views into the sanctuary from the busy High Street.

A runner-up for the President's medal was Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church in nearby Hungerford, Berkshire, by Jeremy Bell Architects. This is the successor to a simple corrugated iron pre-fabricated building, erected in 1939, and consists of a crescent of 14 houses for sale, to pay for the new church in the centre point of the arc. The buildings are designed on a red-bricked Arts and

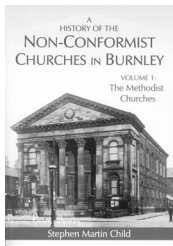
Crafts theme, with purposefully pulled down eaves to the houses and steep roofs to the church. The church itself uses a limited palette of gluelam beams, white plastered walls and ceilings, plate glass, and stone coloured tiles.

Also shortlisted for this award was the refurbishment of the Large Meeting House at Friend's House, Euston Road by John McAslan and Partners. The Grade II building by Hubert Lidbetter won the RIBA Bronze Medal in 1927. The redesign uses unbroken raked seating to unite floor and former galleries to give a more unified gathering space. A new glass rooflight, inspired by the 'skyspaces' of American Quaker artist, James Turrell, above the Large Meeting House evokes a powerful interplay, drawing the sky down into the heart of the renewed space. This scheme was the winner of a RIBA London Regional Award 2015. The Society hopes to be able to view the refurbished Meeting House during its AGM visit this year.

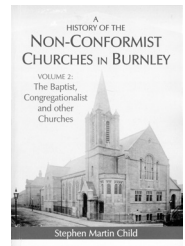
BOOK REVIEW

A History of the Non-Conformist Churches in Burnley, Volume 1: The Methodist Churches by Stephen Martin Child. Burnley: Burnley and District Historical Society, 2014. 268 pages, illustrations, softback. £7.00.

Stephen Martin Child, *A History of the Non-Conformist Churches in Burnley, Volume 2: The Baptist, Congregationalist and Other Churches* by Stephen Martin Child. Burnley: Burnley and District Historical Society, 2014. 252 pages, illustrations, softback. £7.00.



These books have no ISBN numbers so are not available through the general book trade. They are obtainable locally in Burnley or by post, adding £1.40 per volume postage, cheques payable to the Burnley and District Historical Society, from: Stephen Child, 66 Langdale Road, Blackburn, BB2 5DW.



The author has previously written books on the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches of Burnley, Lancashire, and on his own admission these are the churches he has been most familiar with, previously knowing little about the Nonconformists. So he found the task of chronicling the Nonconformist churches rather more daunting than he anticipated, their number and complexity requiring two volumes rather than the one originally intended.

Altogether these books include 99 churches, split more or less half and half between the Methodists and the rest. The author's approach is not statistical but from the evidence given here in terms of buildings and congregations, the Methodists were the strongest, followed by the Baptists with the Congregationalists tailing behind, although some of their buildings were large.

The whole of the current Burnley Council area is covered which, in addition to Burnley itself, includes Padiham, Hapton, Briercliffe and Worsthorne. Under each denominational heading, the churches are arranged into these geographical areas and then alphabetically. Most churches have a photograph of the exterior, some contemporary, some historic, and there are interior views of many as well. The text is narrative, and somewhat anecdotal, but generally gives a chronological history of each church. I would have liked to have seen a location map of the churches, and indeed more precise locational details for each church, giving the Ordnance Survey grid reference. There is a bibliography, mainly of histories produced by the churches themselves, but the author has evidently referred also to directories and local newspapers. He does not appear to have used archival sources and does not refer to the 1851 Census of Religious Worship. Architects are given for something over a third of the churches. These are predominantly local architects, either Burnley based or from elsewhere in Lancashire. Eleven chapels were designed by the Waddingtons, father or son, one of the most prolific local architects. The most widely known architect who appears here is James Simpson of Leeds, who was responsible for Wesley Chapel, Hargreaves Street, of 1839, but the photograph shows that this lacked the portico of his chapels at Rawtenstall or York. This was sadly demolished in 1965 and the current Central Methodist Church built on the site.

From the evidence given here, Old Dissent did not establish a presence in Burnley until the eighteenth century Evangelical Revival, although this probably reflects the fact that Burnley as we know it today is largely a nineteenth century creation, an industrial town built on the cotton industry. There is a Quaker Burial Ground at Foulds House, Briercliffe, which is within the current Burnley boundary but the Meeting House was at Marsden, now in Nelson. The earliest Baptist presence seems to have been in the Hapton area in the 1690s as a result of the work of David Crossley, the Particular Baptist preacher from Rossendale. However, the account here is clearly confused; the president of the Baptist Missionary Society could not have been opening a church in 1710 as the society was not formed until 1792. This church only seems to have had a temporary existence and more permanent Baptist origins can be traced to 1760, when a group began meeting at Burwains Farm, which is near Foulds House, leading to the construction of the first chapel at Haggate in 1767. Oddly the author does not seem to be aware of the more recent work by Rex Watson (2007) which shows that the origins of this church are a little more complex, having Inghamite associations and not initially baptist, only later becoming aligned with the Scotch Baptists. A church of General Baptists resulting from the work of Dan Taylor was formed in 1777, building their first chapel at Burnley Lane, later known as Ebenezer, ten years later. The General Baptists later established other churches in Burnley, Aenon in the town centre and at Hurstwood, their strength in Burnley being noteworthy as there were few elsewhere in Lancashire.

The Particular Baptists were not established in Burnley itself until 1828, when a church was planted by people from Colne, leading to the construction of their first chapel in 1831, which was replaced by Sion Chapel in 1862-3. The Strict and Particular 'Gadsbyite' Baptists established Jireh Chapel in 1853, but while strong in this area the statement that 'they only operated in this area' (vol. 2, p. 46) is incorrect.

The Unitarian Church at Padiham does not originate, as do many Unitarian Churches in Lancashire, from the seventeenth century Presbyterians but is a later establishment of Cookite, or Methodist Unitarian, origin, dating from 1806. The earliest date for the establishment of an Independent church is 1807. Bethesda Chapel was constructed in 1814 and its successor of 1878-9 by William Waddington remains in use, although altered, by the United Reformed Church.

The earliest established Methodist presence was in Padiham, Hall Hill Chapel being constructed in 1779. In Burnley itself the Keighley Green Chapel was built in 1788, later moving to the new Wesley Chapel mentioned above. The Keighley Green building survived in alternative uses until 1975. Other branches of Methodism also became established in Burnley, notably the Primitive Methodists in 1822. As elsewhere, by the end of the nineteenth century the Primitives were constructing some very un-primitive buildings, culminating in the Jubilee Church of 1903 complete with spire, the architect for which was J.B. Thornley of Darwen. The Independent Methodists were of rather different origin and indeed seem to have given the author some problems; Brunswick Chapel (vol. 1, p. 40) is given in the title as 'Independent' but from the description appears not to have been, as it became United Methodist. The Independent Methodists were not as strong in Burnley as they were further north in Nelson and Barnoldswick, having no large chapel in the town centre. There were two smaller chapels in the outskirts, at Cliviger, which still functions, and at Robinson Street in the Burnley Lane area, now demolished. The architect of the Robinson Street chapel was J.L. Crumblehulme, who those members who came on the Bowland visit in September 2014 will remember as the architect of the Independent Methodist Chapel of 1892 at Barnoldswick. The Robinson Street Chapel of 1891 was, however, a much smaller and simpler building.

The author does not claim to have included every Nonconformist cause in Burnley, but has evidently sought to do so, some causes being included on which little information could be found and may have only existed for a short time. No assemblies of Christian Brethren are listed, although I would be surprised if there never were any in Burnley. He does not include groups like Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses who would not be seen as Christian by people in the mainstream denominations, although he does include the Swedenborgians and Christian Scientists who some would find similarly doubtful.

The twentieth century history of Nonconformists has been one of decline in Burnley as elsewhere and the author tells us that of the 99 churches listed only

18 are still functioning and readers of this *Newsletter* will agree with the author that this is a sad fact. They will also be concerned that only two of these use historic buildings complete with original furnishings. These are the Padiham Unitarian church of 1872-4 and Hill Lane Baptist Chapel, Briercliffe, of 1872. Other chapels have been rebuilt or demolished and replaced by new buildings sometimes on the same site, Wesley Chapel for example. Sion Baptist Chapel was sacrificed to that great god of 1960s town planners, the inner ring road, a replacement which is still in use being constructed nearby. Sometimes churches have united and consolidated into new buildings which again have not lasted very long: the new Padiham Methodist Church of 1992 closed in 2009 after only 17 years. The tales of closure are all very similar, a dwindling congregation of elderly people in a building which is too large and costly to maintain. The latter two are probably the key factors as many of those that closed had memberships of around 30, a number which can constitute a viable church if they are committed and active with a diverse age range and a suitable building. In some cases the building seems to have been the major problem, as at Hollingreave Congregational Church whose photograph adorns the cover of volume 2.



*Jireh Strict and Particular Baptist Chapel,
Boot Way, Burnley, Lancashire.*

*Opened 1853, now a public house
(photograph copyright Roger Holden).*

Some of the old chapels survive in alternative religious or commercial use. Aenon Baptist Chapel in Red Lion Street is now a dental surgery, Jireh 'Gadsbyite' Chapel in Boot Way is, inappropriately, a public house. Others have been lost completely, including the grand Fulfilled Wesleyan Methodist Chapel whose photograph appears on the front cover of volume 1; this was closed in 1959 but survived in commercial use until largely destroyed by fire in 1985, finally being demolished in 1992. The oldest surviving chapel in Burnley is the original General Baptist chapel of 1787 on Colne Road, standing alongside the replacement chapel of 1860 and Sunday School of 1872. This impressive complex of buildings is listed but closed in 2007, when they joined forces with the Methodists in a new building on Briercliffe Road. The 1787 building

is used for offices but proposals for re-use of the other buildings have come to nothing and the owners have removed significant parts of the interiors without listed building consent.

But all is not doom and gloom, the newest church building in Burnley was opened in 2013. This was not an amalgamation of existing dwindling congregations, but for a church that had outgrown its previous building. The Life Church, originally the Queensgate Pentecostal Church, had to move out of their original premises on Queensgate in 2005 as they had become too small and they took over the former Gannow Baths until the construction of the new building on Sycamore Avenue. The other positive the author points to is the Hurstwood Free Church, whose pastor is a former Burnley football player. Despite occupying a building rather inconveniently located on the rural fringe of Burnley, the former Hurstwood General Baptist chapel of 1870, this church also has an active and growing membership.

Personally, I would have liked a rather more analytical approach. Nevertheless, these books provide a valuable survey of Nonconformity in this Lancashire industrial town at a very reasonable price, which can be recommended to members of the Chapels Society.

Roger N. Holden



Aeon General Baptist Chapel, Red Lion Street, Burnley, Lancashire. Opened 1851, closed 1989, now a dental practice (photograph copyright Roger Holden).

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