

THE CHAPELS SOCIETY



Newsletter 67

January 2018



*The tin tabernacle as cottage orné – the orthodox Church of
St Mary and St Felix, Babingley, Norfolk – see article on page 7
(photograph copyright Abba Seraphim)*

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NOTICEBOARD

CHAPELS SOCIETY EVENTS

21 April 2018

Visit to Bournville (Birmingham: Andy Vail)

7 July 2018

Visit to East London (Jenny Freeman) with AGM and Andrew Worth lecture (Bill Jacob)

22 September 2018

Visit to West Sussex (Tim Grass)

EDITORIAL

There is no report in this issue of the *Newsletter* of the very successful conference held jointly with the Ecclesiological Society in London on Saturday 30 September. However the majority of the papers covering the topic 'From Citadels to Warehouses: some places of worship in Britain today' given on that day will be published in the next issue of the *Chapels Society Journal* which should be published in time for distribution with the May *Newsletter*. The *Journal* will also include the text of the first Christopher Stell memorial lecture given by Kate Tiller at the 2017 AGM. Much to look forward to!

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 BRISTOL AND KINGSWOOD – 28 OCTOBER 2017

It seems that the last time the Chapels Society visited Bristol was in 2002, so a return was welcome. The day, led by David Dawson, was organised in two parts. There could not have been a greater contrast between the morning walk round central Bristol and the afternoon spent out in Kingswood. David provided the most comprehensive of notes prior to our day and these will be available on our website, so I won't concentrate on the details here; rather I'd like to share impressions and more general comments.



Emmanuel City Centre, Bristol, the former Lewins Mead Unitarian Meeting House of 1787 (photograph copyright the author)

The morning started in bright sunshine. We all gathered at the **Emmanuel Bristol Centre**, formerly Lewins Mead Unitarian Meeting. This meeting house had become disused in the 1980s and had been converted by architects Fielden Clegg into their offices. However, early in 2017 the building was bought by Emmanuel Church, a new Anglican community, and is now used for regular worship. As the screens, amps and various decks suggest, this is a very lively young congregation fed by the local student population. It now has two crowded Sunday services. Of remark were the brass plaques in commemoration of

Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833) an educationalist, reformer and member of the 'Bengali renaissance' centred in Calcutta. Another plaque commemorates Mary Carpenter (1807-1877) also a social reformer and educationalist in Bristol, friend and supporter of Ram Mohan Roy.

The group then walked to **Broadmead Baptist Church**. Although the community has a history stretching back to the early days of Bristol Dissent, this is at street level a rather unprepossessing 1969 building. Refusing to move in the 1960s the church occupies the upper floors above a shopping centre and was designed to fit into the city planners image for this area. However, never judge a chapel by its frontage! This was a warm and welcoming contemporary space, with a wood-lined interior, and well worth a visit.



*The interior of Broadmead Baptist Church, 1969
(photograph copyright the author)*

We then moved on to **The New Room**, recently refurbished with a new entrance and café. It was interesting to hear about the many debates involved in the refurbishment of an historic site of such importance and how to make it available to future generations. Having visited it years ago, I had been a little concerned about how its reorganisation would be handled. But, I have to say that the Museum was excellent. It managed to bring Wesley's growing Methodist movement alive, providing the social historical context, explaining its impact and showing how it is still relevant today.

For the afternoon visits we boarded the coach with our first stop at **Cotham Parish Church of St Mary**, formerly Highbury Chapel. Originally built as an

expansion from Penn Street Tabernacle, this Congregational chapel was funded by the tobacco manufacturers WD & HO Wills and designed by a young, untried William Butterfield in 1840. Later he rather ungratefully referred to the church as a 'schism shop'. In 1975 the building became the parish church for Cotham and in many ways Butterfield's design ideally suits this congregation.

Boarding the coach, we then set off for Kingswood, at this point the weather turned grey and cold, a portent for a change in fortunes. Until now we had visited old buildings well cared for, looking to the future with lively congregations – some very new – offering us a positive outlook. As David's notes warned 'Kingswood is a remarkable landscape of chapels – a product of disagreement and division but more recently reconciliation'.

Our first stop was **Whitfield Tabernacle**, and what a shock! First established in 1741 the building had gone through many phases and changes in fortune. Finally closed in 1983, it is now derelict. A preservation trust was formed in 1995, but goodness they have their work cut out and to my untrained eyes it looks to be an almost impossible task. How does a Grade I listed building get into such a bad way? Things did not get better. We walked round the corner to the **New Tabernacle**, built in 1851-3, and this is also derelict having suffered from arson and vandalism since its closure in 1985. Between these two buildings there is a large burial ground in which I believe there are some monuments of note. It was



*Kingswood Methodist Church,
formerly Zion United Methodist
Free Church, 1844
(photograph copyright the author)*

hard to discern this under the brambles and weeds. The preservation trust wishes to turn this into a green area for community use and I wish them all the best. There is no doubt the surrounding area needs some pleasant community spaces.

Within this locality there are four other Nonconformist buildings and one wonders if this might explain why so many are now in such a bad way. Indeed, were the congregations ever big enough to sustain them? We passed by the **Kingswood Wesley Chapel**, built in 1843 for the Wesleyan Methodist Society. Following abandonment and vandalism, the shell is now being preserved and it is being converted into much needed flats. At least it is no longer a derelict building. The United Reformed and Moravian communities now share **Kingswood Unity Church**. This started life c.1745-58, founded by John Cennick, who resigned from the Tabernacle and founded

a small Moravian settlement. The present church was built in 1856. Following the closure of the New Tabernacle in 1985 the two congregations came together to share the building in 1992, with its warm, cosy interior.

Our last stop was the **Kingswood Methodist Church** (formerly Zion United Methodist Free), built in 1854 as a rival to Kingswood Wesley Chapel. The graveyard was full of impressive monuments; symbols of a previously prosperous religious community. It had a substantial re-ordering in 1983 with a suspended floor to give community rooms below. This involved a rather interesting approach to accommodating the existing organ, which leaves half of it below the congregation. Here we had a lovely welcome and a wonderful ‘chapel tea’; a very positive way to end the day.

Overall the day was full of stories of dissent, disagreement and division but there were also stories of cooperation and rebirth. Chapel Society days are always a pleasure. Not only do we get to see inside so many chapels that are normally inaccessible, we are also able to enjoy the vast knowledge shared by the group. Thanks go to David for organising such a varied and interesting day.

Moirra Ackers

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Paul Gardner writes

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

Dr Anne C Brook, Bradford, West Yorkshire

Dr Gerard Charmley, Leeds, West Yorkshire

The Rt Hon the Lord Freeman, Kensington, London

Would you please note that Stuart Leadley will be taking over the role of Membership Secretary with effect from January 2018.

Can I ask that you get in touch with him if you have moved house or any of your contact details have changed.

COUNCIL DECISION

Following the amendment of Clause 5 of the Constitution at the last AGM, Council at its September meeting agreed to co-opt John Ellis to the Council. This is with a view to John offering himself for election as Honorary Treasurer at the next AGM and to make for smooth transition between Treasurers. John is a long-standing member of the Society and a past Moderator of the United Reformed Church.

THE PLACES OF WORSHIP OF THE BRITISH ORTHODOX CHURCH

A SHORT ARTICLE BY ABBA SERAPHIM

The British Orthodox Church is a small autonomous Orthodox jurisdiction, originally deriving from the Syrian Orthodox Church in 1866. It was canonically part of the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria from 1994-2015, before amicably returning to its original status in order to fulfil its mission more effectively. Over the past century and a half worship has taken place in a number of different venues, sometimes hired halls or through the use of churches belonging to other denominations. As numbers are quite small the church has avoided using buildings which are large and expensive to maintain. The liturgical nature of Orthodox worship, however, necessitates certain structural requirements which dictate the layout of places used for regular worship. The first is for a clearly defined sanctuary, which can be either separated by an icon screen or by a large veil or curtain. The second priority is for an altar which needs to be nearer to a cube in shape, rather than a long trestle table, and to be freestanding rather than fixed against the eastern wall of a church, to enable the clergy to circumambulate it as part of the liturgical ceremonial.

The British Orthodox church in Osborne Road, Winton in Bournemouth, is dedicated to Christ the Saviour, and – rather appropriately – it originally served

first as a stable and then as a carpenter's workshop. It was erected c.1893. The building, which is of rendered brick, is a rectangular structure measuring approximately 32ft x 12ft, with a vaulted roof. It was converted into a church in 1951 when a sanctuary measuring approximately 9ft x 12ft was built onto the existing structure. A wooden miniature rood-screen, originally separated the nave from the sanctuary. On converting it for Orthodox use we filled the arches of the screen with two large ikons of the Saviour and the Mother of God and hung a large painted cross of the crucified Saviour, incorporating figures of the Holy Birthgiver, Saint John the Evangelist and an angel catching blood from the Saviour's side. At the foot is depicted a skull and to the left and right



*The Church of Christ the Saviour,
Winton Road, Bournemouth
(photograph copyright the author)*

are figures of two mourning women, whilst at the top the enthroned Saviour is flanked by two angels and two seraphs in roundels. A large traditional red velvet veil, embroidered with a gold cross, hangs across the sanctuary entrance. The original altar stretched for much of the length of the east wall but was replaced by a free-standing altar, 3ft 6in x 3ft 6in, constructed of rendered bricks and stone and standing 2ft away from the wall. On the east wall of the church is mounted a reredos, the central panel depicting a Neo-Coptic icon of Christ Pantokrator and on either side are panels depicting the four-and-twenty elders.

The Bournemouth Church also has a small upstairs at its west end, which originally probably served as a hay loft, but had been converted into a small vestry, and the previous occupants had a small organ there. As Orthodox worship generally does not use organs, we converted the space freed up into storage cupboards and a church library. The Church stands on a parcel of land situated behind the houses in Osborne Road and is approached by a 97ft long path, which is 10ft wide. This is approached through a lych-gate, comprising two booths built of cement blockwork rendered with concrete. The entire structure has a gabled wooden roof with slate tiles, and is surmounted by a wooden cross, and two notice boards. Of the two booths, one serves as a water-closet and



*The Church of St Mark and St Hubert, Cusworth
(photograph copyright the author)*

the other is used for storage. The area between the lych-gate and the church comprises a tarmacadam path bordered on both sides by flower-beds, shrubs, grass and potted plants. The area just before the church contains a large stone marble stone inscribed 'Christ is Risen', which serves as the cover for a brick-edged cinerarium.

At Cusworth, near Doncaster, South Yorkshire, we have the church of St Mark and St Hubert. The present building originally served as the Pinfold Stable for stray animals and was constructed from stones when the former Cusworth Hall was demolished in 1740 and a new Palladian Hall erected higher up the hill. When the last male heir of the Battie-Wrightson family died in 1952, the estate was inherited by his sister, Mrs Barbara Isabella Georgiana Pearse (1890-1989). Having sold the contents of Cusworth Hall, she decided to open the beautiful chapel there to the public, but maintaining the house and grounds became too expensive. Before she sold the Hall to the local council in 1961 she had the Pinfold Stable converted into the Church of St Hubert, which officially opened in 1960. The locally-carved 18th century oak pews and pulpit were dismantled and, along with the brass candlesticks and old Turkey carpets, they were transferred to the new church. Having been under the care of a number of private chaplains, the ecclesiastical oversight of the Church was transferred to the British Orthodox Church in 1988 and the church rededicated as St Mark and St Hubert. A wooden ikon screen was erected, the altar (which had originally been constructed from the stone horse-mounts from Cusworth Hall) was rebuilt as a cubic one; and a 19th century episcopal throne donated from a closed church in London. One of the ikons depicting St Hubert also portrays Cusworth Church in the background behind the saint. The church also contains the Shrine of Our Lady of Cusworth, which is a 19th century Russian ikon. The churchyard in front of the church, facing onto Cusworth Lane, was laid out as a burial ground for ashes, including those of Mrs Pearse herself with an impressive stone cross memorial to her parents, William Henry Battie-Wrightson and Lady Isabella Cecil, the eldest daughter of the third Marquess of Exeter. As Cusworth is the only church in the village it has served an important local need and the small churchyard is beautifully tended and has a regular supply of fresh flowers on the memorials. The entrance to the churchyard is through a wooden lych-gate and past a large yew, which was planted as a memorial to church members in 1993.

Babingley, near King's Lynn in Norfolk is now merely a hamlet, the site of an abandoned village now in the Parish of Sandringham. The 14th-century church of Saint Felix stands as a ruin in a nearby field but commemorates the mission of Saint Felix of Burgundy who in 630 travelled there on the Babingley river (a tributary of the Great Ouse) but was shipwrecked. Providentially he survived and evangelised East Anglia in the early 7th century. St Felix Chapel was erected in 1894-95 at the direction of King Edward VII when Prince of Wales to replace the mediaeval Church of St Felix. The new chapel – standing



*The interior of the Church of St Mary and St Felix, Babingley
(photograph copyright the author)*

in its own graveyard and surrounded by trees – was constructed of corrugated iron, and arrived flat-packed, having been manufactured by Boulton and Paul of Norwich. As a result of royal munificence the interior is lined with American pine. The roof is thatched in keeping with Norfolk tradition and it once had a small bell-turret. Until 1980, it served as a ‘daughter-church’ to the parish of Wolferton, but it was then declared redundant, and ownership was returned to the Royal Estate at Sandringham. For the next two decades it was used as a youth and social centre, but gradually fell into disrepair. In May 2000 HM The Queen generously offered the gift of the lease to the British Orthodox Church, in return for which the Church undertook to maintain the building and its churchyard. It was consecrated as the Orthodox Church of St Mary and St Felix and serves Orthodox members in and around the King’s Lynn area. The design of the interior with a large wooden chancel arch meant that an ikon-screen would have been unsuitable, so in this church there is only a very large red velvet sanctuary veil. Like the Bournemouth Church the east end, which is apsidal with windows, has panels depicting a Neo-Coptic icon of the Pantokrator amid the 24 elders. Although the Orthodox Church does not reserve the sacrament in the same manner as the Western churches, the Babingley Church contains a finely



*The Church of St Alban and
St Athanasius Chatham
(photograph copyright the author)*

painted and carved 19th century wooden Tabernacle which originally stood in the Catholic Apostolic Church in Southwark, and which was donated by the late Dr Kenneth Stevenson (1949-2011), former Anglican Bishop of Portsmouth, which is used for storing the holy oils.

In the south-east we have the little British Orthodox Church of St Alban and St Athanasius off Ordnance Street, on the slopes near Fort Port Hill, overlooking Rochester and close to Chatham railway station. It was, again appropriately, formerly a carpenter's workshop with large double doors opening out onto the alleyway linking Ordnance Street to Pagitt Street. The wooden workshop was demolished in 1988 and a small independent Anglican Church was constructed on the site. Nearby the British Orthodox had a

small congregation which had been worshipping in a cemetery chapel since 1991, so in 2100, when St Alban's Church was offered for sale, it became an Orthodox Church. A simple wooden ikon screen with a central and two side doors was erected, the sanctuary floor raised and provided with a purpose-built wooden cubic altar. The two main ikons in the screen are neo-Coptic ikons and the church also contains a reliquary of the Theban martyrs.

EAST YORKSHIRE CHAPEL HAS AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

The tiny village of Ellerton in the Derwent Valley on the edge of East Yorkshire, about 12 miles or so to the south east of York, has a hidden gem. Ellerton Methodist chapel was built in 1811 in the main village street and, as in so many rural places, would have been the only place of worship in the village [the Anglicans did not arrive until 1846]. However this delightful rural Georgian chapel with a remarkably intact original interior has an uncertain future.

The chapel was closed for worship in May 2017 and the Methodist Church has put the building up for sale. There is no land associated with the chapel, other than the grass verge to the front, and it is difficult to see what the building could be used for. Almost any new use would require gutting the interior and



The exterior of Ellerton Methodist Chapel

the removal of the box pews and pulpit, features that make this small chapel of particular significance.

Such reminders of the way that Methodism contributed so much to the cultural heritage of the rural East Riding of Yorkshire are fast disappearing. The East Riding was one of the most Methodist areas in Britain; out of the 600 nonconformist chapels built in the former administrative county before 1914, some 530 were Methodist – Wesleyan or Primitive. Of these only some 50 pre-1914 chapels remain in use of which only a handful retain their original interior, none as early as that at Ellerton.

Built in 1811 of cream brick the single storey building with hipped slate roof has a central projecting porch. The overlight to the entrance door and the two large windows to the left and right of the porch have Gothick glazing set in a pointed arch with red brick voussoirs.

The chapel was given a small red-brick extension at the west end, probably in the mid-19th century. There is a small circular window on the west side, and rectangular windows with later glazing in the south front.

Inside, six rows of white-painted panelled box pews are tiered, rising from east to west, with the rows divided down the centre. Steps at either end of the rows lead up to panelled doors that open into the top row. A brown painted panelled pulpit centrally placed against the east wall of the chapel is flanked by panelled pews and seating.



*The raked box pews are a rare survival
(photograph copyright Chris Copley)*

When the chapel was built the leading trustee was Barnard Clarkson, who would have met John Wesley when he visited the Clarkson family farm at nearby Foggathorpe in July 1776.



*The central pulpit (photograph
copyright Chris Copley)*

Chris Copley of the Bubwith Village Trust, with the support of the Georgian Society for East Yorkshire and others, is campaigning to make sure that this splendid small village chapel and its increasingly rare original interior is preserved intact. An application has been made to Historic England seeking the upgrading of the chapel from grade II to II* thereby giving confirmation of the great historical and architectural significance of this chapel and ensuring that due regard of the importance of the building is taken by local and national government and other bodies in deciding its future and provision of financial support.

The editor is grateful to Chris Copley for much of the text and the photographs in this article, which appeared initially as our Chapel of the Month feature on our website in November.

NEWS AND NOTES

Launch of *Chapels of England*

Members of Council were happy to be invited to the launch of Chris Wakeling's new book – *Chapels of England* (see the review below) – which took place at St George's German Lutheran Church, the home of our sister organisation the Historic Chapels Trust, on 5th October. After a short illustrated talk by Chris which, as usual, contained much that was illuminating, it was good to be able to tour the exhibition, mounted by HCT to celebrate 500 years of German Protestants in Britain.

The Listed Places of Worship (LPW) Grant Scheme continues to 2020

The Government have announced that the LPW scheme which gives grants that cover the VAT incurred in making repairs to listed buildings in use as places of worship has a life guaranteed until 2020. The scheme covers repairs to the fabric of the building, along with associated professional fees, plus repairs to turret clocks, pews, bells and pipe organs.

Victorian Society's endangered list for 2017

Two cemetery chapels at Ince-in-Makerfield, near Wigan have been included on its Top Ten Endangered Buildings list for 2017 by The Victorian Society. Despite being listed at grade II since the 1980s, these buildings, designed by the 25-year-old Alfred Waterhouse in 1855, in the early days of his Manchester practice, have sadly been allowed to decay. The group of three buildings – lodge and two chapels, one for the Church of England and one Nonconformist – are possibly the earliest example of public buildings designed by Waterhouse, still at that time a practising member of the Society of Friends. Ironically the lodge has been sensitively restored.



Hull and Primitive Methodism

2017 was Hull's year as City of Culture and this drew the attention of our colleagues at *Methodist Heritage News* to the role of William Clowes in Primitive Methodism

*The two cemetery chapels by
Waterhouse in their present state
(photographs copyright
The Victorian Society)*

in Hull. Their Autumn issue contained an article based on a recent biography of Clowes by Martin Batstone [*The Fruitful Mother and the Forgotten Son* by Martin K. Batstone. Ilkeston: Moorley's Print and Publishing, 2015. ISBN 978-0-860717-010].

William Clowes (1780-1851) was born in Burslem and being a sickly child was little educated, beginning work as a potter's apprentice at age 10. He was apparently a good dancer and aspired to success in that field. However at the age of 25 he was converted to Methodism and became the leader of a Wesleyan class. He attended the famous camp meeting on Mow Cop in 1807. He started as a Wesleyan preacher in 1808 but because of his continuing association with the Bournes he was omitted from the preacher's plan and his quarterly ticket withdrawn in 1810.

Having joined with Hugh Bourne in forming the 'Society of the Primitive Methodists' in 1812, he became a successful evangelist largely in the North of England, coming to Hull in January 1819. He made Hull his home, referring to it as his 'fruitful mother' and was still working there on his death in 1851. At that time an imposing chapel in his name was being erected in Jarratt Street which unfortunately passed out of Methodist use on Methodist union in 1932 and was demolished in 1965. However a new church was built in north Hull in 1956 {Trinity Methodist Church} which is still known as Clowes Memorial Church.

Caveat Visitor

Council has become increasingly aware of the potential for accidents during our visits programme, which allows members and friends access to chapels which not infrequently contain trip hazards from uneven floors and paving. It has therefore been decided to make it clear that those joining our visits are responsible for their own safety, although we will always in future offer advice as to the hazards present as well as noting the length of any walks involved.

Your Newsletter archive

Member Ted Royle of York (royle77@talktalk.net) writes to say that, in looking through his file of Chapels Society *Newsletters*, he found that he had mislaid no 53 (May 2013). He also has duplicate copies of nos 9, 35, 43, 50 and 61. He would be happy to let other members have his spare copies if they contact him – and even happier if he could find a spare copy of no 53.

The Hon Editor and the Membership Secretary do have some back numbers which they are just about to rationalise and they will be looking for copies of *Newsletter* 53 as well. Members also may not realise that all newsletters since issue 43 (January 2010) are posted in pdf form in the Newsletter archive on the website (www.chapelsociety.org.uk/publications/newsletter/newsletter-archive/) after two years have elapsed from their publication. We hope, at some point, to digitise earlier newsletters and add these to the archive.

BOOK REVIEWS

Victorian Staffordshire Pottery Religious Figures: Stories on the Mantlepiece by Stephen Duckworth. Woodbridge: ACC Art Books, 2017. 160 pages with 368 colour and 18 b&w illustrations, hardback. £30. ISBN 978-1-851498-71-0.



This book is a very well researched and produced book on a subject which has only had a passing comment in more general books on the subject of Staffordshire Pottery figures and ornaments. There have been several books in the past, of which the best known is perhaps *Victorian Staffordshire Figures 1835-1875* by A & N Harding,

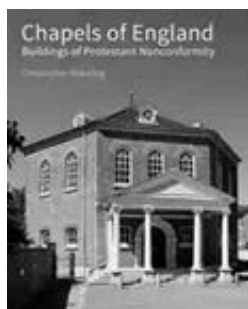
The outstanding value of this book is that it is focused on the pottery religious figures produced between 1837 and 1901. This Victorian era in Britain was a period of vivacious religious culture. The 1851 British Census of England and Wales recorded that on 30 March the population was 17.9 million. On Sunday 31 March around 10.9 million people attended Christian worship: 5.29 million people attended Church of England services and 4.53 million people were non-Anglican worshipping Christians. It is during this era that very large numbers of religious Staffordshire figures and ornaments were made and sold in shops, at travelling 'pot fairs' and from other outlets. The Staffordshire potters were not spearheading a Christian campaign they were responding to an entrepreneurial opportunity provided by the public's demand for religious figures and ornaments. However, the purchase a Staffordshire religious pottery figure or ornament was a natural and clear display of a strong commitment to the Christian gospel and church. The middle classes, artisan and working classes put the figures on their mantlepieces and walls as a statement of 'corporate identity' of faith and churchmanship.

The more secular atmosphere which has followed the wars of the 20th and 21st centuries has meant that this subject has been neglected. Stephen Duckworth has done the academic world, ceramic circles, and the enthusiastic collector of Staffordshire figures a great service in researching thoroughly the subject and getting the book published to a very high standard. The layout is clear with a logical progression throughout. The chapters have comprehensible sub-headings which open up unexpected but interesting subjects. An example is the chapter *Who Bought the figures?* The sub-headings give information about the production process, the cost of the figures, and the people who bought them. Included is a table of an average household accounts taken from printed manuals in 1828 and 1874. In the chapters on *Old and New Testament Figures* Stephen Duckworth not only illustrates the figures in colour but also affirms the image's authenticity and Biblical setting by using, as did the Victorian potters, the King James 1611 Authorised Version of the Bible. There are representative biblical citations. There

are several helpful pictures of engravings, paintings, stained glass windows and medals which identify un-named figures. The book has a very significant chapter on *Other Religious Figures* which includes historical Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Jewish individuals and subjects. The strong temperance movements of the age are represented by other images. In the *Portraits of Preachers* chapter there is a very good listing of portrait figures and busts, many of which are cross-referenced to PD Gordon Pugh's *Staffordshire Portrait Figures of the Victorian Era* (second revised edition, 1999). In this chapter there is a good representative section on John Wesley busts and figures. The concluding section of the book has a 62-page *Catalogue of the Figures* in full colour in which many churches and chapels in Staffordshire pottery are illustrated. There are two good appendices listing Pre-Victorian and Parian-ware religious subjects. The footnotes are excellent and the index is reliable. The book is well written and will interest both the general reader as well as enthusiasts of Staffordshire pottery.

Donald Ryan

Chapels of England: Buildings of Protestant Nonconformity by Christopher Wakeling. London: Historic England, 2017. 320 pages with 261 colour illustrations, hardback. £50. ISBN 978-1-848020-32-0.



There is no more welcome or fitting occasion to publish this exemplary book than during the 500th anniversary of the commencement of the Reformation. Historic England is to be congratulated upon this beautifully produced and illustrated volume in which many of the striking photographs are drawn from HE's own archives. Dr Wakeling's expert knowledge of the subject is displayed to excellent advantage as he describes the development of chapels in the context of the religious and political circumstances of the times.

He begins by emphasising that the religious spectrum in immediate post-Reformation Britain remained fairly wide. Early on specialised buildings emerged to house Dissenting congregations. The Baptists, Quakers and Presbyterians emerged as distinctive groupings. Preaching and congregational participation were the distinguishing features of worship. After 1672 when Dissenters could practice their beliefs more freely small places of worship appeared in rural areas that owed much to domestic building while architectural ambition evidenced itself more obviously in the towns. Inside these places of worship pulpits were the main feature, often erected high up against a wall. Galleries were introduced to bring congregations closer. More Nonconformist buildings arrived when the Act of Toleration of 1689 allowed freedom of worship to all except Unitarians and Roman Catholics, examples being The Old Meeting in Norwich with a

gallery of 1693. Dutch-influenced timber-framed chapels spread in East Anglia. Quakers invented their own plan forms incorporating screens and partitions. Despite the legal barriers Unitarians built glorious Georgian chapels in the early 1700s such as Mary Street Unitarian (originally Baptist) Church in Taunton with its Corinthian columns and chandeliers, dating from 1721.

Methodism emerged in the mid-18th century out of discontents with Anglicanism, accompanied by a widespread hunger for spiritual renewal. The New Room in Bristol of 1739 evidences this and Methodism grew by leaps and bounds as the century progressed. Congregational hymn-singing became nearly ubiquitous. Three-decker pulpits were features as were interiors crammed with galleries. The Presbyterians, Quakers, and Baptists, nourished by new religious enthusiasm, kept on building. The Octagon Chapel in Colegate, Norwich, of 1764-6, was first to adopt this novel layout but other innovative designs including curved walls were tried. The Evangelical Revival was the impetus behind the famous Countess of Huntingdon's Chapel in Bath of 1765 with its dais for the minister. After 1740 chapels were often laid out on their long axes, bearing witness to the influence of Palladianism.

By 1820 five new chapels opened on average every week. They were often the work of local contractors (frequently members of the congregation), carefully detailed and usually displaying vernacular mannerisms. Sunday schools arrived as a new building type.

In the 1830s qualified architects took on much of this work, designing chapels for a wide range of denominations, many of which required large organs to accompany the singing. These were often placed behind the central pulpit forming a dramatic backdrop to worship. Out went the amateur musicians – the butt of many jokes – and in came prominent, well-practised choirs.

Large classical chapels of imposing grandeur appeared such as the Calvinist Jireh Chapel in Lewes of 1805/26. Dignified porches and giant order columns might ornament these designs, all subtly differentiated from Anglican plans. Central blocks of bench-type pews were fashionable, as were curving galleries and wide-span roofs, impressive central pulpits and organs. In laying out their chapels Nonconformists remained adventurous, employing elongated hexagons and other distinctive plan forms. The newly available cast-iron columns were employed frequently to support many floors of keen worshippers and/or improve sightlines. Chapel building continued apace with smaller denominations forming and the Unitarians gaining freedom to worship openly in 1814. The fashionable Greek Revival style gained favour and, later on, lively Gothick buildings appeared and chapels in elaborated Gothic Revival or powerful Romanesque Revival styles. Even rural chapels might display rudimentary pointed arches. Towers and spires put in an appearance in towns.

After 1850 Nonconformists continued to devote substantial resources to chapel building, erecting more places of worship than Anglicans, often in

the new suburbs or poorer areas. As congregations grew chapels were often redeveloped on the same sites. Centralised denominational governance encouraged architects to specialise in working for one denomination only. Some buildings were ambitious and of the highest quality such as Lockwood and Mawson's United Reformed (formerly Congregational) Church at Saltaire, West Yorkshire of 1860 with its sumptuous interior and lavish decoration. Now in a World Heritage site it displays a confidence, worldliness and sophistication that had been rarely achieved before. Equally prominently the theatre-like Metropolitan Tabernacle in South London of 1861 attracted vast congregations with seating for an astounding 4600 worshippers drawn by the great Charles Haddon Spurgeon's preaching. Styles of these vast preaching boxes were often eclectic and exuded an aura of worldliness, even secularism, that distinguishes them markedly from Anglican and Catholic churches. Westminster Chapel of 1863-5 and the Congregational Chapel at Wellingborough of 1874-5, are further examples of this mode, both with striking interiors. Other outstanding examples are James Cubitt's Union Chapel of 1875-7 with its massive tower and extensive ancillary rooms and the later, mighty Methodist Central Hall, 1905-12, built close to Parliament Square. The Unitarians sought high aesthetic qualities in their churches such as John Gibson's unrivalled Todmorden Unitarian Church of 1865-9 and the glorious Ullet Road Unitarian Church, Sefton Park, Liverpool, by Thomas Worthington of 1896-9 – examples of art truly enhancing religion.

By the 1890s the architects of Nonconformity were producing outstanding buildings of international significance, often on difficult sites, during a heyday that continued until 1914. Their nomenclature changed to the Free Churches, their agendas became reformist, responding to national social and political issues. They continued to embrace structural innovations in their buildings, employing a wide repertoire of styles. The Arts and Crafts movement, with its emphasis on traditional crafts and hand-wrought construction, had a huge impact on Free Church building. Edgar Wood's Christian Science Church in Manchester of 1903-8 is an outstanding example of this approach, as is the White Church (now URC) at Fairhaven, Lytham St Annes of 1911-12 with its ravishing stained glass. Free Churches gained ground in the suburbs, in newly-founded garden cities and growing prosperous suburbs where denominational allegiances were weaker. Modern comforts in lighting, heating, comfortable seating and generous spaces for ancillary uses were employed in new building projects and proved attractive to worshippers.

After 1914 church- and chapel-going declined. There were fewer Sunday and weekday services. Closures and chapel sales accelerated. Nevertheless, diversity in stylistic experimentation can be detected, including examples of historical re-imaginings such as the Baptist Church in Cheam Road, Sutton, London, by Welsh, Cachemaille-Day and Lander of 1934 and the memorably stylish Art-Deco interior of the Unitarian Church of Divine Unity, Newcastle upon Tyne of

1939-40 by Cackett, Burns Dick and Mackellar. Continental Expressionism also played an influential role.

The wartime project, *Recording Britain*, incorporated some non-Anglican buildings such as Bethesda Methodist Chapel, Stoke-on-Trent, while specialist publications examined the history of the genre in a considered scholarly manner. This serious interest in documenting the history of Nonconformist building, set in its context, culminated in the late Christopher Stell's definitive volumes for the Royal Commission on *Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting Houses in England*, to which Dr Wakeling's book provides a superlative coda, carrying the story forward from its (mainly) mid-19th-century cut-off point.

After some revival in the 50s decline continued. Creating loose-fit spaces was one positive response so that a range of community-centred events might take place in a building, without regard to denominational adherences. New chapels and churches were, even in these straightened circumstances, often imaginative in design, sometimes taking their cue from Scandinavian and American exemplars. Since the 1960s church designs have often continued to be progressive, exploring new techniques in steel, glass and specialised roof construction. One example is Trinity Presbyterian (now URC) Church in Norwich, of 1954-6, by Bernard Feilden, which has an inventive roof structure. These churches are far from the 'fort-like citadels' that describes some of the large urban chapels of the previous century. Those of the 70s and beyond belong to the Modern school with distinctive external presences and often dramatic use of internal light sources, together with carefully chosen furnishings. The advent of newer denominations during the last century and foreign denominations arriving in the recent past have augmented a vibrant mix of religious expression.

Dr Wakeling approaches the complexities of his subject with a light, sure, almost self-effacing touch, clarifying the multifarious strands of denominational beliefs through the construction of their buildings. His grasp of a huge subject, covering many centuries, is deceptively understated, but his thorough researches are most carefully weighed and set out persuasively with conviction and clarity. Many of the chapels he discusses are astonishingly impressive but little known to the general public, or hidden by reason of their origins amid fear of persecution. All deserve greater recognition and familiarity as a result of this splendid publication.

One last observation – it is to be hoped that future publications on religious buildings as a whole will present a balanced picture of the building type in England rather than concentrating exclusively on one denomination without sufficient reference to and comparison with others.

Jenny Freeman