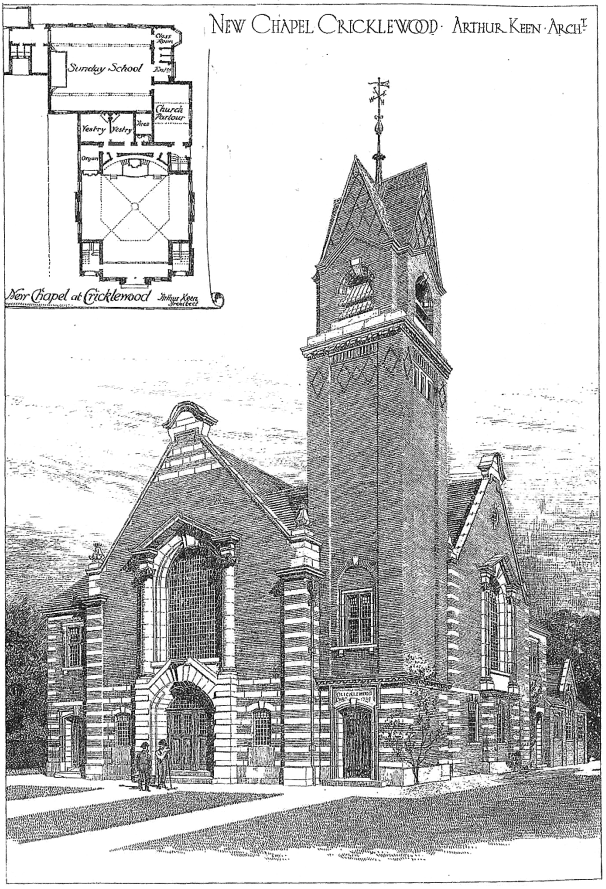
THE CHAPELS SOCIETY

Newsletter 68 May 2018



Engraving of Cricklewood Baptist Church as illustrated in the Building News *of October 23, 1908 (see article on page 3)*

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NOTICEBOARD

CHAPELS SOCIETY EVENTS

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

The Council is beginning to look forward to the Society's 30th anniversary which we will celebrate in 2019. There will be further reflections on that in the next issue. With this issue you will find the Annual Report for the last year and details of the AGM in July. This presents a number of opportunities for members to become more closely involved with the running of the Society. There are vacancies this year for election to the Council and we are again looking for nominations for the post of Visits Secretary. The task is not an onerous one and although we have survived for some years without such an officer, Council is becoming increasingly aware that our visits could be made better if someone were prepared to support our visit organisers more strongly. Please contact the Secretary if you feel you could become more involved.

ARTHUR KEEN IN CRICKLEWOOD: THE 'ARTS & CRAFTS' BAPTIST

AN ARTICLE BY ALEC HAMILTON

Anson Road Baptist Chapel, Cricklewood (photograph copyright the author).

Arthur Keen (1861-1938) – all but forgotten now – was a 'founding father' of the Arts & Crafts. Alongside W.R. Lethaby, E.S. Prior, Gerald Horsley, Ernest Newton and Mervyn Macartney he was a member of the St George's Art Society (SGAS), the young architects from Norman Shaw's office who met to discuss art and architecture in a sort of unbuttoned Junior Common Room, which, soon merging with another 'smoker' of aesthetically-minded young men, The Fifteen (which included John Dando Sedding and Walter Crane) and transmuted into the Art Workers Guild (AWG) in 1884. At the AWG architects mixed with painters, sculptors and engravers, and imbibed and embraced the politico-artistic ideas that came to be known as 'Arts & Crafts' after the name of its offshoot, the Arts & Crafts Exhibition Society (ACES), founded in 1888.

The SGAS first met on 5 May 1883. Keen was not at the first meeting, but was elected at the second, June 1883, along with Gerald Horsley. He – and this may be revealing – never joined the AWG. He was FRIBA in 1904; President of the Architectural Association 1910-11; Hon Secretary of the RIBA 1919-21, a member of the RIBA Council for 21 years, and Vice-President 1925-7. He was Hon Secretary of the Board of Architectural Education 1917-19. In the 1920s he became somewhat obsessed with re-organising traffic management on the bridges of London – he was Chairman of the Thames Bridges Conference from 1925.

Campsbourne: Hornsey: School Buildings by Arthur Keen

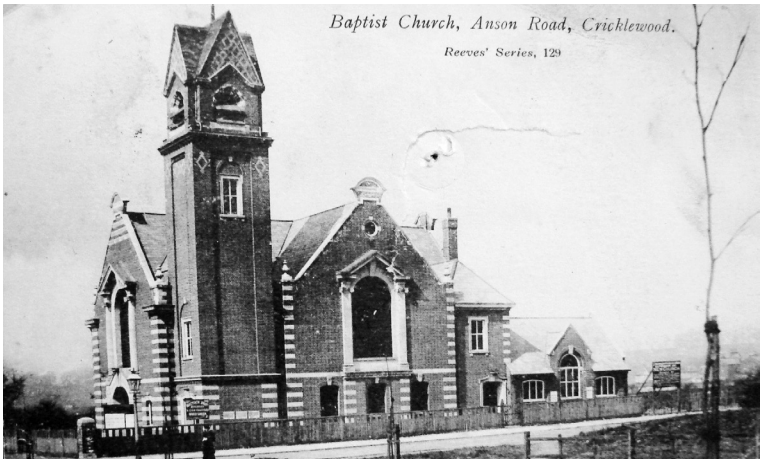
Despite all that, Keen has become – for reasons which are unclear – obscure, little remembered, and un-studied. One reason for this obscurity is that Keen did not build much – a bank, a number of suburban villas, especially in and around Limpsfield, a church school at Hornsey, a village hall, a mission hall, a hospital, a clinic and some offices.

Instead, he devoted his energies to the Baptist Church: from 1908 he was Architect to the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, whose Headquarters building, Baptist Church House (BCH) in Southampton Row he designed in 1901. It stands yet as his great memorial – currently in the spasmodic throes of being turned into a five-star hotel. Inside can still be discerned the work of Keen's friend, and leading member of the AWG, the plasterwork artist, Laurence Turner (1864-1957).

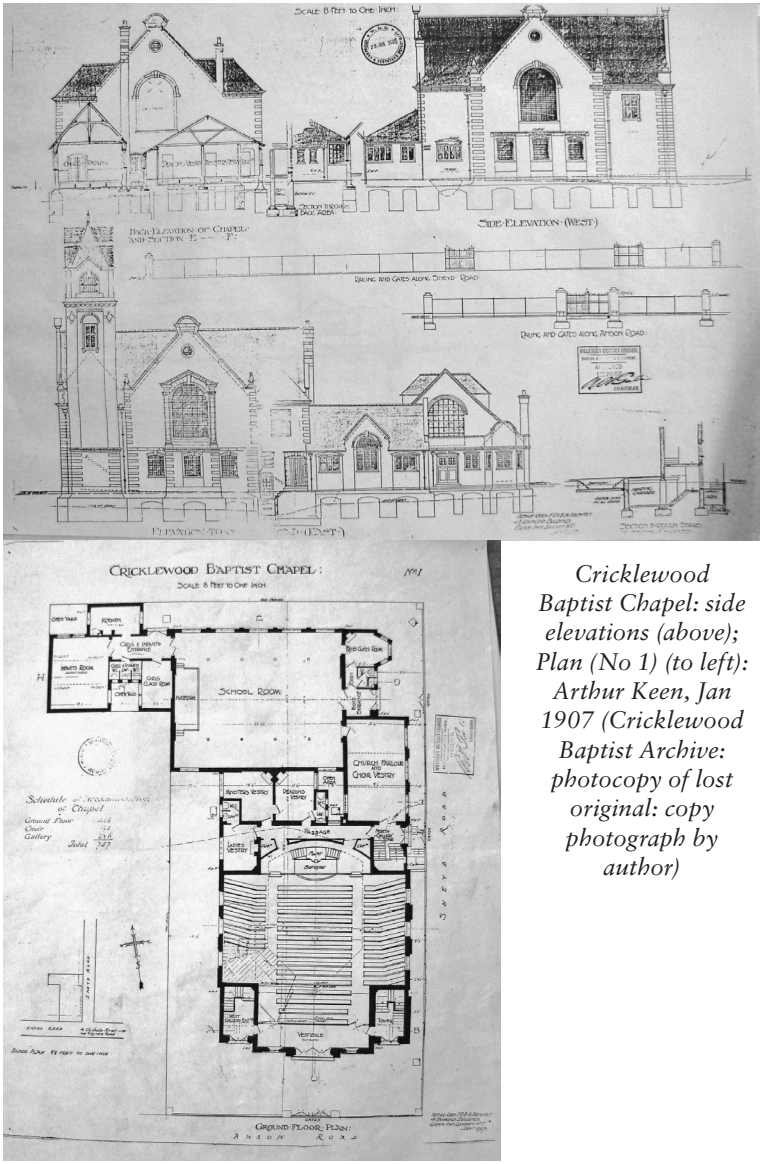
As to churches, Keen built only one – in Cricklewood.

Baptist buildings in the 1880s tended to be modest in scale and uncontroversially Gothic in design, with conservative interiors. In the 1890s, Baptist architecture became somewhat more extravert – Baptists were perhaps vying for customers and status? Two aesthetic strands dominate around 1900: cheerful and celebratory, often in seaside towns; proudly municipal in towns where Baptists had civic significance.

George Baines (1852-1934) specialised in designing for the Baptists (though he worked for other Nonconformist denominations too). His son, Reginald Palmer Baines, became his partner in 1901. Their drawings dominate the architectural section of the *Baptist Handbook* from 1897. Their work has the vigour of a Pearly King – more Music Hall than church in some cases – and the Baineses tended to repeat themselves.



Cricklewood Baptist Church: postcard postmarked 2 August 1910 (Cricklewood Baptist Church archive: copy photograph by author)



Cricklewood Baptist Chapel: side elevations (above); Plan (No 1) (to left): Arthur Keen, Jan 1907 (Cricklewood Baptist Archive: photocopy of lost original: copy photograph by author)

In this context, Keen's Baptist Church in Cricklewood strikes a stately, almost regal note. The influence on Keen of Shaw is not hard to see – not so much Shaw's Anglican churches, perhaps, as his substantial, stately town houses (There is a collection of 23 letters from Shaw to Keen (1878-96) at the RIBA Library). And Keen shared with Shaw, and even more so with his co-SGAS

founder Gerald Horsley, a taste for Queen Anne – just this side of parody. The influence of Ernest Newton seems to have been almost as potent: Keen was in Newton's office as assistant from 1881. In 1908 they were sharing offices. Both were at Shaw's funeral in 1913, along with their fellow SGAS founders. Keen was on the General Committee to fund and erect a memorial to Norman Shaw.

The strongest visual parallel for Cricklewood, however, is with a public *secular* building type: the Carnegie Libraries that began to appear in England from 1893. Was Cricklewood Baptist Chapel to be read, then, as a demonstration of liberal enlightenment? Not really to be seen as a church at all?

As well as a space for liturgy, there was a parlour, Sunday School, class rooms and vestries: it was to be a social centre. From the street it had something of the assertive solidity of a bank (see overleaf). Take away its tower, and it would pass for a modest borough's town hall. But money seems not to have been a problem, and so the tower was built. The chapel thus combines a landmark spiritual beacon with the lively worldly confidence of a place of business.

'Responsibility for building the church was in the hands of the London Baptist Association, who formed a building committee, chose an architect, and accepted a tender for the erection of the building.' It is likely the political and financial influence of a powerful and wealthy Baptist figure, William Rickett from nearby Hampstead, was critical in the LBA's choice of the exalted Keen to build Cricklewood chapel.

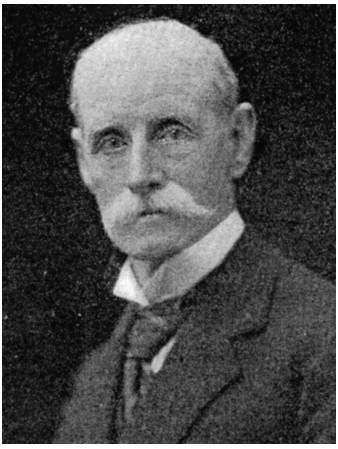
We know very little about the brief the Baptists gave their architect or the process of this building: what we have is the chance and happy survival of some material at the church itself, even though the worship space was sold in 1990 for

Cricklewood Baptist Church: the first service (?) 1908
(Cricklewood Baptist Church archives: copy photograph by author)

flats. The congregation now meets in what were the Sunday School rooms, and in one of the old vestries some drawings, photographs, cuttings, booklets and a few record books survive, from which we can piece together something of the story. Cricklewood Baptists built their first church (a 'tin tabernacle') in 1885. It was sold to the Congregationalists a few years later. In 1906 William Richard Rickett gave £2000 towards building a new chapel. Rickett was a rich and active Baptist, a Deacon at the rather smart Heath Street Baptist Chapel, Hampstead (1861). He was a Trustee of the Baptist Building Fund from 1890. 'His chief love was the [Baptist] Missionary Society of which he was Treasurer for 17 years [from 1893].' He was also Chairman of its Centenary Committee. He donated an enormous £6000 to the BMS 'thanksgiving fund' in 1893.

The land for the new chapel was acquired (for £870) by the London Baptist Property Board Ltd from All Souls College, Oxford. The foundation stone was laid on 28 September 1907; the first service held in the Church Hall (the space marked 'Church Parlour' on Keen's plan) on 8 January 1908; the completed building opened on 7 April; the first service on 12 April; the church 'founded' on 10 September 1908. Early numbers were modest: 51 were present at the first service; the first membership was just 20. Numbers grew: by 1925 there were 93 members, a Young Peoples' Bible Class, Girls' Brigade, Boy Scouts and Women's Own group: 'The Life Boys and the Girls' Life Brigade were to follow.' By 1918 there was also a Young Abstainers' Union. It was respectable, lively, thriving, prestigious even: there are top hats amongst the bowlers.

But Keen was never seen as a celebrity or an architectural lion. He was simply the best man for the job. If he was asked to design other churches – and we don't know – he must have declined. This fits with his rather attractive personality.



Arthur Keen (1861-1938) (JRIBA, 9 January 1939, RIBA Collections)

His obituaries present Keen as a quiet, self-effacing, meticulous man: 'his character was marked by profound sincerity, unaffected modesty and a quality of earnestness which distinguished everything he undertook.' His 'virtues were virtues of character that had little or nothing spectacular about them… patient, earnest… courteous.' He was a sympathetic mentor to younger men: Banister Fletcher wrote, 'I took to Keen immediately… I learnt a great deal from him, for he was always ready to help the younger assistants and pupils.'

One of his articled pupils recalled: 'One always felt in the office that you were doing something worthwhile… [he looked] upon my drawing board with the dear words, "the drawing must be *Crisp*".' His own drawing

style was a 'precise, delicate and yet forceful style of draftsmanship… a bit "old-fashioned" perhaps, but charmingly so.' '[H]e embodied everything connected with detail, tidiness, law and order.'

He had the same fastidious instincts as Philip Webb, the hero of many an Arts & Crafts architect, and F.C. Eden – men who did not hesitate to turn down work they did not want to do: Keen 'often refused work because he felt that his clients' instructions must require him to produce something which he regarded as unworthy or in bad taste.' And he had an acute aesthetic sense: 'a hatred of anything ugly'.

In one respect at least he was more in the tradition of Street than Shaw: 'he was never willing to delegate important work to subordinates, but practiced his belief that the true architect must settle the design personally and must supervise the work in all its details.'

He gave little of himself away. He was not a prolific author, although a frequent contributor to *The Times*: in 1921 he published an article considering the developments in craftsmanship from the 'crude and awkward productions of the Elizabethan and Jacobean times' to 'the sweetness and refinement of the Queen Anne and Georgian buildings that give to the old suburbs of London… and our cathedral cities their peculiar charm and interest.' Keen was an enthusiast for the Classical – an advocate for Wren at a time when pulling down city churches was Church of England policy. He was no fan of the Gothic Revival: 'One knows all about the "restorations" of the Gothic Revival, but architects have realized, as everyone else has realized, what has been lost, and they are quite alive to the value of what remains.' Keen saw in Wren something that chimes with Arts & Crafts ideals, as Mackmurdo and the Century Guild had before them, even though Keen did not follow quite the same line himself: 'None can study Wren's work… without feeling the plasterer must have been given a very free hand, and … was fully worthy of the reliance that was placed in him.'

As to Keen's religion, we can assume, I think, he was a Baptist, but not how committed or constant: we know nothing of his attendance, for example. But he had fellow-feeling for Anglican social work: 'St Mary-at-Hill – a church that is doing most valuable work for the Billingsgate Market people.' For his own part, it may be significant that he left just one modest charitable bequest in his will: £50 to the Architects' Benevolent Society.

And it is perhaps touchingly suggestive that, when the Surrey Archaeological Society made their Annual Excursion on 18 July 1935, to Oxted and Limpsfield (where Keen had retired), it was 'conducted by Mr. Arthur Keen, FRIBA, who spoke on the examples of domestic architecture visited, and Mr. Philip M. Johnston, FSA, FRIBA, addressed the members on the Churches.'

Johnston was a well-established church restoring architect, who had also built Anglican churches. Keen may have discreetly and diffidently felt, as a Baptist, he was a bit out of his depth. If only he had taken them to Cricklewood.

I am grateful to Chas Bayfield, Church Secretary of Sneyd Road Baptist Church, who has not only preserved the records that survive there, but has taken a keen interest in the history of the church; to Emily Burgoyne, Librarian at Regents Park College Library, Oxford; and to Dr Liz Walder. For Cricklewood Baptist Church I have used Cricklewood Baptist Church 70th Anniversary booklet*; L. Malpas,* Cricklewood Baptist Church: a concise history *(single A4 sheet, n.d. but after 1960), and 'W T', 'The Story of the beginning' in the church's* Jubilee Services leaflet*, 13-17 September, 1958 as well as the drawings and photographs shown. For William Richard Rickett, largely see S.J. Price,* Popular History of the Baptist Building Fund *(Kingsgate Press, 1927). Keen's obituaries are found in* The Builder*, 23 December 1938, p 1201: in the* Journal of the RIBA*, 9 January 1939, p 255-56 (by G.A. Fortescue: Same text appears in* The Builder *13 January 1939); and in* Journal of the RIBA*, 20 March 1939, p 523 (by Banister Fletcher).*

THE CATHOLIC APOSTOLIC CHURCH, WOLVERHAMPTON, STAFFORDSHIRE.

AN ARTICLE BY EDWARD PETERS

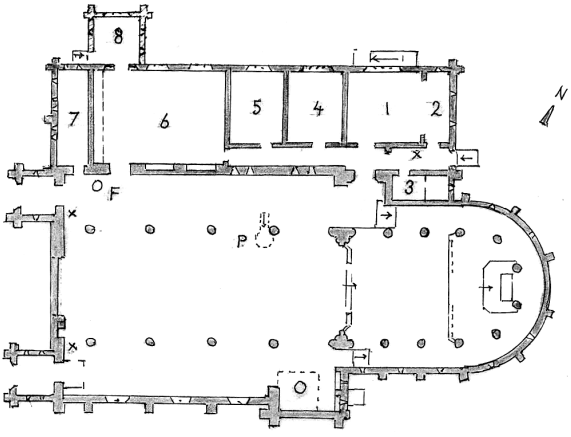
The Catholic Apostolic church in Wolverhampton in Staffordshire was built in 1892-3 in Bath Road, adjoining one of the approaches to West Park. It replaced an earlier one built for that body elsewhere in the town. The Catholic Apostolic Church had been formed in 1832; in spite of its part Presbyterian roots it had a very elaborate ritual, with vestments and incense. It was ruled by twelve Apostles, with priests, elders, deacons and other church officers below them. The priest in charge of a church was called its Angel. However, lack of provision for replacing the Apostles meant that no more priests could be ordained once the last Apostle had died in 1901. Only one church is still functioning in this country. The building in Wolverhampton still belongs to the Catholic Apostolic Church but has been used by various other denominations since its own services ceased over 80 years ago. Fortunately, the fabric has been but little altered in that time, and although the fittings in the church have largely disappeared, it is possible to describe the original arrangement and the use of the ancillary rooms using some early photographs, and newspaper reports of the laying of the foundation stone and of the opening of the church.

The Catholic Apostolic Church appeared in Wolverhampton by mid-1835, and had prospered sufficiently to be able to build a church in 1845. This was in Snow Hill, in the south of the town, and was designed by the minister, the Revd G. Freer. It was described in 1851 as being of stone, with a plain exterior but finely decorated inside. It had a western tower. By 1884 it was described in a local directory as weatherworn. Later the cost of necessary repairs and the need for a larger building led to the decision to build a new church on a larger site. This had been obtained by 1890, when it seems that a competition was held to design the new building: the designs were submitted using pseudonyms. One revised drawing

The church from the east
(photograph copyright the author)

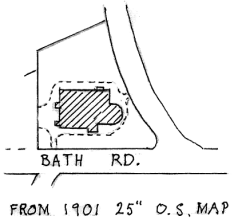
and report survive, but not that built. From this it seems that the site was later enlarged by adding the adjoining building plot to the north. The successful architect was H.W. Rising of the City of London, with a much more compact plan than the drawing surviving. The builder, Lovatt, was local.

The church was built parallel to Bath Road, so fitting the site, but in consequence was aligned rather north of east. The foundation stone was laid on August 2nd, 1892 by the priest in charge, the Revd A. Inglis, assisted by two elders and seven deacons; the ritual was said to have been complicated. Services in the church began in early November, 1893; consecration of the building, however, was postponed pending completion of some minor building work, and settling some other matters of detail. This did not complicate services taking place as the altar and its fittings were reused from the previous church, where they had been consecrated when installed. A baptistery and morning chapel formed part of the



F FONT
P PULPIT
O ORGAN
X HOLY WATER STOUP

1 MINISTER'S VESTRY
2 SACRISTY
3 PRIVATE LAVATORY
4 SUB-MINISTERS' VESTRY
5 DEACONS' VESTRY
6 MEETING ROOM
7 LADIES' ROOM
8 Early 20th Century ADDITION



Plan of the church

design, but were omitted from the building contract, presumably on grounds of finance. From later, large-scale maps the previous church was fairly quickly demolished and the site redeveloped.

When Catholic Apostolic services ceased in the church is not clear. The last local directory that the writer has seen listing a minister was 1921; those for 1924 and 1932 note the building but not a minister. By 1936 it was listed as a Welsh Calvinistic church. It was later used by a Ukrainian church, still there in 1974, to be followed by a Pentecostal church, before the present occupants, Rhema Faith Church. In the process, as noted above, the fittings have largely disappeared, except for the font and the altar. The interior has been reoriented to face west, and a large platform recently installed at the west end between the two entrances.

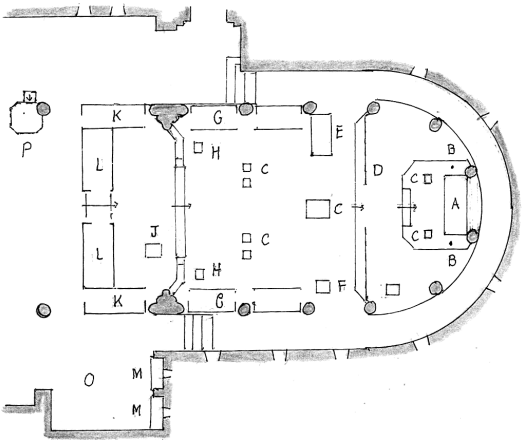
The church consists of an aisled nave with a clerestory, and a chancel with an apsidal end and narrow ambulatory; on the south is a small transept. The arch between the chancel and nave extends through the roof and supports a spirelet. At the west end are two porches for the congregation, the southern one, nearer the road, being a little more ornate. A third entry, at the east end, was for the private use of the officiating ministers, deacons and members of the choir. This is in an attached range along the north side of the church containing the vestries. The whole is of well-laid red brick with white Hollington stone dressings. There are substantial buttresses on all sides save the north, which is plainer. The windows in the church are all lancets, of Early English pattern.

Internally, the church is of Bath stone throughout, with circular columns to the arcades and simple mouldings to the arches, all in the early English style. The chancel is slightly emphasized by narrower arches and rather more ornate

Interior of the church (photograph copyright the author)

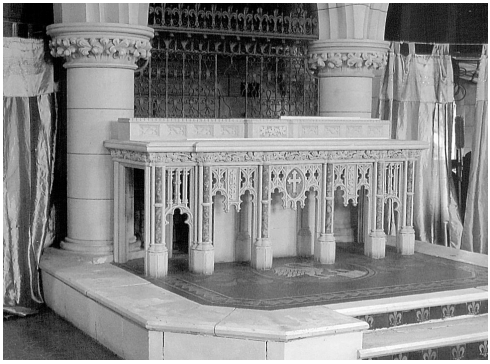
carving to the capitals. Above the columns are narrow colonettes, rising from corbels to support the roof trusses. The roof is boarded, the boards above the rafters in the nave. The early photographs show no painted decoration, only plain stonework. The chancel arch has but little projection each side, so just marking the division between the nave and chancel. The nave floor is reported to have been wood block, with encaustic tiles in the chancel. Heating was by pipes laid under the floor, with the boiler house under the vestry range. Lighting was originally by pendant gas fittings in the nave, gas brackets in the chancel.

Turning to the original arrangements, the porches have decorative wrought-iron gates in the outer arches; a timber draught lobby was added at some stage inside the south entrance, presumably as it was the most used, being the nearer to the road. A holy-water stoup was set in the wall by both doorways. Between the entries is a wide arch, built up on the outside, which would have formed the opening to the intended baptistery. The carved stone font meanwhile stood (and still stands) at the west end of the north aisle. Seating was provided for 300, pews with carved ends in the nave, chairs in the aisles. The pulpit was of carved wood, on the north side, one bay east of the chancel arch. In the eastern bay of the nave were eight stalls, facing east, for the deacons, four each side of the central walkway (there were actually seven deacons, but the plan required an even number of stalls). The floor rose two steps at this point. At the ends of the stalls, below the arches, were return stalls for the lower choir. On the south side was an eagle lectern, facing across the church. At the chancel arch itself there is a low wall each side, with two steps up between. The low transept on the south contained the organ, reused from the previous church, but enlarged with extra stops. There were also two arched recesses in the east wall, the use of which is not clear. The proximity of the organ would have prevented them being used for side altars for weekday services.



CHANCEL

A ALTAR
B CANDLESTOCKS
C PRAYER DESKS
D COMMUNION RAILS
E ANGEL'S THRONE
F CREDENCE TABLE
G CHOIR STALLS
H LECTURN
J EAGLE LECTURN
K LOWER CHOIR STALLS
L DEACONS' STALLS
M FOR SIDE ALTARS
O ORGAN
P PULPIT



The altar (photograph copyright the author)

Just beyond the chancel arch were two lecterns, one each side. Given these, the need for the eagle lectern is not clear, but it may have been a design requirement, as the three lecterns appear on the surviving plan noted above. Was the eagle reused from the earlier church? Either side, set back in the first two bays of the chancel, were the upper choir stalls, where the elders would also have sat. Between were four simple prayer desks, for ministers offering supplications for each character of ministry (elder, prophet, evangelist, pastor). On the north, just to the east of the choir stalls, was the Angel's throne, a large seat and prayer desk for the presiding minister. Opposite, on the south, was the prosthesis or credence table, for the communion elements, with between a more elaborate prayer desk or faldstool, for the minister to make intercessions. The communion rails, with a further step up, were beyond, on the diameter of the apse. Finally, on a platform approached by a further two steps, was the ornate altar, with a carved, low ledge at the back. This supported, in the centre, a tall tabernacle for the reserved sacrament and consecrated oils, with what appear, from the photographs, to have been two vases with flowers each side. Behind was originally a solid wooden screen with a carved top, replaced at some stage by a decorative wrought-iron screen. As noted above, the altar had been brought from the earlier church. Either side, on the platform, was a tall candlestick, but with an oil lamp, not candle: candles were not approved, oil lamps being considered more scriptural. In front were two further prayer desks. Above were seven pendant oil lamps, hanging from a decorative iron frame suspended from the chancel roof. This frame is still there. The only stained glass in the church is in the three clerestory windows above the altar.

The narrow ambulatory was provided so that officers of the church could pass from one side of the church to the other without crossing in front of the altar. At each column there is an arch over the ambulatory like a flying buttress. A morning chapel was intended to have been built on the south side of the chancel; unlike the baptistery no evidence was found of any provision for future access to it.

The division into nave, chancel and sanctuary, with the lower choir in the structural nave, followed the requirements of the 'Book of Regulations', published in 1878.

On the north is a parallel range, nearly as long as the church, containing the vestries. External access is by a door at the east end; there is a holy-water stoup

The church from the west
(photograph copyright the author)

just inside. The first main room was the large vestry for the superintending minister, with the sacristy to its east; the two were separated by a wide arch which has since been built up. A piscina and small wall safe survive in the sacristy. On the other side of the entrance was a private lavatory. Opposite this vestry door was a double door to the church. Beyond is a passage, lit by two roof lights, with two pairs of windows to the north aisle as borrowed lights. Off this were two further vestries, the first for sub-ministers, the second, now a kitchen, for deacons. Beyond is a large room for church meetings and choir members: a row of cupboards formerly along the west wall will have been for their robes. There are still two shelved recesses, one, with glass doors, labelled 'Library'. A door at the west end provided access for members of the congregation, and allowed the choir to process in from the west end. A small extension on the north, added in the early 20th century, provided a fourth entrance, and additional W.C. accommodation. At the west end, and accessible only from the north aisle, was a small room, neatly fitted up for lady members, from the surviving, unused design, this may have been for the deaconesses.

The relative importance of the rooms in the north range was indicated externally. The east wall of the sacristy had a strip of blind arcading. On the north the ministers' vestries had each a four-light window, the deacons' vestry only a three-light one. The three windows in the meeting room were also of three lights, but shorter than those to the vestries.

The site had access on two adjoining sides from public roads, and some unused space to the north. An early photograph shows the Bath Road side, with decorative iron railings which have since been replaced. The low plinth survives. The gates shown do not seem quite to fit aesthetically, however, being rather heavy wooden ones with wooden posts. The north end of the site was developed in the early 20th century with a pair of semi-detached houses.

The writer is indebted to Mr. P. Knight for access to the church, to the staff of Wolverhampton City Archives for access to the early photographs and newspaper articles, and to Lambeth Palace Library for copies of the 1890 plan and report. He is particularly indebted to Dr. T. Grass for guidance on various points of interpretation,

and for his encouragement. Books consulted were The Lord's Work *by T. Grass (a history of the Catholic Apostolic Church), and* Fashions in Church Furnishings *by P.F. Anson. Any errors remain the writer's responsibility.*

'GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS'

Moorea is all you could wish for in a Pacific island. This speck in the ocean can provide a luxury holiday experience with all mod cons in a fake Polynesian hut. But should you find yourself there, turn off the perimeter road at Papetoai and walk down to the beach. Alongside you will see a lovingly tended and beautiful octagonal chapel with exceptional acoustics. You will also be contemplating a turning point in world history.

The London Missionary Society was formed to be an ecumenical sponsor of missionary activity. Its first overseas project resulted in thirty missionaries landing in Tahiti in 1797. There was no evangelistic response whatever and local politics resulted in them all being expelled. Most despaired and left but a handful believed God had plans and moved no further than to the adjacent island of Moorea. There they created a base at Papetoai. Still there was no response to the Gospel.

After twenty long years, the tide turned, they rejoiced in the first Polynesian baptism and in 1822 were able to form the first Christian church. In 1827 it erected its distinctive chapel on the site of a former native temple. Work was able to resume on Tahiti and from there the evangelisation of the Pacific Ocean islands was led through the remaining decades of the nineteenth century. While the focus may have moved elsewhere, the Papetoai chapel stands quietly amongst the coconut palms as the oldest Christian church in the Pacific.

In 1842 the French took political control of what is now French Polynesia and the LMS handed over the Church leadership to the French Protestant Mission. They refurbished the church in the 1880s but always acknowledged the crucial contribution of the LMS pioneers and erected a memorial to them in the church. Some of their graves are outside, alongside the ocean that was their highway. In 2016 the Maohi Protestant Church in French Polynesia came home to its historical roots by joining the Council for World Mission, the equal partnership of Churches that succeeded the imperial model of the LMS.

All this may be 10,000 miles away but Chapels Society members who think of John Williams as a missionary martyr rather than a guitarist will have spotted the link. For decades, almost every British Congregational chapel had its

Missionary Sunday when the octagonal LMS hut collecting boxes were opened. Sunday School scholars collected ship halfpennies to fund the work of the John Williams missionary ships around the islands of the Pacific. Vivid stories of dedicated service were told and in the chapel at Papetoai they spring into life.

And is our organist striking up:

In Christ there is no East or West,
In Him no South or North,
But one great fellowship of love
Throughout the whole wide earth.

John Ellis

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

New Membership Secretary

I have now taken over as Membership Secretary from Paul Gardner. Please send all applications for membership and notifications of change of details to me by e-mail to sjleadley@hotmail.co.uk or by post to: Stuart Leadley. 52 Southwood Avenue, Cottingham, East Yorkshire, HU16 5AD.

Please note that I work full time and therefore it may not be possible for me to respond to any correspondence immediately.

Data Protection

Council is preparing an Information Governance Policy and Data Procedure document for presentation to the Annual General Meeting this year. The purpose of this document is to ensure that data regarding the members of The Chapels Society is handled in accordance with the law and best practice, and to define the duties and responsibilities of those officers of the Society who process members' data.

Publications for Sale

I have copies of a selection of back issues of the Society's *Newsletter* available if any members would like them. The earliest is number 49 (January 2012) and the latest number 63 (September 2016). These are free if collected in person (perhaps at the AGM), but if you would like them posting then postage and packing costs will have to be paid. Please contact me using the details above for details of issues available.

I also have one copy of each of *The Chapels Society Miscellany 1* and Clyde Binfield's *The Contexting of a Chapel Architect* available for sale at £10 each including UK mainland postage and packing. Please contact me using the details above if you are interested.

Stuart Leadley

NEWS AND NOTES

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.

ADHSCL AGM and Lecture
The AGM and annual lecture will be held this year on Thursday October 11th at Dr. Williams's Library at 2.00pm. The AGM will be followed by a lecture from Dr. Geordan Hammond, Senior Lecturer in Church History and Wesley Studies at the Nazarene Theological College and Director of the Manchester Wesley Research Centre.

Wesley Historical Society Triennial Conference
This is to take place at Wesley House and Wesley Church, Cambridge, on 22-23 June. The theme for the event is 'Methodism and Politics'. For further details contact the Conference Secretary, Dr. Clive Norris, 18 Parkfields, London SW15 6NH, or email whsconference2018@gmail.com.

Changes at Historic Chapels Trust
Our sister charity, the Historic Chapels Trust, has announced the results of its Strategic Review. From 1 April the administration of the Trust has moved from St George's German Lutheran Church and will be provided on a contract basis by the Churches Conservation Trust, supported by funds from Historic England. This is for an initial period of one year during which the CCT will be drawing up 'Way Forward' reports for each of the HCT properties. The Society, as with many other supporters of HCT, is keeping a watching brief.

Historic England names Top 10 Faith & Belief places
As part of its campaign *A History of England in 100 Places,* Historic England announced on 1 April the ten places nominated by the public and chosen by the Dean of St Pauls to represent the 'Faith and Belief' strand. The only Nonconformist place of worship chosen was Farfield Friends Meeting House, near Addingham in Wharfedale. Ironically this was the first place owned by the Historic Chapels Trust when it started. Farfield is a simple single-room meeting house in the vernacular of the late seventeenth century which retains some of its original fittings. For the Dean of St Pauls it 'represents the rootedness of Christian non-conformity in the English landscape and symbolises its influence on so much social and economic progress in the 18th and 19th centuries'.

Plans to preserve Tolpuddle Old Chapel

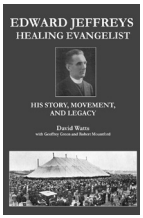
Tolpuddle is famous for its Martyrs, a group of farm workers in west Dorset who in 1834 had formed a trade union. Although unions were lawful, six of its leaders were arrested and sentenced to seven years' transportation to Australia for taking an oath of secrecy. All but one of the Martyrs were members of the Methodist chapel; some even worked on its construction. Their 1818 building was replaced by a new chapel across the road in the 1860s. The Tolpuddle Old Chapel Trust bought the derelict property in 2015, and are fundraising for its renovation as 'a quiet place in the heart of the village' – a community space that will also tell the story of the Martyrs and their Methodism.

Cirplanology revival

The Society of Cirplanologists, established in 1955, has recently been relaunched with a new team of officers, at least two of whom are members of the Society. From its inception, the Society's purpose has been to 'bring together for study, research and fellowship those people interested in any aspect of circuit plans, especially those plans printed before 1970, and to encourage the deposit of such plans in the nearest Record Office or Archives Centre'. For further information contact Nicholas Page, the treasurer, at strayorganist@gmail.com.

BOOK REVIEW

Edward Jeffreys – Healing Evangelist. His Story, Movement and Legacy. By David Watts with Geoffrey Green and Robert Mountford. Stourbridge: Transform Publications, 2017. 156 pages with 46 black and white illustrations, paperback. £8 plus £1.80 each p&p from www.edwardjeffreysrevival.com



The Chapels Society is concerned with preserving and celebrating buildings, not just for their architecture, but also as repositories of religious and social history. Yet protestant Nonconformists have been committed to the view that a church is the congregation, not a building. I recall sitting next to my Grandad at the closure service of Rodney Street, Christian Meeting House (Churches of Christ), Wigan and the preacher reassuring us that the chapel was just 'a tent'. This book is the story of a man and a movement that quite literally raised some very big tents – one accommodating 5,000 in 1934 Liverpool – for a decade, between 1928 and 1938, but never settled into a stable sect or denomination, leaving only scattered local fragments. For all that, Edward Jeffreys' *Bethel Evangelistic Society* (the name should be in the book title) is important for three reasons that I'll explore below: the global significance of Pentecostalism and associated strands of evangelical faith; the 1930s timing of this movement; and its focus on working class communities in the 'distressed areas'.

Edward Jeffries, initially brought up a Welsh Congregationalist, belonged to a

remarkable family of evangelists. His father, Stephen, a former Welsh coal miner, and uncles George and William, were key figures in the Pentecostal movement that created Elim and the Assemblies of God. Chapters 1 and 2 trace a convergence of influences, from both the 1904 Welsh Revival and the dramatic new faith originating in 1906 at Azusa Street, Los Angeles. As mainstream English and Welsh Nonconformity was adopting a more liberal and thoughtful approach to the Bible and a 'Social Gospel'; Pentecostalism re-invented popular, other-worldly New Testament Christianity, with predictions of the second coming, dramatic public 'crusades', the spirit speaking in tongues, healing and large-scale conversion, plus mass outdoor adult baptisms. Chapter 3 sees Edward found his own Bethel movement that centres on faith healing and conversion, eventually side-lining glossolalia and thus moving away from mainstream Pentecostalism. Chapters 4 to 9, follow the revival campaigns, year by year, through Bristol, Birmingham and the Black Country, the Potteries, industrial Lancashire, Liverpool and North Wales. While other Nonconformists were sympathising with the poorest working classes, often from some social and geographical distance, Bethel was immersing itself in their lives, hopes and tragedies.

Yet the movement collapsed even more quickly in 1938, with Edward leaving to become a conventional Anglican priest in the post-war period. The reasons seem to have been organizational ineptitude or disinterest – the Bible College established in 1931 only lasted a year – Edwards' own autocratic, charismatic style of leadership and a theological rift with Pentecostalism. We know revivals are ephemeral, even though they leave a residue. Chapters 10 to 14 explore the sudden decline, Bethel's doctrine, organization and healing ministry and the pastors who supported Edward. Chapters 15 to 18 consider legacy and aftermath. 'Of the 80 assemblies formed, 23 closed whilst 29 became part of the Assemblies of God, 18 Independent or FIEC [Fellowship of Evangelical Free Churches], 7 Elim, 2 Baptist and 1 Apostolic. Effectively, 57 congregations…' Estimated attendance peaked at 15,000 with some congregations as large as 1,000. Many continue to this day, some still carrying the Bethel name. And the revivals sent ripples through other Christians and churches. There are four invaluable Appendices, which collate Bethel choruses, examples of healing testimony from the Black Country campaign, pastors' origins and ministries, and the history and destinations of local assemblies.

In this country, Pentecostalism has long been regarded as a backstreet religion of little consequence or a recent import by West Indian black churches. For too long, it's flown under the radar for British social and religious historians. You wouldn't believe that this is the fastest growing world faith, by conversion, now reaching all parts of the earth from Brazil to China. Bethel was working class based and midland/northern provincial, with a low sectarian profile – 'just Christians' – and conservative values, which doesn't make for popularity with academic historians. Bob Dylan instructs on the album, *Slow Train Coming*:

'You've either got faith or unbelief. There ain't no middle ground.' At personal level, many of us like that agnostic middle ground. But for the sociology of mass, popular faith, Bob has a point. Even Marxist historians, like Eric Hobsbawm, recognised the importance of evangelical religion for the Victorian British working classes. They have been much more reluctant to admit that faith into the twentieth century. Here, the photos alone, of huge religious gatherings (10,000 in Birmingham), scotch any notion that 'the working class had no religion' or any crude version of secularisation theory that leaves faith in the Victorian era. The public theatre of massive rallies, conversions and healing shows the continuing popular resonance of Christianity well into the middle of the century. It supports Callum Brown's argument in *The Death of Christian Britain* (2001) that serious secularisation awaited the 1960s.

This is a most valuable study of early-twentieth-century Pentecostalist and evangelical religion on the move. David Watts has written a committed history for believers. He takes Bethel's 'thousands' of conversions and healings at face value; something a sceptical reader like myself can't do. Yet for historians of twentieth-century working-class Protestantism, this is an important book and a remarkable source, precisely because it's a labour of love and contains so much rich, factual raw material about this neglected movement. At times, I wanted to ask other questions, such as: what relationship, if any, did Bethel members in these labour movement heartlands have to trade unions, the co-operative movement and the Labour Party? Did they produce activists, committee members and councillors, as did other 'fundamentalist' groups, like the Churches of Christ in similar areas, during an earlier period? But this study opens the door to such further inquiry.

Finally, there is a very interesting Chapels Society theme, buried in the text, about successive occupations of buildings. Bethel wasn't interested in architecture. They began with big tent revivals but then needed homes for new 'assemblies'. Like the earlier Salvation Army, they often moved into ice rinks or cinemas. But as local numbers shrank and settled, they turned to 'God boxes', like the early Primitive Methodists. Some they built themselves, in the crudest way from prefabricated tin or concrete; but most they acquired from declining mainstream Nonconformity. During the core campaign chapters, I totted up eight Methodist (including Calvinist, Independent and Primitive), three Congregationalist, and one each of Quaker, Strict Baptist, Salvation Army and Roman Catholic buildings. The mainstream denominational Nonconformists were declining but also moving out of the inner city. This was another changing of the guard for popular Protestantism. A generation after the late Victorian 'new primitivism' of the Salvation Army and the Churches of Christ, ordinary people were drawn once more to fundamentalist and evangelical religion, much to the consternation of the liberal middle classes. We know this from the USA, but in the 1930s Britain wasn't so different. *Peter Ackers*

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