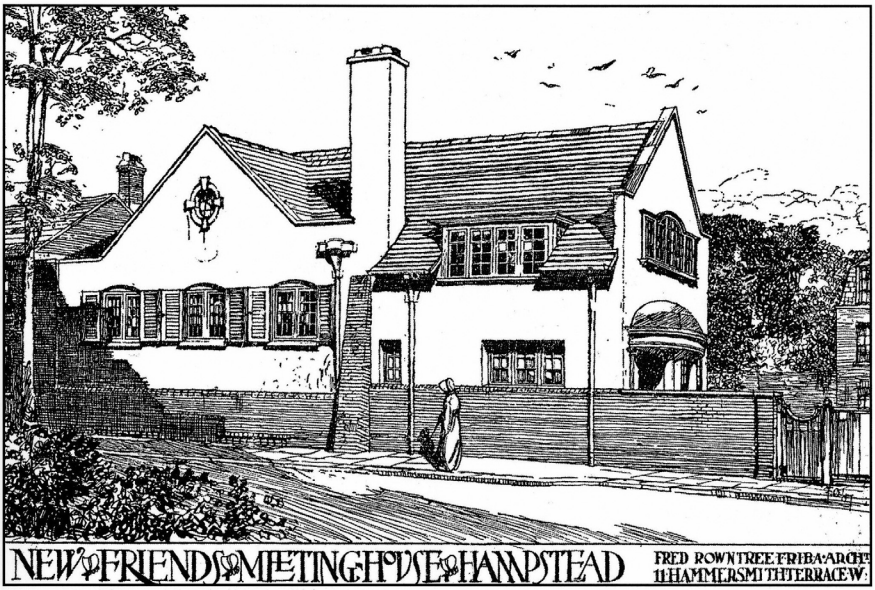
THE CHAPELS SOCIETY

Newsletter 75 September 2020



Fred Rowntree's Arts and Crafts design for the Hampstead Friends Meeting House, as shown on the invitation card to the opening of the building in 1907 [see review of books on Arts and Crafts churches]

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ADDRESS BOOK

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NOTICEBOARD

CHAPELS SOCIETY EVENTS

Saturday 5 December 2020 AGM by Zoom [11 am]

Those wishing to attend should notify the Secretary and they will be sent details of how to connect

EDITORIAL

This Newsletter contains the latest article from Edward Peters: he returns to the chapels of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, the subject of his first article which appeared in *Newsletter 5* in 1991. Edward is a founder member of the Society and what every newsletter editor dreams of – a regular contributor – and, as such, your editor is continually grateful for his regular articles.

Leafing through some of the *Newsletter* back numbers in our archive, it is clear that the progress of the infant Historic Chapels Trust was of great interest to our members in the 1990s, as it gradually acquired its initial portfolio of chapels. A number of those involved with the Society in the early days also became involved as Trustees of the HCT. However regrettably that closeness has been lost and we have found ourselves as onlookers as the HCT has faced a future without assured funding. Therefore it is especially pleasing to receive the informative contribution from Chris Smith about the future of the HCT in this issue. I hope that this will see the beginning of closer links in the future between the Trust and the Society.

PROCEEDINGS

CHAPELS SOCIETY AGM

The Council met by Zoom on 23rd September and agreed that it would not be practical to hold the 2020 AGM in person under the current restrictions. Like many other organisations, we have agreed to hold a virtual AGM using the Zoom platform – this is set for Saturday 5 December at 11 am – for the purpose of electing officers and agreeing the Annual Report, which was sent out with the last *Newsletter*. As always nominations should be sent to the Secretary at least one week before the meeting. The agenda and details of the Zoom link will be made available to those who notify the Secretary of their interest in attending.

Zoom novices are reassured that they do not have to download a copy of the program. If you notify the Secretary of your wish to attend, preferably by using the e-mail address ChapelsSociety@googlemail.com you will be sent a link which you can type or copy into your browser. This will activate a process which will connect you to the meeting. Connections can be made using a variety of devices including computers, laptops, ipads and smart phones. They will work successfully in audio mode unless they have a built-in camera, in which case you will be able to see as well as hear the participants.

The Council encourages members to join in this experiment.

CHAPELS SOCIETY ACTIVITIES

The Council regrets that none of the planned activities for 2020 have been able to take place because of pandemic restrictions. The Spring and Autumn visits will be rescheduled for some point in 2021 when it is hoped that meeting and travelling will be more easily and safely arranged.

We are in the final stages of planning a Conference for the Autumn of 2021 – this will report the findings of the Communities of Dissent project, undertaken largely by members of the Family and Community History Research Society, which Kate Tiller outlined in *Newsletter 64* [January 2017] and will take place in Oxford at a date to be arranged.

Members looking to make up for a chapel-shaped hole in their activities are reminded of the many chapel-related items on our website, including the featured chapel, gallery of chapel pictures and the itineraries of a number of our chapel tours, which might spark off a personal chapel crawl. Later in this issue there are also references to two of the many internet sites devoted to chapel pictures and histories. Flickr (www.flickr.com) is also a wonderful hunting ground for UK and international chapels.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

We are pleased to be able to welcome two new members to the Society since the last *Newsletter*, David Goodall of Ulrome in East Yorkshire, and Jim McCallum of Leicester.

News of deaths

We also have to report the sad loss of four members. Mrs Jean Stell, founding and life member of the Society, died in March 2020. We heard in May 2020 of the death of Dorothy Potter of Norfolk; Mrs Potter was a member for many years. News of the death of Norman Harries, who lived in Holmfirth in Yorkshire and previously pastor of Bolstermoor Baptist Chapel, was received in June 2020, as was that of the death of Amanda Arrowsmith of Stowmarket in Suffolk. Ms Arrowsmith was a life member of the Society and served as Honorary Editor for three years (see appreciation below).

Stuart Leadley

AMANDA ARROWSMITH (1947-2020)

Amanda Arrowsmith, a life member of the Society, died this year at the age of 72 after a long period of increasingly debilitating illness. Amanda was born in Chepstow in December 1947 and, later moving to Birmingham, studied at King Edward VI High School for Girls, going up to Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, on a scholarship to read English in 1966. This was where we first met when she auditioned for a part in a summer production of *As you like it*. She made an excellent Viola, with her slight, boyish figure and elfin features.

After gaining a first in Finals, Amanda started her doctoral research in 1969 but must have felt herself unsuited, for in 1971 she took the Bodleian Library course in archive administration and commenced her immensely successful career as an archivist. After a period at the Northumberland Record Office, where she rapidly won promotion, she removed to the Suffolk Record Office where she spent most of the rest of her career, apart from a brief period as County Archivist in Berkshire from 1979-1982, where we met again briefly. Appointed as Suffolk County Archivist in the latter year, she became Director of Libraries and Heritage in 1990, responsible for libraries, archives, arts and heritage, and served in that position until her early retirement in 2001. Faced with the challenges of senior management it is typical that she responded by studying for an Open University MBA which she gained in 1992.

Amanda's intelligence and array of talents were linked to a genuine and warm personality which had the gift of making people feel special and charmed everyone from the most junior archivist to the most hard-nosed councillor. Even as Director she was not above coming in in jeans and trainers to help staff

move into a new building. She was in the front line of innovation in archives, in developing CARN, the joint readers ticket, as an early advocate of the use of archives in schools and in encouraging the development of local history fairs. As well as the service she gave to the Chapels Society as our Hon Editor from 2004 to 2007, Amanda served on a number of bodies, as Secretary and then President of the Society of Archivists, as an English Heritage Commissioner, as a member of the DCMS Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and as a member of the Lord Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Public Records.

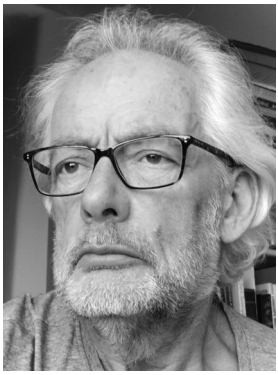
I met Amanda for the last time at my first Chapels Society AGM, which was to be her last, for having decided she could no longer continue as editor, she suggested my name in her place – one of the pleasant memories I have to thank her for!

At home in Stowmarket, Amanda was a stalwart of the local Catholic Church and a member and sometime chairman of its Parish Council. She traced her ancestry back to St Edmund Arrowsmith, martyred at Lancaster in 1628. She was one of the instigators of the Catholic Archives Society but also of the local Foodbank and a volunteer there with her partner, Jill Mortiboys, another life member of the Society. Indeed, I have learnt that Amanda's support of this Society extended to giving life memberships as presents to appropriate friends!

Although her long illness led Amanda to become increasingly housebound, close friends report that her telephone conversation remained cheerful. She died in Ipswich hospital on 22 May 2020, from a heart attack, ending a life well lived and full of service.

Chris Skidmore

HISTORIC CHAPELS TRUST (HCT) – THE WAY AHEAD



Chris Smith, Vice-chair of our sister organisation, writes:

Chapels Society members will have been, to differing degrees, aware of the HCT since its inception. A number of you, to whom thanks and respect are due, are actively engaged in supporters' groups related to particular chapels. Some are, or have been, patrons or Trustees and almost all have given support over the years, whether through chapel-specific activity, or donations or advice, be that strategic or practical.

Most will know that the formation and original model of the Trust was very generously funded by English Heritage (now Historic England – HE) a practice which continued for many years. To all concerned about the future of redundant Nonconformist

chapels and Catholic churches in England, this will have seemed only right when considered in the context of the development of the system for Anglican churches, now fulfilled by the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT). Trustees believe that it is essential that this HCT model survives into the future. Communities with strong and enduring ties to chapels are often keenly able to campaign, to build up local support and to animate a building once acquired. HCT exists to enable all that through its charitable status, its willingness to embrace freeholder duties and obligations, and its direct access and reputation when dealing with national funding bodies.

Sadly, most good things come to an end and as HE's funding was flat-lined for decades and then savagely cut, it was unwelcome but no surprise when its support for HCT was first questioned and, eventually, time limited. This forced HCT into a radical re-assessment of its viability and future role.

The Board of Trustees changed: Debbie Dance, the new Chair, brought her extensive experience of ensuring the success of charities to bear; additional external advice was sourced and three difficult decisions were made. First to adopt a transition programme to achieve a viable programme and financial structure for life without HE funding; second, to enable that by radically reducing outgoings; third to achieve the transition by working closely with CCT. CCT deal with similar issues facing 350+ redundant churches and their supporters. They also have close connections with government and funding bodies. Finally, despite statutory hurdles, they have throughout remained keen in applying their skills and connections to assist HCT.

The transfer of time and energy necessary to identifying and adopting this transition programme has meant that we were unable to support the chapel supporters' groups in the way which we would like to, as HCT was no longer able to employ our own direct team. As we now have a dedicated Local Community Officer (LCO) we are able to, and committed to, rebuilding those relationships. We have engaged in recent (Zoom) discussions with chapel groups, singly or together with other chapels and the Trustees are actively engaged where possible.

The transition programme has now been endorsed by HE who have offered a final three year funding package which runs – on a downwards trajectory – until March 2022, when it ends. The funding allows HCT: to manage its freeholder obligations during that period, including funding priority maintenance and repair; to employ an LCO to foster and develop the supporters' groups, their activities and relationship with the Trust; to attract new Trustees to reinforce the Board (now down to five members); and to employ a dedicated fundraiser to reach the, daunting but realistic, minimum target of £250,000 per annum by 2022.

That brings me to what Chapels Society members can do to help. We will undoubtedly need trustees with experience of rebuilding charity finances, strengthening social media presence and strengthening connections with

government and business. But we will also need the critical presence of those who understand the chapels, their meaning and future requirements and the communities who value them. So please contact me for a discussion chris.g.smith@outlook.com or consider how a more formal Chapel Society response to that need might be developed. And please consider any financial support you can give: https://www.hct.org.uk/donate.

It may seem strange that I have not so far addressed two issues – COVID and whether HCT can realistically survive. As for the former, you will understand that HCT has been hit by lockdown rules and other restrictions – the loss of income experienced by the chapels will amount to a reduction of at least £40,000 in this year. We are, of course, in discussion with all the bodies such as HE and the NHLF who are offering emergency support and HE acknowledges that all the programmes it is currently funding, including HCT transition, will be subject to disruption. Like the rest of the nation we will make what we can of all that.

As for the long term viability of the HCT, Trustees are acutely aware of the duty to watch the bottom line, to have in mind the charitable duty to ensure that all chapels remain in appropriate hands should we fail and to have processes in place to deal with that eventuality. At the same time, however, we remain convinced of the role that HCT can and should play. We look forward to the time when we can once again consider taking on further chapels, better supporting existing chapel groups and playing a part in the further development of systems which will enable communities around the country to continue to enjoy and pass on to others the chapels they so value.

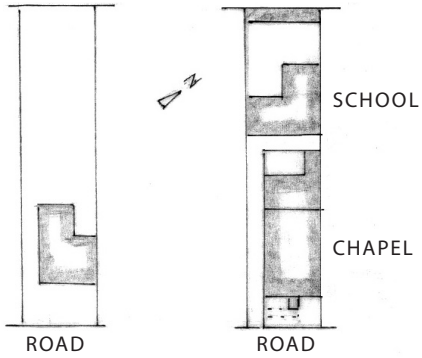
So, those critical caveats aside, we remain strongly committed to our fund raising and trustee seeking activities and hope that Chapels Society members will feel able to support in any way that you can.

THE COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON / FREE CHURCH CHAPELS, MALVERN LINK

AN ARTICLE BY J. EDWARD C. PETERS

There are two Countess of Huntingdon Connexion chapels in Malvern Link, the north part of Malvern, one succeeding the other. Both are on Worcester Road, the earlier, no. 333, just north of Lower Howsell Lane, the other, which replaced it, about ½ mile to the south, just east of the railway station. The new chapel was called Malvern Link Free Church; the cause was by then a member of the Congregational Union.

The original cause dates from 1835, when a group, concerned at the spiritual state of the area, built a small, neat chapel, and registered it for services. The leader was William Towndrow, a local shopkeeper. There were ten trustees,



Site plans for the first chapel at 333 Worcester Road, on the left in 1839 and on the right in 1884

four from the Malvern area, the rest from Worcester. For the first twenty years or so the services were taken by men coming out from the Countess of Huntingdon chapel in Worcester. The need is shown in that the church at Leigh, in which the parish then was, is four miles away, that at Great Malvern, in the next parish, two. The premises were described as a chapel, house and garden in 1839, the house probably a room or two for the chapel keeper. A Sunday school had been started the previous year; more significantly for the area, a day school (a British School) was begun in 1844 through the generosity of a London family which had benefited from the water cure. This must initially have been held in the chapel: the building, still extant but much altered, was erected behind the chapel in 1845, designed by W.M. Teulon, brother of the better-known S.S. There were 40 pupils in 1855.

The return for the Religious Census of 1851 gave rather more detail, the chapel had 116 free seats, 14 others (presumably paying pew rent), and space for a further 18 if needed. Attendance on census Sunday was 86 in the morning, 55 in the evening, with 41 at the Sunday school.

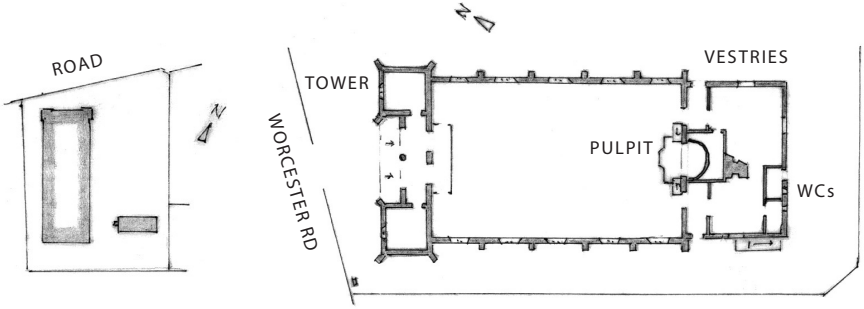
It was decided to put the cause on a more formal basis in 1857, compiling a roll of full members, 21 in all; as shown by the 1851 figures, the overall attendance will have been much larger. Inspired by the growing population of the area, and presumably also attendance at services, it was decided in 1860 to appoint a resident minister, and to rebuild the chapel to provide more seating (200). This was opened in 1861, free from debt, it was noted. Presumably the British School was used for services during the building work. A vestry and room for the chapel keeper former a lower wing at the back.

The Link chapel was involved, with Emmanuel Church in Malvern, also Countess of Huntingdon, in supporting three village chapels of the same denomination to the north of Malvern by 1888, this lasting until at least 1925. Until 1896, and again briefly after 1901, it had involved Holly Mount Congregational Chapel in Malvern, but it had had to withdraw for financial reasons. The Link chapel also briefly took on a chapel in Poolbrook in 1892, but declined the following year to do this permanently. It did, however, set up its own mission in Upper Howsell in 1894; a mission hall, clad in corrugated iron, was opened in early 1896. The work lasted until the end of 1907, being then closed with the opening of the nearby Wesleyan Methodist chapel in Somers Park Avenue.

The 1861 chapel in later years with the sign of its then owner, Chas Davies, Builder (photograph copyright the author)

In 1891 concern was noted at the adverse influence of the Church of England, a third of the Sunday school pupils being lost. Further concern at this influence was noted in 1902, this time affecting adult attendance. A problem was to arise in the late-nineteenth century with the central body of the Connexion which had a final say in the appointment of ministers; one candidate declined to sign the 15 articles. This problem also continued with the next, the Revd E. Charles, but seems somehow to have been resolved, as he was appointed, and the chapel continued with the Connexion. Perhaps because of this problem, the chapel had applied to join the Congregational Union as well. It had also joined the Free Church Council of Malvern, which was founded in 1898.

In 1896 the need for a larger church in a better position was noted. The site was to be to the east of the railway station, the services were to be non-liturgical. In fact, they had been so since at least 1892. Obtaining a suitable site,



The 1904 chapel, on the left the site plan as in 1926, showing the position of the old mission chapel, and on the right the plan of the chapel as built

part of the grounds of Link Lodge, it was purchased, helped by an anonymous grant. A building committee was quickly set up. The chapel was to seat 300, with provision for a gallery, with a Sunday school for 200, ordinary offices, heating, lighting and seating, all for £3500. Six architects were approached to submit plans pseudonymously: five responded. The design of T.W. Houlds of West Malvern was considered best, and was tendered for: unfortunately, the three obtained were all for more than £5000. Discussion with the architect to reduce the cost not proving satisfactory, he was replaced by H.E. Lavender of Walsall, another of the six approached. The major modification to his design was to move the lecture hall / Sunday school from behind the chapel to one side. Ten tenders were obtained, the lecture hall being a separate part in case, as happened, it needed to be omitted for financial reasons. The lowest was by Holloway, presumably A. Holloway of Upton on Severn. An appeal was made for funds. Perhaps fearing unauthorized interference, the committee insisted that the architect should instruct the builder that only he could issue instructions. It chose gas lighting, rather than electric, presumably on grounds of cost, similarly chairs instead of pews, and the gallery was omitted. A problem arose with the the drain from Link Lodge, which ran across the site.

The new chapel was opened in 1904, and was named Malvern Link Free Church. The old chapel continued in use as a Sunday school, the British School also continued. The latter was closed in 1909, apparently with the opening of the Malvern Link County Council School in Somers Park Avenue. The Free Church purchased the old chapel and British School from the Countess of Huntingdon Connexion that year. The Sunday school was continued, but the British School behind was let out from 1921. The whole was sold in 1930 to Davies & Co, builder. It was decided in 1908 to move the memorial to William Towndrow to the new chapel: it was not however, found there in 2019. It is unlikely that it would have been affected by the decision not to allow memorials in the new chapel made in 1930, presumably in response to a request to erect one.

The 1904 chapel, seen from the Worcester Road (photograph copyright the author)

The chapel had been partly paid for by various loans, including from the bank, which were not finally paid off until 1931, with the sale of the old property. In 1907 an individual

communion set was provided, The following year the mission chapel from Upper Howsell was moved to adjoin the new chapel, to be used as a Sunday school. Electric light replaced gas in 1923, and two years later the fence to Worcester Road was replaced with the present iron railings. All these were financed by gifts. A legacy in 1937 proved very useful when the church was found to need retiling. The Connexion was to hold its annual meeting in Malvern in 1928, and again in 1937.

It was decided in 1932 at last to build the church hall, presumably encouraged by the loans on the chapel being paid off. It was designed by H.S. Scott, who had earlier designed the Wyche Free Church. The clock in the tower was given in 1938. The Sunday school building was used by the Army from 1939 as a writing and recreation room, but the following year the W.V.S. was using it for storage. Because of the blackout the evening service in the chapel was moved to the afternoon. The organ was to be replaced in 1948, and moved in about 1963 from behind the pulpit to against the south wall, partly blocking a window. Because of the cost of repairs needed in 1991, it was then replaced with an electronic one.

As noted above, the chapel had been part of the Congregational Union since 1899, as well as part of the Countess of Huntingdon Connexion, in which later body the property was vested. In 1970 ownership became joint with the Congregational Union, or rather its successor, the U.R.C., which bought the remaining half in 2003. From 1987 to 2009 the chapel shared its ministers with Holly Mount URC, but has since reverted to having its own minister.

Turning now to the buildings, both of which survive: not much is known about the first chapel, save as noted above. The British School was built in the garden behind in 1845, and still survives, although now a dwelling. Access was on the west of the chapel; it is of brick with a slate roof.

The present building dates from 1861, and replaced the first chapel. It is Norman Revival in style. The walls are of brick, rendered on the south and west sides, with a plinth, moulded string course at window cill and springing levels, and a moulded cornice. There were recessed dummy horizontal joints below the windows. These have markedly stilted arched heads. The gable has a pediment with a moulded floor interrupted by a circular window, which, as late as 1980, had lettering above. Entrance was by a flat-roofed porch. The north wall is blind. The chapel was offset on the site to leave an access way to the rear on the west side. Between the chapel and the road was a burial ground, surrounded by a low, brick wall. Entrance was originally off the side access, but was changed to direct to the road in 1893. When the chapel was sold the graves were moved to St. Matthias churchyard. There was a lower section behind the chapel, which contained the vestry and accommodation for the chapel keeper. At some stage Davies built a lean-to along the side of the chapel, having moved the rear access to the adjoining site. The lean-to was still there in 1980. The chapel has since been converted to a dwelling and Chinese Takeaway; the render appears to have

been renewed, simplifying some of the details, and new windows were made in the lower part of the side wall.

The new chapel (dating from 1904) is set near the west boundary of the site, to leave space for the intended lecture hall / Sunday school. There were trees along the Worcester Road boundary, which were thinned in 1925 when the metal railings were erected. The entrance front has a tower on the left with corner pinnacles and a flat roof, and open porch in the centre, and a small room on the right, balancing the tower in plan. The tower and small room have diagonal corner buttresses. This part is of rock-faced, well-squared stone, with ashlar dressings and windows. The chapel itself is of five bays, buttressed, of pale yellow brick with a red brick plinth and moulded terracotta eaves, the roof tiled. The windows have stone tracery, Perpendicular in style. Behind is a slightly narrower, hipped-roofed section containing the vestries, the windows to which have wooden casements with stone lintols.

Internally, I describe the chapel as it is in 2019. The walls are plastered with a dado rail, roof trusses exposed with diagonal boarding above, hiding the rafters. Owing to a drought, the walls spread very slightly in 1922; to prevent further movement the iron ties in the trusses were replaced with a heavier section. Entrance is by a glazed lobby, the end doors positioned to serve the original walkways. At the other end are two double doors leading to entrance lobbies. Between is the pulpit, with an arched, curved recess behind, originally containing the organ. The floor and communion platform were reformed in 1966, and the seating replaced. Whether the floor had been built, as desired, to slope down twelve inches from the entrance is not now clear. The rear lobbies give access to the vestries, the larger choir vestry on the east. Between them is a brick chimney stack, with the original fireplace surround surviving in the choir vestry, there are two WCs, one opening off the minister's vestry, the other with only external access. In 1910 a hot-water central heating system was installed,

The interior of the 1904 chapel (photograph copyright the author)

the boiler in the space below the minister's vestry, How the church had originally been heated is not clear.

The church hall has rendered walls, a low-pitch roof, and some Art Deco features. It has been slightly enlarged to the east. The corrugated iron Sunday school was demolished in about 2000.

The writer is indebted to the minister for access to various minute books, consulted up to 1941, to the church secretary and others for information and access to the building. Also consulted were various minutes relating to Holly Mount Congregational Church in Malvern, local directories, Worcestershire, *by A. Brooke and N. Pevsner and* Dissenters All *by R. Ellis.*

BATH STREET CHAPEL, HUDDERSFIELD

AN ARTICLE BY EDWARD ROYLE

The chapel in Bath Street, Huddersfield, must have the most unusual chapel history in the whole of Britain. Although for part of its history it was home to religious congregations, it was built as the Huddersfield Hall of Science by and for the followers of Robert Owen in 1839. The Owenites believed that Man is good by nature but corrupted by his environment. The solution to the problems of mankind therefore lay in leaving behind the evil influences of what was termed the 'Old Immoral World' and settling instead in Communities of United Interest where all influences would be benign and the secular millennium could be commenced in the 'New Moral World'. This made sense to a generation of workers growing up in early industrial society with its dirt, drink, poverty, lack of education and exploitative working conditions, but among the other evils of present society were the false teachings of religion on such matters as original sin and redemption through faith. The Owenites were therefore opposed to, and opposed by, Christianity, especially that of an evangelical variety such as flourished in a town like Huddersfield. Yet at the same time the Owenites assumed in the way they organised themselves the form of a religious sect, with their meeting places (chapels), 'social' hymns and secular ceremonies, Sunday schools, anniversaries, fund-raising bazaars, naming ceremonies for infants (baptisms) lectures (sermons), study of 'sacred' texts (written by Robert Owen) and so on which served in functional terms the cultural needs of a chapel congregation.

To promote his cause, Robert Owen established his Association of All Classes of All Nations in 1835 and two years later his National Community Friendly Society to promote a community as an experiment to 'prove' the truth of his message. When a community was begun in Hampshire in 1839 these societies were amalgamated to form the Universal Community of Rational Religionists, or Rational Society for short. The Owenites themselves, as advocates of Owen's

'social system', were known as Socialists. Some of their lecturers controversially took out preaching licences to gain legal protection. In all during the next few years after 1837 some sixty branches were formed throughout the country, chiefly in London and the textile districts of Lancashire, Cheshire and Yorkshire. The sixth branch in the whole country, and the first in Yorkshire, was in Huddersfield. Early meetings took place in what were called Social Institutions, often no more than hired rooms, but the bigger branches leased or built larger premises which they dignified as Halls of Science. Although there were several of these, the most famous being that in Manchester (the building was sold in 1851 to become the city's first Public Library before being demolished to make way for the Free Trade Hall), the one built in Huddersfield is the only one to survive. In the later nineteenth-century the Secularist movement continued the legacy of anti-Christian Owenism and had its own halls (notably the one in Humberstone Gate, Leicester), some of which were called Halls of Science, but the Huddersfield hall is a unique survival of this earlier phase. As such it has been Grade II listed since 1978.

To begin with, in the Autumn of 1837 the Huddersfield Socialists rented their premises from the landlord of the George and Dragon on Manchester Street. Here the cause prospered and the room was soon over-full, so when the landlord was threatened with the non-renewal of his licence they began looking for alternative premises. This was not easy. The landlord of the first building plot they acquired broke his contract; when another plot was found the builders broke their contract; and their local lecturer was dismissed by his employer, who was a Wesleyan. Finally they secured a site just outside the town centre where there had been a small spa – hence the later name of the new street. About fifty local Socialists began to dig the foundations in March 1839, the foundation stone was laid on 2 April, the roof was on by 10 July and the hall was opened on Sunday 3 November 1839.

The building is described in the Listing as

> York stone, the facade dressed, the returns random-coursed rubble; three stories (formerly two stories but Hall divided horizontally without affecting fenestration); central pedimented block slightly advanced; five sash windows with glazing bars, the central with arched head, plain architrave, extrados and keystone; plain rectangular panel the pediment with apron-pieces and defaced inscription; central doorway at first floor level with plain architraves, slight cornice hood, rectangular barred fanlight and 6-panelled door; stone steps and later wrought iron handrails; ground floor has two plain doorways with panelled doors and fanlights; string course; blocking course, parapet and moulded cornice; slates.

The building was almost square, 17 x 15 yards, and 30 feet high, with a school room in the semi-basement and a main hall on the first floor approached up a

The Huddersfield Hall of Science as it survives today, as a paint and equipment store (photograph copyright the author)

steep set of steps. There was a musicians' gallery over the entrance. Three of the windows held stained glass, executed by a Salford plumber, Joseph Smith, who did the same for the Manchester Hall of Science and the main community building, Harmony Hall, in Hampshire.

All this was made possible because the local leadership included a number of men who, if not wealthy, could be described as prosperous workmen and skilled artisans, led by George Brook, a foreman dyer (who lost his job on account of his Socialism and set up his own business). Another self-employed Socialist was Reid Holiday, a chemist whose business was eventually to grow into the dyestuffs division of ICI. The original managers included clothiers and others in the textile trades, shopkeepers, a tailor, a joiner, a shoemaker and a warehouseman. For the most part they depended on their members and paying Sunday 'congregations' to service their building loans, and when the movement began to decline after 1842 the future of the Hall was thrown into doubt. In 1844 the Wesleyans offered to buy the hall for use as a schoolroom but their offer of £1,000 was considered too low and an agreement was reached with the local Chartists – radicals who campaigned for universal manhood suffrage – to share the premises, but the Chartists were also in decline after 1842 and in 1847 the decision was made to relinquish the hall.

In August 1847 it was leased to the local Unitarians for use as a chapel but in 1853 they built themselves a Gothic chapel just round the corner in the new Fitzwilliam Street and the lease was sold to the Baptists. Baptist churches, both Strict and Particular, were strong in the Huddersfield area, but mainly out of the town and among the handloom weaver communities of the hills and valleys to the west. But as industry moved into factories in the valley bottoms nearer the canal and then the railway, so the Baptists sought out a town centre chapel, and they occupied the former Hall of Science from April 1855 until April 1878 when they too opened a new chapel nearby in New North Road, though they retained the building as a school until 1882. The building was then acquired by Peter and James Conacher, internationally famous organ builders, as an extension to their main works in the town to serve as an erecting shop and saw mill – they supplied several local churches and chapels including the parish church. They retained the premises until 1902 when the chapel briefly returned to mainstream

religious use as the Railway Mission before becoming a warehouse in 1919 for Gris Brothers, Shoddy Merchants. Since 1963 it has been occupied by Ramsey Clay, painters and decorators, as their paint and equipment store.

The interior shell of the hall is still recognisable for what it was, except for the addition of a part mezzanine floor in the main hall and boarding over what was once described as a 'very richly ornamented' ceiling, though the stained glass has gone. In its present, secular and run-down state the building is shadowing, in its old age as in its youth, the history of many a more conventional chapel. Bath Street is less than a five-minute walk from the railways station; both it and the Unitarian (now Polish Catholic) chapel were viewed from the outside by the Chapels Society on their visit to Huddersfield in 2008.

Further reading: Alan Brooke, The Hall of Science. Co-operation and Socialism in Huddersfield, *c.*1830-1848*, Honley: Workers' History Publications, 1993. Edward Royle, 'Huddersfield and the Secularist Tradition: the Huddersfield Secular Society and Sunday school', pp. 199-217 in* Learning and Living. Essays in Honour of J. F. C. Harrison*, ed. Malcolm Chase and Ian Dyck, Aldershot: The Scolar Press, 1996.*

NEWS AND NOTES

Catholic Church of St Edmund, Archbishop, Houghton, West Sussex

Matt Davis writes: An attractive and unusual Roman Catholic chapel built in the West Sussex countryside for the Dukes of Norfolk was sold for £500,000 at a 'virtual auction' in June. The Church of St Edmund Archbishop (i.e. Edmund of Abingdon, d. 1240) was built in 1879 in the middle of fields next to the River Arun north of Arundel, whose castle is the seat of the dukedom. The dynasty has always been Catholic, and Henry Fitzalan-Howard, 15th Duke of Norfolk (who had already commissioned the Church of Our Lady and St Philip Neri – now Arundel Cathedral – in 1868) funded the construction of a small chapel to serve both Houghton and the larger village of Amberley. By the time the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton was created in 1965, the church had one Sunday Mass and was served by priests from the Cathedral, and this continued until closure in 1994 or 1995. With minimal alteration it became an auction gallery, as shown in this 2011 photograph, but was converted into a house soon afterwards.

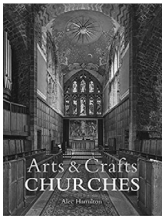
The dainty brick building has been described as resembling a school chapel, and indeed the only architecturally similar church in the Diocese is the 1872 chapel at St Wilfrid's School in nearby Angmering (also closed for public worship in 1995 and now part of the school). A simple four-bay hall of red brick with yellow-brick dressings and quoins, domestic-style windows, St Edmund's has a very prominent chimney rising from the gable end and is also linked to a lower projecting porch with a round-arched recessed doorway under a projecting gable.

New county websites

The ever-assiduous Frank Law has pointed out to me two very different county websites which have details of Nonconformist buildings. **Our Warwickshire** is a local government site run by Heritage & Culture Warwickshire, supported by volunteers. Among the many subjects covered are Religious Buildings – at www.ourwarwickshire.org.uk/content/subject/religious-buildings-religion-beliefs – although the coverage is by no means extensive. Quite a different ethos is found at **Shropshire's Nonconformist Chapels** – at www.users.waitrose.com/~coxfamily/index.html – which is the personal project of Janice Cox and contains information and photographs of over 500 Shropshire chapels. There is an open invitation to contribute photos and text which some members might like to take up.

BOOK REVIEW

Roger Button. *Arts and Crafts Churches of Great Britain: Architects, Craftsmen and Patrons*. Settle: 2QT Publishing, 2020. 279 pages, softback. ISBN 978-1-913071-49-3. £25.



Alec Hamilton. *Arts & Crafts Churches*. London: Lund Humphries, 2020, 352 pages, hardback. ISBN 978-1-848223-21-9. £45 [*Lund Humphries are offering members of the Chapels Society 20% off this book and free UK postage until 31 December 2020. To claim go to www.lundhumphries.com and use the code AC20 at the checkout to apply the discount*.]

The publication of these two handsome volumes on the same subject raises the great question of what exactly constitutes an 'Arts and Crafts Church'. Both

authors freely admit that there is no strict definition, so that the inclusion of churches is partially subjective. The closest that either Button or Hamilton come is the involvement of architects or decorators associated with the Art Workers' Guild or associated bodies, and/or a building in harmony with these principles. There is, therefore a certain amount of 'I know one when I see one' in the churches and chapels included in these books. Button suggests that Arts and Crafts churches stand in contrast to Gothic Revival and modernist buildings in that they were focussed on people, rather than ideals, meaning that a church or chapel designed and built according to Arts and Crafts principles 'would produce a distinctive, original, and importantly a welcoming' environment. Likewise, Hamilton writes of Arts and Crafts churches: 'They are not the Houses of a judgemental God, nor dominated by the drama and pain of Crucifixion, but somewhere to meet gentle Jesus, meek and mild, the Good Shepherd.'

Hamilton links the Arts and Crafts movement in church architecture to the Victorian 'crisis of faith': to him, Arts and Crafts churches were designed and built by people lacking the easy confidence of the Tractarians, moving from the High Victorian into the understatement of the Edwardian era, and the start of the decline of the British churches following the Great War. In dealing with the Welsh situation, for example, he quotes extensively from R. Tudur Jones' *Faith and the Crisis of a Nation*. Button is less interested in the possible connection between Arts and Crafts and the crisis of faith than the interaction between patrons and architects, as the subtitle of his work suggests.

Button adopts a chronological approach to the subject, beginning with precursor churches, such as Brampton, in Cumbria, and the work of John Douglas, before moving on to churches identified with the Arts and Crafts movement in a survey which concludes just after the end of the Second World War. Hamilton's book, on the other hand, consists of an essay on the definition of Arts and Crafts churches, including a discussion on the nature of the faith which led to the construction of such churches, followed by a gazetteer interrupted by occasional panels discussing architects or particular manifestations of the Arts and Crafts style, such as Oxford chapels, and the chapels constructed by the Settlement movement in London. At the end of Hamilton's study a list of further reading may be found, reflecting the fact that this book had its genesis in an academic thesis.

As might be expected, the majority of space in both books is devoted to considering churches, patrons and architects of the Anglican persuasion, itself a revealing window on the nature of the Arts and Crafts Movement and the connection between some of its leading spirits and high Anglicanism. Nevertheless, the involvement of the Arts and Crafts movement in chapel architecture is outlined to some extent. As might be expected, Button's chronological approach reveals that there was some interest in Arts and Crafts style buildings among Nonconformists as early as the 1880s, with a study of

Broughty Ferry Baptist Church, Scotland (1881), and its architect, John Murray Robertson, a member of the Brethren. The choice of architect and style is said to have come from a concern that the new chapel should not resemble a building of the established church. For Hamilton, the attraction of the Arts and Crafts style for Nonconformists was that it was a means of declaring, 'we are modern, fashionable, interesting: we have arrived.'

Button chooses a number of representative buildings to illustrate the progress of the Arts and Crafts movement, among them just over a dozen Nonconformist buildings, and a few Roman Catholic, 'inter-denominational' and private chapels. This serves as a reminder that the architects who designed Arts and Crafts chapels were not slavishly imitating the buildings of the establishment, but seeking their own way of expressing the new style. Some of these buildings will be familiar to Society members, such as the First Church of Christ Scientist, Victoria Park, Manchester, the Catholic Apostolic Church in Edinburgh, and the Quaker meeting houses in the Garden cities and suburbs: others, such as the wonderful Ann Griffiths Memorial Chapel, Dolanog, perhaps less so. These buildings remind us that late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Nonconformity still had something to say in its buildings. Interestingly, the Quakers are represented out of proportion to their numerical strength, perhaps because the cosily domestic style of the Arts and Crafts movement fitted well with the requirements of Quaker worship.

Hamilton makes mention of many more chapels, from solidly respectable Nonconformist chapels such as Hutton & Shenfield Union Church and Four Oaks Wesleyan Chapel, both built for developing commuter suburbs, to the wonderfully robust Methodist church at Ben Rhydding, Ilkley, and Lutyens' quirky Overstrand Methodist Church, and the young people's chapel at Rodborough Tabernacle. The chapels mentioned in the main text, with those included as 'worthy of interest' at the end of each list, make it plain that the Arts and Crafts designation may be applied both to grand and very metropolitan places of worship, fitting in with Hamilton's thesis that the Arts and Crafts style appealed to upwardly-mobile Nonconformists, and to rather more retiring places of worship. None of these may, however, be called truly insignificant – to decide to build in the Arts and Crafts manner was, after all, a conscious choice.

Edgar Wood's First Church of Christ Scientist is not the only one of this architect's churches featured in both books. Button and Hamilton both devote much space also to his imposing Middleton Methodist Church (1899-1901), built around a garden. In the sequence of Hamilton's gazetteer, Wood's work at Middleton follows on from pieces on Worthington's Ullet Road Unitarian, Liverpool, and the Rathbone chapel at Wallasey (now Historic Chapels Trust) – leading one to wonder whether there was something about northern Unitarians and architecture. Hamilton observes that 'artistic church Architecture in the North West was driven by dynamic Nonconformists – the Unitarians of Liverpool

in particular, but also the Christian Scientists'. Interestingly, two buildings of the small Free Church of England merit inclusion in Hamilton's gazetteer.

Both writers devote separate sections to Wales and Scotland, recognising the different religious scene in these two countries. The Traquair murals in the Edinburgh Catholic Apostolic Church attract a great deal of attention. For Wales, Hamilton's mention of the churches of William Beddoe Rees piqued this reviewer's attention – perhaps because a number of these were familiar sights.

A number of the churches and architects mentioned in these books will be familiar to members of the Chapels Society. William John Hale, the architect of a number of Sheffield chapels, is the subject of a one-page panel in Hamilton's book, the reader being directed to an early Chapels Society *Miscellany* for further information. The First Church of Christ Scientist, Manchester, as already noted, is mentioned in both books, whilst the Free Churches erected in the Garden Cities feature more prominently in Hamilton than in Button. Curiously, whilst Chorleywood Free Church is studied by both authors and Hamilton observes that the original scheme was not executed, both seem to miss that the present building was constructed as a schoolroom and later adapted as the main sanctuary once the need for the construction of the chapel building had passed.

Hamilton in particular makes some statements which seem odd, such as asserting that Parliament's rejection of the 1928 Prayer Book indicated that national interest in religion had passed. The statements made my William Joynson-Hicks (an evangelical Anglican) and others in the Parliamentary debates on the subject suggest a rather different reason for the revised Prayer Book's rejection. Inevitably, there will be some churches and chapels which might seem to fall into the 'Arts and Crafts' category which have been missed, especially among the smaller denominations (I find it hard to believe, for example, that there are no Arts and Crafts Gospel Halls).

As one would expect, these books are profusely illustrated and attractively produced, although Lund Humphries must be judged to have produced the most handsome and sturdy of the two volumes. Both authors include the addresses of the churches and chapels mentioned, allowing the enthusiast to visit them, or at least the local exemplars: Hamilton, in particular, could provide a jumping-off point for further study, whether of a denomination or an architect. Both books are worth the read, Button's has a good treatment of the progress and decline of the Arts and Crafts style in church and chapel architecture, and Hamilton's book is not only a good guide, but would make an excellent present for someone interested in these things.

Gerard Charmley

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