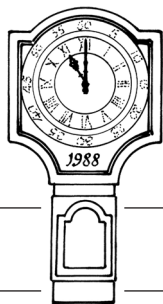
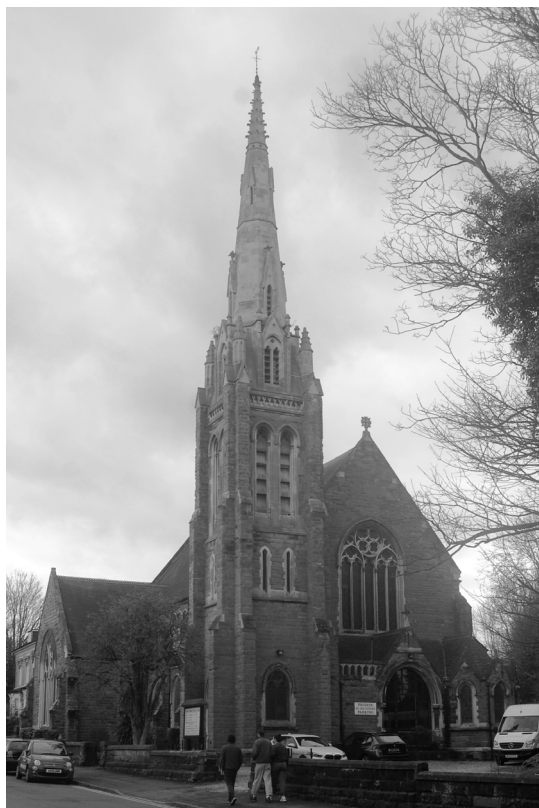


THE CHAPELS SOCIETY



Newsletter 87

February 2024



The Calvary Church of God in Christ (Moseley Assembly), Oxford Road, Moseley, West Midlands, seen in March 2022. This edition of Newsletter starts to explore the important theme of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches and their contribution to Britain's religious life – in this instance, rescuing and taking good care of a superb Victorian Baptist chapel which closed in 1992 (photograph copyright Matt Davis)

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NOTICEBOARD

CHAPELS SOCIETY EVENTS

31 March 2024

Copy deadline for May 2024 *Newsletter*

27 April 2024

Visit to The Wirral (Port Sunlight to Wallasey by coach), led by Roger Holden (**booking deadline 30 March 2024**)

EDITORIAL

Our recent visit to Salisbury, reviewed in this edition, revealed to attendees a highly encouraging and perhaps surprising pattern: across the board the city's religious scene is thriving, with chapels and denominations old and new experiencing numerical and spiritual growth. This theme, astutely noted by *Peter Ackers*, forms the starting point of his article in this *Newsletter*, in which the rapid growth and maturing of groups belonging to the Pentecostal and Charismatic traditions is identified as a key trend in the religious life of 21st-century Britain – and, therefore, of the utmost importance to our Society. Meanwhile, bookings are now being taken for our spring visit to the Wirral (please see the enclosed form): I hope to see you there!

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

PROCEEDINGS

VISIT TO SALISBURY, 7 OCTOBER 2023

It is probably fair to say that the city of Salisbury is not generally associated in the popular imagination with Nonconformity or nonconformist chapels, dominated as it is by its medieval cathedral, which boasts the tallest spire in England. However, the Chapels Society's autumn visit demonstrated that Salisbury possesses a rich and early Nonconformist heritage, and many still lively chapels. Interestingly, in every chapel visited the effects of Covid and of recent immigration were mentioned, without any sort of prompting.

The tour began at the railway station, from which could be seen not only the mighty spire of the cathedral, but two smaller spires. The first of these, a short distance from the station, was the former Dew's Road Primitive Methodist Chapel, a George Baines-designed building erected in 1916–17. Of brick, with stone dressings and a slender tower topped by a short slated spire, the chapel remained in Methodist use until 1987, when the Methodists consolidated



The exterior of Salisbury Baptist Church, showing the Lombardic façade added in the 1880s rebuild (photograph copyright Gerard Charmley)

their work at St Edmund's Church Street chapel. It was purchased by the Elim Pentecostal Church in 1990, opened for worship in 1992 and has recently been renamed 'Rediscover Life Church.' The congregation have also acquired an adjacent building which was erected as a school and latterly was used as a tannery. Next door to this is a three-storey house, built as a workshop, which served as a Congregational mission and Sunday School until 1898, when the opening of new Congregational premises in Fisherton Street allowed for the consolidation of all the work on one site.

From Dew's Road, the route passed through the Cathedral Close and alongside the spectacular Early English Gothic cathedral. From here it was but a short walk to Brown Street, and Salisbury Baptist Church. One of the earliest Baptist churches in the country, the cause here formed part of Porton Baptist Church (founded 1655), from which it separated in 1690. An early member was Colonel John Rede, a former officer in the New Model Army. For most of its life the work of the church has been based at Brown Street, the site having been acquired in 1719 and a chapel erected soon afterwards. This was replaced in 1750, and again in 1829, when W. H. Roe designed a chapel incorporating Egyptian and Classical motifs. This was in turn rebuilt in 1881–82 to a design by W. J. Stent of Warminster which included a muscular façade in the then popular Lombardic style, with a projecting centre bay incorporating a giant arch reaching into the pediment and a circular window, giving the red brick chapel a significant presence on the street. The replacement of the façade did, however, lead to only recently resolved problems with water ingress. For fifteen years the fabric of the building was neglected on account of the shadow of a compulsory purchase order hanging over the site. The danger having receded, the chapel has recently been extensively modified within by the insertion of a floor at first-floor level, creating meeting rooms below a first-floor sanctuary, and allowing the church to host events held by other groups, creating a cheaper and multi-use chapel. Currently the congregation numbers about 120 with between 50 and 60 young people and children, in part due to people coming in from now closed village churches and in part due to immigration. Since Covid the congregation has increased by about 30 per cent.

From Brown Street the visit passed the former Barnard's Cross Mission Hall. Originally erected as a joint Nonconformist mission in 1876, the building later became an Open Brethren Gospel Hall, which closed its doors in 2015. It is now used by the Anglican Mission in England, a conservative Anglican group. From here we passed the site of the first Friends' Meeting House in Salisbury, followed by the former United Methodist Free Church chapel, now a nightclub. The first chapel was erected in 1852, and the present building, in a mixed Gothic and Italianate style, replaced it in 1896. The congregation took part in the Methodist unions of 1907 and 1932, before the chapel closed its doors in 1958, the remaining members joining St Edmund's Street Chapel. After this, the

building was purchased by the Elim Pentecostal Church, who used it until their move to Dew's Road.

A short walk from the former UMFC, along St Edmund's Church Street, took us to Salisbury Methodist Church. There has been a Methodist chapel on this site since 1759, when a chapel described by John Wesley as 'the most complete in England' was erected to designs in which Wesley had a role. The Methodist Society dates back to 1736 and was founded by Westley Hall, brother-in-law to the Wesleys, whose later eccentricities led to a separation from the Methodists. This chapel was demolished in 1810 as it had become too small for the congregation. The new chapel, which incorporated what was at that time the largest unsupported ceiling in England, was extended towards the street in 1835 to designs by a Mr Harding, rendered in 1870 and internally re-ordered, and further extended in 1889 to the design of Fred Bath, who added the Tuscan-columned porch, now enclosed by glass. Following the union of the city's Methodist churches in 1987, the church was re-ordered internally again in 1992. Three of the four galleries were removed, leaving one above the main entrance, and on the far wall is a modern embroidery depicting the Creation. Most of the main worship space is now filled with moveable chairs taking the place of the pews. The stained glass windows came from the now closed chapels. Like Brown Street Baptist, the church has seen growth since re-opening from lockdown, numbers having increased in recent years from between 30 and 40 to about a hundred, with about a dozen children. Much of this growth has been driven by incomers from Africa.

From the Methodist Chapel we walked to the Salvation Army Hall in Salt Lane, where an unscheduled stop took place, as the building was open. Although it resembles a converted commercial building, this is one of the most significant buildings in the history of Salisbury Nonconformity. The side and rear walls incorporate parts of a Presbyterian chapel erected in 1702 for a congregation tracing its origins back to 1662. In 1720 a minister's house was built in front of the chapel. The church split in 1757 when a number of members withdrew due to issues with the governance of the church and the drift of the ministry towards Unitarianism. The remaining congregation declined to nothing. By 1815 the now derelict complex was purchased by the Wesleyans for Sunday School premises and to use the house as a manse. In 1882, the Salvation Army purchased the premises, and the minister's house was replaced by a brick-built schoolroom block in 1889. More recently, a modern porch was added to the chapel. Inside, the chapel is an empty space.

The walk to St Osmund's Roman Catholic Church passed number 14 Endless Street, now a Chinese restaurant but briefly the Assemblies of God 'Endless Life Church', and the Salisbury Royal British Legion Club, which either stands on the site of or incorporates parts of a former Congregational chapel of 1806. St Osmund's, likely named for the founder of the original Salisbury Cathedral at



Interior view of the upper (chapel) level of the horizontally subdivided Salisbury United Reformed Church (photograph copyright Matt Davis)

Old Sarum, was built in 1847–48 to the designs of A. W. N. Pugin. The complex of buildings stands just outside the walls of the Cathedral Close, and incorporates a schoolroom and presbytery. Built of flint in simple Decorated Gothic style with a pyramidal-roofed tower, the church retains a devotional atmosphere, with several pleasing stained-glass windows and stencilled decorations on the walls.

From here we walked along Fisherton Street, passing the Bridge Tap Public House, built as the Maundrell Hall (named for John Maundrell, burned as a Protestant in 1556 in or near the city), a non-denominational mission and institute for the working classes intended to draw them away from the public houses (making its current use ironic). It closed in 1954 and passed into commercial use. Just past Maundrell Hall is Salisbury United Reformed Church, built in 1879 to designs by Tarring and Wilkinson of London to house the city's Congregational church. The church can trace its origins to the secession of about 20 members from Salt Lane Chapel in 1756 over the Christological views of the new ministers. The seceders initially worshipped with the Congregational church at Wilton, but soon rented a room in Salisbury, before building a chapel in Scots Lane in 1767. Disagreement over who should be minister in 1806 led to a further division and the erection of a new Congregational chapel on Endless Street for the seceders, but the two congregations were reunited in 1855. The size of the reunited congregations at times exceeded 800, prompting the erection of a

new chapel – or rather church, for this stone building in the Decorated style has a tower and 132-foot spire. Internally, the chapel was churchy in style, with lofty Gothic arches, a side pulpit of stone with mosaic panels and a communion table beneath a large stained glass window. The buildings were renovated in 1938, but in the 1970s further work was needed. After consideration was given to the sale of the whole complex, it was decided to internally remodel the chapel and sell the schoolrooms, creating a first floor worship area as at Brown Street. The church was cleared internally, and a floor erected at first floor level, allowing the lower part to be converted into a hall and rooms. Some of the furnishings remain, including a couple of pews and the heavy Communion Table, given as a peace memorial in 1918. The war memorials are now sited in the first floor foyer, and the mosaic panels from the pulpit are now set in the wall above the entrance to the sanctuary. The church joined the United Reformed Church in 1972. During the Covid lockdowns the church held services on Zoom, and continues to stream its services. There is a small junior church and the church are looking to reduce their carbon footprint and become an ‘Eco-Church.’

From Fisherton Street a short walk led to the old outskirts of the city and Pembroke Lodge, a fine and eccentric-looking villa dating from the early 19th century. After a period as lodgings attached to the adjacent hospital, the house was derelict by the start of the present century, when it was acquired by the Salisbury Society of Friends. It is a building of several parts, the oldest being a two-storey building with bow-front which might have been a toll-house. By the 1880s the whole building was a single house. A larger building to the rear was demolished by the Quakers when the building was adapted for a meeting house.

The original Salisbury Friends’ Meeting, which came into existence in the 1650s, was extinct by 1826, but in the 1880s a meeting came into being at Wilton, which in turn faded by the outbreak of the Great War. After the war, Quakers began to gather in Salisbury, and in 1962 a terraced house on Harcourt Terrace was purchased as a meeting house. By the turn of the century, the Meeting decided to seek alternative premises due to parking issues, although using a terraced house created its own issues. Pembroke Lodge, which is largely on one level (the first floor is let out), and had land to the rear, was more suitable for their use. In 2010, Pembroke Lodge opened for the first time as a Quaker Meeting House. An elegant listed building, it is light and airy within and has a beautiful garden to the rear. Within there is a substantial library and the block on the other side from the two-storey portion of the lodge now houses the meeting room. Photographs of the building before and during its redevelopment were displayed. Today the meeting house hosts various groups and activities during the week from playgroups to yoga.

From here it was but a short walk to the final chapel of the day, Emmanuel Evangelical Church, which occupies a former Wesleyan chapel of 1860. Built of brick with stone dressings, the chapel sports identical windows to those at



The delightfully restored Friends Meeting House, a new addition to Salisbury's religious scene (photograph copyright Gerard Charmley)

Salisbury Methodist Church, and a striking semi-circular porch with a dome, most likely also the work of Fred Bath and dating from the re-fronting of this chapel in 1897. Internally the chapel retains its pews, galleries with cast iron inlay panels, and high pulpit, and there is an organ in the rear gallery. The Methodists left the building in 1962 and it was bought five years later by an independent evangelical church meeting at nearby Emmanuel Hall (now demolished). Founded as a Railway Mission in 1906, the church changed its name when its association with that body ceased. Under the ministry of Malcolm Watts, pastor from 1971 to 2021, the church adopted a more conservative and Reformed ethos, embracing exclusive psalmody and forming a seminary for the training of Reformed evangelical ministers now housed in a villa a short distance from the chapel. The church is well-attended and Covid allowed the interior to be entirely repainted. At the chapel we heard an interesting talk on the history of the church, with special reference to its doctrinal position.

Much thanks for an interesting and varied day must go to Matt Davis and to the churches visited.

Gerard Charmley

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Sad news

Since the Membership Update in the last *Newsletter* we have been informed of the death of long-time member the Revd Nigel Lemon, of Preston in Lancashire.

Stuart Leadley, Membership Secretary

CHRISTOPHER GEOFFREY WAKELING

(29 NOVEMBER 1948–2 OCTOBER 2023)

‘A learned and inspiring enthusiast of all things chapel-related’

Chris Wakeling’s death was announced just before *Newsletter* 86 went to press. There was barely room in that issue for the briefest of notes in memory of one who had joined the Society’s Council in 2006, become its President a year later, served for two terms (2007–2013), and remained active in its support. Even so, that note caught the essence of the man: ‘...a learned and inspiring enthusiast of all things chapel-related’.

Of course there was more to it than that. For a start, there was his appointment as O.B.E. (2019), an honour which Chris rather deprecated but which the rest of us knew was wholly deserved. We were glad that it brought to the fore the public face of this most unpublic man. It particularly reflected his contribution to Historic England’s Places of Worship Forum, of which he had been a founder member and was for long its Chair (2005–2016). That demanded a national perspective, as did his chairmanship of the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain (2000–2003). More local perspectives came from chairing the Staffordshire Historic Buildings Trust and Urban Vision North Staffordshire (2004–2009). The former was a longstanding commitment, over many years and still ongoing; the latter was in suggestive contrast. Together they told of one visionary’s grasp of what the built environment might be, simultaneously reaching back and looking forward, feet firmly on the ground. Urban Vision, for example, was almost improbably ambitious. It aimed to promote:

‘...urban regeneration in North Staffordshire by the encouragement of high standards of planning, urban design, and architecture; the advancement of public education in the areas of architectural and urban design; the maintenance, improvement or provision of public amenities through the encouragement of urban design; the preservation of buildings or sites of historic or architectural importance.’

Outsiders might dismiss this as parish-pump pomposity, incorrigibly and impossibly so, but those who serve on such bodies know how time-consuming they can be, how draining of optimism, and how helpful it is to attract from the first experts who – when needed – are ready to be almost tiresomely perfectionist, fully prepared to insist on first principles. For five years (2014–2019) Chris was an adviser for EDP (Empowering Design Practices), an Open University project which aimed to help historic places of worship use their buildings to creative advantage. One who worked with him has paid tribute to the way in which his ‘quiet generosity, discretion and professionalism’ brought ‘fruitfulness out of kite-flying’. Note those words. Their like will recur. Almost as a matter of course

he became a Trustee of the Historic Chapels Trust (2014) and a member of both the Baptist Union and the Methodist Listed Buildings Advisory Committees. He was thus a committee man. It could hardly have been otherwise.

Chris's place on such committees reflected his expertise in two unfashionable yet obstinately important areas: Nonconformist Architecture and Adult Education. His immersion in the former had grown with the years. His undergraduate dissertation was on Nonconformist Architecture, his Ph.D was on Victorian and Edwardian Nonconformist Church Architecture, and many of the lectures that he was increasingly asked to deliver were on aspects of Nonconformist Architecture, as were most of his publications. That might be seen as an academic's niche subject, attracting few competitors. In fact there was nothing niche in Chris Wakeling's approach to his subject. He celebrated its ongoing variety, ensuring that the most boxlike Zoar had parity of esteem with the grandest of Chapeldom's spires and porticos. He set them in context. Most daring of all he placed them in a European, indeed a transatlantic, architectural context and made it clear that this was a continuing process rather than a thing of the past. His approach was magnificently vindicated in *Chapels of England: Buildings of Protestant Nonconformity* (2017), a coffee-table book in appearance but a work of meticulous scholarship in content which is as pleasurable to read as it is to handle. *Chapels of England* justified and enhanced *Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting Houses*, Christopher Stell's pioneering quartet of inventory volumes (1986–2002). The two Christophers had transformed the standing of their subject.

And Adult Education? That provided his bread-and-butter and kept his feet on the ground. It also retarded the academic recognition which was his due. From 1977 to 2011 Christopher Wakeling was a lecturer in Adult Education and visual-arts convener at Keele University. Adult Education is Higher Education's Cinderella. It has confirmed universities in local estimation and opened opportunities for the unlikeliest candidates. It has, however, seldom appealed to university leaders, especially of the newer sort, ambitiously world-leading, fixated on research ratings and dismissive of its attraction (as they see it) to well-circumstanced women with time on their hands. Keele was no exception in its attitude although Adult Education had been integral to its establishment as a university in the first place. In Chris's time at Keele there was what one friend has called a 'disastrous clash of cultures' between dyed-in-the-wool adult educationists and university leaders for whom all must be cutting-edge, world-beating, and research-centred.

Chris buckled down at Keele for over thirty years, in effect doing his own thing, unpromoted, while teaching indefatigably in Staffordshire, Cheshire, and Shropshire on all matters art-and- architectural and many matters cultural. His classes were often over-subscribed; some had waiting lists. He innovated and got away with it, hence the M.A. in Architectural History which was the first of its

kind. He became known in the wider world of Continuing Education, invited to lecture on courses at Cambridge (for a Master's in Building Studies) and Oxford (for Paul Barnwell's sessions at Rewley House exploring Places of Worship in Britain and Ireland, 2009–2018), and at the Weald and Downland Museum in Sussex (for conservation professionals, 2004–2017). When he retired in 2011 Keele recognised his service with an Honorary Fellowship and in the summer of 2023 it was suggested that he apply for an Honorary Readership. His O.B.E., after all, reflected well on Keele, *Chapels of England* could not be ignored and, yet more telling, his edition of Pevsner's *Staffordshire*, destined to be the last in the uniquely magisterial *Buildings of England* series, was scheduled to appear in 2024. A biennial university lecture, the Earl Lecture, to be delivered by him, was to be re-launched for the occasion. It would be clear testimony to the public engagement, teaching, and research which had been hallmarks of his career.

Writing did not come easily to him. It was hindered by the regimen of extramural teaching, and the completion of his doctorate was delayed by it. The nature and structure of *Chapels of England* and *Buildings of England* did not make for fine sweeps of prose. Nonetheless, his publications, relatively few in number but strong in quality, had grown from the mid-1990s. Their style was confident and their range demonstrated a wide grasp of architectural history in general. His chapter on 'Post-Renaissance Europe' in Dan Cruickshank's edition of Sir Banister Fletcher's classic *A History of Architecture* (1996) might stand as an earnest of this. It is not surprising that Keele was nudged to promote him.

What of the man behind the historian? I first met Chris Wakeling in 1973 when he was mulling over the subject and sources of his Ph.D. He was tall, indeed lanky, and his long hair accentuated his height. Over the years he seemed to change little, although photographs disprove that. His gaze was direct, thoughtful, understanding yet critical. He listened and contributed with the good historian's courteous scepticism. I experienced his approach, painstakingly meticulous, taking nothing for granted, when I convened the organising committee for a symposium on Architecture and History held in April 2002 at the University of Sheffield under the joint auspices of the Royal Historical Society and the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain. Its proceedings were published in 2003. They did not include anything by Chris but their range and quality testify to his foundational contribution in locating speakers, marshalling their subjects and determining the sequence of their papers.

Christopher Wakeling was born in Cardiff. Transport rather than architecture was in his DNA. His father worked in the city's bus depot, his grandfather drove Cardiff's last tram. His education was what a bright boy might expect: Cardiff High School followed by Cheltenham Grammar School when the family moved to Gloucestershire. He remained at Cheltenham Grammar School when his parents moved on to south Yorkshire. School over, he taught for two terms – focusing on slow learners – in a West Riding primary school before

Art College in Leeds and an undergraduate degree course in the History of Art at the University of East Anglia (1969–1973) which led to postgraduate work supervised by Stefan Muthesius.

Various strands were coming together. The Wakelings were Anglicans but in Gloucestershire Chris encountered Young Friends and in Norwich he met, and in due course married, Marianne Windsor whose roots were Quaker. Marianne was reading German and hers was a four-year course, with a year in Germany. Chris somehow extended his three-year course to join her in Germany; he did not warm to its architecture. Chris never joined the Society of Friends but he is best described as Quakerish; the word fits his approach. As for teaching, he got on well with children and teenagers; he was less at ease with undergraduates but warmed to mature students. His brief experience of teaching in the West Riding confirmed the first, and his parents' management of care homes prepared him for the last.

His health was never good. The cancer from which he suffered in 2015 recurred in 2023. It led to major surgery from which he was recovering when he succumbed to Covid. Three days before the surgery he dated his application for an Honorary Readership. He died a month later.

Over a hundred gathered to celebrate his life in the Old Chapel, Etruria, and thanks to Zoom more were able to join them. There could not have been a better setting for their farewell: a small chapel, formerly Wesleyan, sensitively restored (would Chris have wholly approved of the chairs which replaced the pews?) as a funeral venue. Its galleries were as well-filled as the body of the chapel. The celebration, enfolded in music, included two longer and two shorter appreciations, interspersed with a profound silence broken by the occasional cough. It was not a Meeting of Friends but it was certainly Quakerish and the essence of a good life, its seriousness, its sensitivity, and its quiet wisdom had been recreated for many friends.

(I have been indebted for help in the preparation of this appreciation to Paul Barnwell, John Briggs, Trevor Cooper, Diana Evans, Philip Morgan (for his Tribute in Etruria's Old Chapel), and Marianne Wakeling, last alphabetically but first in all other respects.)

Clyde Binfield

Dr Wakeling died on 2 October, not 30 September as reported in Newsletter 86. Your Editor would like to apologise for this error. An obituary also appeared in the 'Other Lives' section of The Guardian on 27 November: see <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2023/nov/27/christopher-wakeling-obituary>.

CHAPEL DONATIONS ON VISITS

It has always been the practice on a Chapels Society visit to leave a donation at each of the chapels visited to thank them for hosting us and to support their work. On a visit that does not need the hire of a coach, most of the payment made by participating members goes towards funding the chapel donations and the refreshments they provide.

The Council has reviewed our approach and felt that it would be good to give somewhat more generous donations, especially given the financial challenges facing many chapels. However we are reluctant to increase significantly the costs of visits, as we wish to encourage the widest possible range of members to enjoy these. Therefore on future visits there will be a donation from Society general funds to each chapel to top up what comes from the members participating on the day.

This change of policy will not create a need to increase members' subscriptions as we have made savings by the Council now normally having its meetings online. As a result we avoid a substantial sum in regular travel costs, which can now be diverted to a purpose central to the Society's objects.

John Ellis, Treasurer

RECONNECTING WITH CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN FAITH: BRINGING THE CHAPELS SOCIETY INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

AN ARTICLE BY PETER ACKERS

For all heritage organisations, changes in current political and religious ideas shape their ability to preserve buildings and other artefacts. For example, the dramatic revival of participation in Remembrance Day should ensure the preservation of war memorials. Moreover, as I argued in the 2019 Christopher Stell Memorial Lecture (*Newsletter* 73, January 2020), the Chapels Society is as much about remembering past religious and social movements as celebrating their architecture. Once public interest in those traditions wanes, their landmark buildings are likely to disappear.

As we all know, British Christian observance is in decline and this is most dramatic in the once mainstream United Reformed (URC) and Methodist Nonconformist churches. More and more chapels are faced with closure and often there is little sense that this disappearing past is of any relevance to current generations. These thoughts came to mind on some of our recent Chapels Society tours, round Brighton in 2022 or Dewsbury and Batley in 2023. We visited or

passed many impressive buildings with tiny congregations, on their last legs, or already closed and repurposed. There is something sad and funereal about such tours, important though they still are. By contrast, our last visit to Salisbury in 2023 seemed more hopeful. New congregations or fresh influxes of young people were refilling and reviving old buildings. As I recall, the Baptists were outgrowing their building. Last September, I led a Loughborough U3A Church History day to two iconic Leicestershire chapels: Bardon outside Coalville, with deep roots in the Old Dissent, and Barton-in-the-Beans, a village chapel that provided an evangelical mission platform for the Baptists to become the county's strongest Nonconformist group in the 1851 Religious Census. Both are beautifully preserved buildings with a handful of devoted but ageing members. The Baptists were benefiting from the youthful enthusiasm of a Leicester evangelical church.

The Chapels Society visited Loughborough Church of Christ in 2015. That day, we also walked up the hill to what was once St Peter's Church of England to see an impressive conversion by the Elim Pentecostal Church and another Charismatic church. In summer 2023, I revisited that Church of Christ, a late Victorian, red brick 'Backstreet Bethel', to give a talk on the history of their movement. A majority of the Churches of Christ joined the URC in 1981, but not this chapel. Since I began Ph.D research in the late 1980s (see *Newsletter* 4, June 1991) on the group my Dad's Wigan family belonged to, one chapel after another has closed. Leicester was once a major centre, but little remains. Hence my expectation in Loughborough was to find a few old, white people marking time before closure. Instead, I encountered a community led by young men with a mixture of age, sex and ethnic backgrounds. This is an 'Old Paths' chapel; a tradition widely regarded by 'progressive' Christians at the start of the 20th century as 'fundamentalist', old-fashioned and out-of-touch with modernity. Yet they're still here and now they've opened a new, mainly African-origin church in Leicester.

So what's going on, here and elsewhere? As I argued earlier (*Newsletter* 68, May 2018), this is something more complex than secularisation and straightforward Christian decline. As with Methodism in the 18th century, new popular religious movements have emerged 'under the radar' of respectable religious opinion. Dan Hitchens, in *The Spectator*, 23 September 2023, pointed out that 'London's Sunday attendance is 10 per cent higher than 40 years ago'. One simplistic explanation is immigration from the more religious 'majority world'. For a deeper understanding, we need to turn to *The Oxford History of Protestant Dissenting Traditions*, Volumes IV (2019) and V (2018). Edited by Jehu J. Hanciles and Mark P. Hutchinson, these set the 20th century in 'Global Context'. In simple terms, they chart the dramatic decline of 'mainline' liberal Protestantism in America and Europe and the equally dramatic, but less widely acknowledged, rise of Pentecostal and Charismatic traditions. The latter have

not only created thriving new churches all over the world, most notably in Africa and Latin America; they have also reshaped Anglican and even Roman Catholic worship traditions. Jehu Hanciles (Volume IV: 3) writes of ‘the extraordinary growth of Pentecostal-Charismatic movements... from less than 1 per cent of all Christians in 1900 to 23 per cent by 2000’. Sylvia Collins Mayo (Volume IV: 296) tracks British church attendance from 1998 to 2005 and finds falls of 43 per cent in the URC, 24 per cent for Methodists and 8 per cent for Baptists, while Pentecostals have grown by 34 per cent. Gordon Heath (Volume V: 85) concludes: ‘The growth of Pentecostalism and the Charismatic movement in Britain has changed the demographics of Nonconformity’. In other words, Christian immigrants are bringing it with them or seeking out churches of this ilk, but so are younger generations born in this country.

How does this help an organisation that seeks to publicise and preserve historic chapels? After all, these new traditions take even more seriously the fundamental Protestant idea that ‘the church’ is the people, not the building. Indeed, when the building is too small, they look to move on. They have little notion of ‘sacred space’, so why should they care about old English Baptist, Methodist and Congregational churches?

Obviously, one important counter is to stress the theological roots of global Pentecostal and Charismatic movements in earlier Methodist, Evangelical and



Citygate Church Bournemouth, a Newfrontiers-aligned Charismatic Evangelical church opposite Bournemouth railway station, may not look like a chapel, but its large congregations and range of groups and ministries are firmly within the tradition of vigorous, outward-looking Protestant Christianity (seen here in July 2022; photograph copyright Matt Davis)

Holiness traditions. And the *Oxford History* does this. That helps especially where they are using an old church building, as we found the Assemblies of God occupying a Wakefield Baptist chapel in 2019. On the other side, what does the aesthetic, architectural side of our mission make of places like the Icehouse Christian Centre, visited on our 2015 Grimsby visit? I think the answer is that all religious movements care potentially about their past and that it is our job, as a Society, to connect with new English generations of whatever ethnicity, attracted to this expanding wave of Christianity.

This may take some of us out of our theological comfort zones. But, as my examples above demonstrate, Chapels Society visits are already remarkably ‘broad church’. And we’ve always tried to bring together disparate traditions, reaching beyond the mainstream, as in our 2017 joint conference with the Ecclesiological Society, ‘From Citadels to Warehouses’. But what the *Oxford History* suggests to me is that we now need to engage more urgently and directly with what is now the dominant global form of Protestant worship, especially among the young people. Only by doing so, will we reconnect the past with the present and begin to draw new generations into our ranks.

In a sense, this is ‘back to the future’. Fine late Victorian buildings sometimes obscure the demotic origins of English Nonconformity. Anglican parsons of the 18th century complained about Methodist ‘enthusiasm’. Late 19th-century movements like the Churches of Christ and the Salvation Army were a backlash against growing Nonconformist denominational respectability. Clearly, this should only ever be one strand of Chapels Society activity. Yet, as a start, I’d suggest we organise visits and conferences that engage explicitly with the Pentecostal and Charismatic tradition, thus drawing people from these movements into our Society and onto our Council.

A CLOSER LOOK AT 21ST-CENTURY TRENDS ... AND SOME CHALLENGES

AN ARTICLE BY MATT DAVIS

Whether during a chapel crawl or through a survey of published material, it can be hard to grasp the sheer extent of the vigour with which newer or less strongly represented religious groups of the type characterised in Peter’s article are catching up with the traditional denominations: so let us look at some more statistics. Using the official Worship Register and my associated database of places of worship, I have selected three random areas – intended to be broadly representative – and have analysed in depth the places of worship registered there since 2000 (the total is given in brackets after each area name). The findings may take us far outside our ‘theological comfort zones’.

A large urban area: Nottingham (69)

Of these, 33 are Pentecostal, 17 are Islamic, 4 are Charismatic Evangelical, and 3 are Sikh; there are two each for Buddhists and Hindus; and one each for Christadelphians, the Coptic Orthodox Church, Jehovah's Witnesses, Jews, Methodists, Roman Catholics, Spiritualists and Ukrainian Catholics.

A semi-rural area with medium-sized towns: East Sussex, excluding Brighton & Hove (30)

Of these, 7 are Charismatic Evangelical, 6 are Pentecostal and 3 are Spiritualist; there are two each for Baptists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Latter-day Saints and Muslims; and one each for the Greek Orthodox Church, Methodists, the Plymouth Brethren Christian Church (PBCC), Roman Catholics, Strict Baptists and a non-denominational group (Ellel Ministries) which specialises in spiritual retreats.

A rural area: Wiltshire, excluding Swindon (26)

Of these, 6 are for the PBCC, 3 are Pentecostal and 3 are non-Charismatic Evangelical (independent or FIEC-aligned); there are two each for Charismatic Evangelical congregations, Jehovah's Witnesses, Muslims and non-denominational Christian groups; and one each for Baptists, Buddhists, Latter-day Saints, a Polish Catholic congregation, the United Reformed Church ... and a congregation of druids, for whom the first long barrow since the Neolithic period was built in 2014 near Devizes. Recent changes to legislation mean that such structures can be formally recognised as places of worship!

Unsurprisingly, the most urban area, Nottingham, has the most new places of worship: both overall, and for new Christian groups and the major world faiths. In East Sussex, the proximity of the Latter-day Saints' 'London England Temple' at Newchapel, just over the Surrey border, may explain the recent opening of two meetinghouses, and the appearance of several Spiritualist churches (all in smaller towns: Battle, Hailsham and Seaford) is curious; but again Pentecostal and Charismatic groups predominate, mostly in the big towns of Eastbourne and Hastings but not exclusively. Even Wiltshire, which shows more variety, has seen some penetration by two of the longer established Pentecostal groups, the Assemblies of God and the New Testament Church of God, while Charismatic groups have put down roots in growing Warminster and Ludgershall. (The prevalence of new PBCC places of worship is attributable to the group's very specific requirements for buildings of particular sizes and its longstanding prevalence in the Chippenham and Salisbury areas.)

These bald statistics hide important nuances. Across the board, the newly registered buildings of the bigger, more traditional denominations are largely replacements or anomalies. In Nottingham, a new Methodist church has not

been founded: instead a suburban joint Church of England and Methodist partnership has merely added and registered a freestanding annexe to its long-established church building. The newly registered Roman Catholic building is in fact a monastery chapel next to Bulwell's existing Catholic church, not intended primarily for public use. In East Sussex, apart from one new Baptist foundation in Bexhill – in a former URC building – each of the 'new' Baptist, Methodist, Roman Catholic and Strict Baptist churches replace older, usually larger premises that have been sold off. In Wiltshire, both the Baptist and the United Reformed chapels, at Porton and Corsham (Monk's Chapel) respectively, are ancient by Nonconformist standards but have only recently been formally registered because marriages were due to take place. Meanwhile, many of the places registered by smaller and less familiar groups occupy old churches or chapels, whose reuse and reinvigoration should be welcomed by all who have an interest in such buildings; others are interesting and creative reuses of a variety of secular buildings; and some impressive new-builds complete the picture. For anybody worried about the decline of our urban areas, it is encouraging that such groups are bringing new life (to borrow a favoured Pentecostal church name) not just to redundant chapels but to dead office buildings and grim industrial streets. In an era when the significant environmental impact of demolishing and replacing perfectly serviceable buildings is better understood, this is an unexpected but welcome form of urban renewal.

A challenge

It poses a challenge, though: do we need to rethink the very nature of a chapel? The liturgical requirements of the most rapidly growing groups



*King's Church, Lewes, East Sussex, seen in 2017: a good example of the vast industrial buildings popular with Charismatic Evangelical congregations
(photograph copyright Matt Davis)*

and denominations are somewhat different from either the ritual-led, altar-focused style of a Catholic service or the strongly Word-focused ministry of many mainstream Nonconformist denominations, where pulpits and galleries predominate. A typical service in a Pentecostal or Charismatic church will involve informal fellowship with other worshippers, smaller ‘breakout’ groups, and a great deal of singing and music – potentially quite elaborate, with full bands and a setup similar to what may be found at a nightclub ‘gig’ or arena concert; preaching is more likely to be extemporary and, again, informal; and services tend to be geared up specifically for online streaming – often on a dedicated YouTube channel or Facebook group, but potentially needing to be ‘sliced and diced’ into a TikTok video (short-form and highly customisable) or an Instagram feed (currently the *de rigueur* method of ‘delivering content’ to the smartphone generation). None of this translates into needing a building which has a comfortably conventional chapel-like form. It is why new-build churches tend to resemble vast hangars or strikingly branded auditoria, and why internal features are often stripped out when former chapels are taken over. Pews and galleries are no good when the Gospel message is delivered by a floor-walking pastor and celebrated through dance.

Another challenge

Claiming that the religious, structural, economic and social features that led to the founding and rapid growth of Nonconformist worship communities in the 18th and 19th centuries can also be identified in the new religious communities of the 21st century – the ‘back to the future’ idea – may, on the face of it, seem surprising. Can the founding, development and early experiences of a 21st-century Pentecostal church really have anything in common with the early years of, say, a Victorian Wesleyan chapel or an Edwardian mission hall? Would one of these new congregations really recognise much about typical chapel life in the heyday of Nonconformity? I assert that, in both cases, the answer is ‘yes’. Start by reading the story of the New Testament Church of God in Southall, west London – which I have taken as a representative example, having surveyed the histories of numerous Pentecostal and Charismatic congregations.

The New Testament Church of God identified Southall as an area where spiritual growth could be sought. Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism in various forms were predominant; many churches had closed. A pastor was appointed, premises were hired (a room at the town hall), and the church was founded in October 1983. The pastor and his family moved on; an attempt to restart the church in 1985 nearly failed (nobody turned up to the first service under the new pastor), but numbers gradually grew. Weddings and baptisms followed; evangelistic outreach proved increasingly fruitful; Tamil-language services started to cater for Tamil Christians; numerous fellowships – men’s, women’s, youth – and associated organisations started: Bible schools, training of the lay faithful, house

groups and ‘cottage meetings’; there were church outings, prayer marathons, fasts, camps ... all of a sudden, the congregation numbered in the hundreds. A disused chapel was bought in 2002 and was registered for marriages two years later; church members pledged money for improvements and expansion; and the house next door was bought and now provides rental income. Typical weekly attendances are 300, and the cliché ‘every day and twice on Sundays’ can be applied literally to the church’s service pattern.

Now push the dates back a hundred years or more, swap the denomination name for something more familiar, and re-read the paragraph. Apart from specific details, it could be describing the early decades of a Wesleyan, Baptist, Presbyterian or any other Free Church. And that is why anybody interested in chapels, their communities and their social impact should take a keen interest in what Peter Ackers correctly describes as ‘the dominant global form of Protestant worship’. It is revolutionising Christian expression in this country: let us engage with it.

- *More detailed studies of Nottingham’s religious scene, the New Testament of God, and (in due course) other new churches and religious groups will follow in a series of articles in future Newsletters.*

NATIONAL HERITAGE LIST FOR ENGLAND: NEWLY LISTED PLACES OF WORSHIP

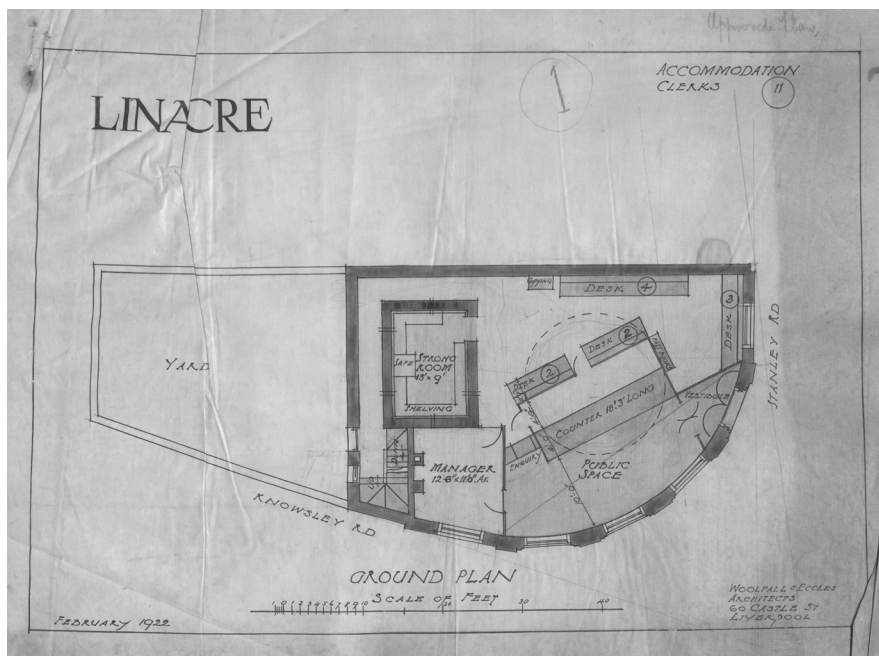
No chapels were newly listed in the last quarter of 2023; but in Wakefield, the Neoclassical former Sunday School and day school associated with Westgate Unitarian Chapel has been upgraded to Grade II* listed status (NHLE reference 1242123). It started out as an orangery and was built around 1800, but in 1849 it was granted to the trustees of Westgate Chapel for educational use. It was later converted into offices but is now empty. It stands just off Back Lane.

DESECULARISATION DIGEST: ELIM CHURCH, BOOTLE

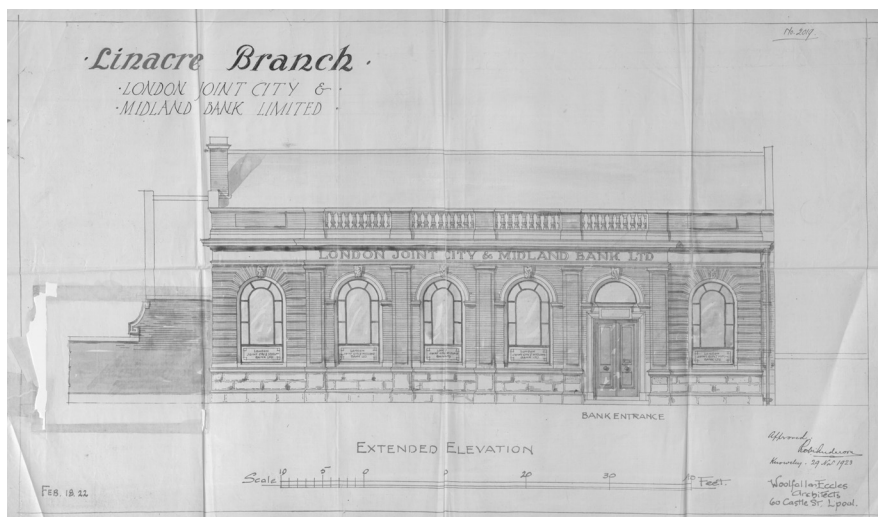
The architectural practice of Woolfall and Eccles, formed in 1890 by Thomas Eccles and John Woolfall and based in central Liverpool, was prolific and worked on all types of buildings. The partnership have to their name almshouses, golf clubhouses, mansions, offices, Anglican churches and even a Presbyterian chapel (St Columba, Toxteth Park; only the tower survives) – but banks were their speciality. They were particularly associated with Midland Bank: their practice was one of a small number employed by Midland in the pre-World War

II period to design its branches. A degree of uniformity and common identity was understandably important to the Bank. Woolfall died in 1919, and various other architects joined the practice: it eventually became T. M. Alexander and Sons after Thomas MacKelvie Alexander joined in 1923. No doubt all of these architects would be surprised to find that one of their branches, opened a century ago, has spent nearly 30 years in religious use by a Pentecostal community!

Midland had a main branch in Bootle town centre on Derby Road. To supplement this, a sub-branch linked administratively to Derby Road was opened in April 1924 at a major junction, the crossroads of Knowsley and Stanley Roads, in the north of town. It was known as the Linacre branch in reference to the district of Bootle in which it was situated. Woolfall and Eccles received the commission, just as they did for many other Midland branches across the north of England. They drew up the plans in February 1922 and got them approved in November 1923; construction soon started, and the branch opened in April 1924. It was a striking rounded-off design, adapted to the corner site facing a large roundabout. The façade, forming just over a quarter of a circle, had six evenly spaced arched openings separated by subtle brick pilasters and, except for the two outermost, topped with stone surrounds and keystones. The entrance was set into the second opening from the north; the others had windows, letting



Ground plan of the Linacre branch of Midland Bank (1924) – now Elim Church Bootle



*Extended elevation of the Linacre branch of Midland Bank (1924)
– now Elim Church Bootle*

plenty of light into what was a small space. The single-storey building had a tiled roof hidden behind a balustraded parapet. Bombs damaged the building severely in 1941, but it was reconstructed faithfully. It remained in use as a bank until 1997, when it closed.



Elim Church Bootle, Knowsley Road/Stanley Road, Bootle, Merseyside, in February 2020 (photograph copyright Phil Nash, from Wikimedia Commons: licensed for reuse under Creative Commons licences CC BY-SA 4.0 & GFDL)

The Elim Pentecostal Church came to Bootle in 1977 when a series of tent meetings were held, which were successful enough to allow the Welsh Church on Stanley Road to be hired for regular services. After a move to another hired hall, the church bought the old bank building in 1997, converted the interior and held its first service there on 13 December that year. The debts incurred were paid off within seven years. The congregation grew continuously, though, and soon a mere sub-branch building was no longer big enough. The church retained the building (and its registration for worship, granted in April 1998) but started to rent a hall again temporarily. In 2017 it was able to buy a new building, formerly St Andrew's Memorial Hall, and ordinary services are now held there – but the old bank is used for youth work and services and also as the church's offices and administrative headquarters.

In preparing this article I would like to acknowledge the contribution of, and offer my thanks to, Jemma Lee and Claire Twinn of the 'HSBC History' archive, launched in 2021, where a vast amount of information on the history of HSBC and its constituent banks has been curated. The ground plan (item number 0123-0672) and extended elevation (item number 1503-0018) scans are used courtesy of the HSBC History archive and HSBC Bank UK plc.

CHAPEL CLOSURES

I am grateful to *Revd Reginald Rooke* for supplying details of recent chapel closures in the East Midlands Synod of the United Reformed Church. Three are profiled here; four more will follow in the next or a subsequent *Newsletter*.

Rothwell United Reformed Church, Northamptonshire

The church traces its origins to 1655 and was therefore significant in the development of Nonconformity locally. The plain but stately and dignified chapel was built in 1735 and altered on three occasions between 1762 and 1852. Built of ironstone, it has Romanesque-style rounded windows with bright white surrounds. The Victorian interior is impressive and well-preserved, with box pews, gallery, oak pulpit, many memorials and similar.

Paulerspury Chapel, Northamptonshire

This small village has a tiny, oddly shaped chapel: a double-gabled façade with an offset gabled porch, half-gables to its side and yet more gables to the side walls of the chapel. Most windows are round-arched, in contrast to the pointiness. The church was founded in 1826. Conversion to a house appeared to be



underway in October 2023. Will the tiny burial ground be preserved? (*Pictured on page 23 in February 2007; photograph copyright Ian Rob, adapted from <https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/343897>: licensed for reuse under Creative Commons licence CC-BY-SA 2.0*)

Ermine United Reformed Church, Ermine Estate, Lincoln, Lincolnshire

This very large housing estate forms the northern chunk of Lincoln, up to the A46/A15 bypass. A Congregational church was built on a generous site in 1956. Long and quite substantial, it was a brick building with a square tower-cum-porch. A block-glass window in the shape of a Cross was a nice touch. (The estate has also lost its Methodist church – built c. 1961 and closed before 2018. Permission for demolition was granted in November 2019.)

Hastings Tabernacle, East Sussex

‘Pulpit’ chapels – provided not for existing congregations but for aspiring preachers – were a common feature of Sussex’s unique brand of Calvinism in the 19th century. The Tabernacle was one such, built in 1854 for the ministry of Charles Pavey. Its alignment varied between independent, Calvinistic and Strict Baptist depending on the subsequent ministers in charge, but by the 1980s it was an Evangelical Free church. In 2018, with decline setting in, the Church Growth Trust acquired it, aiming to plant a new congregation; but instead it was taken over by the nearby Holy Trinity Church and is used as a hall for youth activities and as a ‘Ukrainian sanctuary’ and café, offering fellowship and practical support for Ukrainian refugees. Stone-built and very severe, it occupies a prominent town-centre spot. (*Pictured right in April 2010; photograph copyright Matt Davis*)



➤ The ‘Lost Chapels’ feature returns in Newsletter 88.

BOOK NOTICES

Places of Worship in Britain and Ireland 1929–1990, edited by P. S. Barnwell and Allan Doig, the penultimate book in this series, is now available and will be reviewed in a forthcoming *Newsletter*. It considers often overshadowed mid-20th-century developments as well as the impact of Vatican II, discusses synagogues and mosques alongside churches and chapels, and includes a chapter

on Nonconformist buildings in England by the late Christopher Wakeling. It is being offered to Chapels Society members for £35 (a £15 discount on the cover price) and with free postage. To take advantage of this please email the publisher, Shaun Tyas, directly (shaun@shauntyas.myzen.co.uk) or call 01775 821542, and pay by cheque (made payable to Shaun Tyas), PayPal (directly to the above email address) or bank transfer (check the account details with Shaun). Alternatively write to Shaun Tyas, 1 High Street, DONINGTON, Lincolnshire PE11 4TA.

NEWS AND NOTES

Chapels above shops

Philip Thornborow has drawn my attention to Emmanuel Church at Weston Favell, a big district shopping centre in Northampton. The building is very curious: it is attached to the side of the shopping centre and is entirely above ground level, suspended above a road. There are two entrances: up a covered staircase from the adjacent bus stop, or from the shopping centre through the church's integral coffee shop. What a contrast to the Sacred Heart Catholic Church a few steps away, built at the same time (the mid-1970s) but in a much more conventional free-standing form – although it too is an unusual building, being a lofty, steel-framed pyramid. Emmanuel is now a Church of England, Baptist and Methodist LEP, but it was built for Methodists; and Philip notes that Methodists arguably pioneered the concept of chapels above shops with their Central Halls, in which rent paid by the shop tenants helped to support the church's activities. For a detailed assessment of Central Halls, see Angela Connolly's thesis *Methodist Central Halls as Public Sacred Space* (2010), available at https://pure.manchester.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/54506512/FULL_TEXT.PDF.

Holocaust memorial window under threat

Brighton and Hove Reform Synagogue, a striking modernist building in Hove, is under threat of demolition – and, according to local newspaper reports, its Holocaust memorial stained glass window could be lost. The foundation stone, which has dual Gregorian and Hebrew dates, was laid on 27 July 1966/29 Tammuz 5726 and the synagogue opened the following year. Concerns over the fabric and accessibility resulted in the community applying to demolish it and replace it with flats with an integral ground-floor synagogue in 2017. This was refused, but so was a proposal to Historic England to award Grade II listed status. (The synagogue is currently on Brighton and Hove City Council's Local List of Heritage Assets.) Now, the Twentieth Century Society has submitted a new listing bid following the worship community's majority vote to try again for a replacement building with flats above.



Brighton and Hove Reform Synagogue, Palmeira Avenue, Hove (1967), seen in September 2018. The tripartite memorial window is visible below the triple-curved roof (photograph copyright Matt Davis)

The memorial window was designed by R. John Petts, the London-born Welsh artist famous for the memorial window at the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, bombed in a fatal racist attack in 1963. Of his window at the synagogue, art historian and curator of the National Portrait Gallery Alison Smith stated there is ‘no comparable Holocaust memorial of this scale and quality in the U.K.’ and it ‘stand[s] as one of the great religious works of art of the 20th century’. Similar praise has come from other sources. The worship community states that if demolition goes ahead, all windows will be preserved and then reinstated prominently in the replacement building.

Three Oaks Methodist Church

This small early 20th-century chapel, built for the United Methodists, was based in the village of Three Oaks in Guestling parish near Rye in East Sussex. It closed in around 2000. I have received an enquiry about its war memorial: nobody seems to know where it ended up after the chapel closed. Do any Chapels Society members know? If so, please contact me.

United Reformed Church closures

Several recent *Newsletters*, including this one, mention this topic: either directly, as in the ‘Chapel Closures’ section, or by allusion (refer to the statistics quoted

in Peter Ackers' article, which showed a large decline in attendance nationally during a seven-year period). It might be interesting to work out just how many churches which joined the URC at its formation in 1972 are no longer in use – a job which should be possible, because *The United Reformed Church First General Assembly Agenda and Reports* (1972) contains a list of every church at that time. I did the exercise for Sussex, and found that of 72 churches which joined the URC in 1972, only 35 remain open (including five which have moved to new buildings since the union). Not particularly revealing on its own, but a deeper analysis of the raw data – looking at, for example, locations (urban/suburban/rural), closure dates, origins (Congregational, Presbyterian etc.), current uses and other factors, could provide some useful insights. Watch this space...?!



*Alfriston United Reformed Church, East Sussex, was built in 1801 as an Independent chapel, became Congregational, joined the URC in 1972 and closed in May 2009. By March 2022, when this picture was taken, it was 'The Old Chapel Centre' – an exhibition space, community hall and concert venue
(photograph copyright Matt Davis)*

New uses for chapels

Kenneth Jackson has identified a former Wesleyan chapel which survives in the middle of an area of heavy industry east of Keighley town centre and which has been repurposed as a foundry – certainly more appropriate to its surroundings, but a surprising fate for the impressive stone-built chapel! Its Classical-style façade is now dominated by the metal accoutrements associated with foundries, and the date-stone on the gable has been partly obliterated – it reads 'WESLEYAN CHAPEL / ERECTED AD 18??' – but there are some clues

as to dates. The chapel, in an area historically known as Worth, is not in the *Methodist Statistical Returns* of 1873 but is in the 1940 version, where it was the fourth-largest of the 16 chapels in the main Keighley circuit. It is on the 1889 O.S. map, albeit with ‘just’ 500 seats rather than the 700 mentioned in 1940, and is still marked as a chapel on the 1952 and 1956 maps. The *Bradford Observer* (16 November 1953) confirms what happened, though: the church merged with the former Primitive Methodist chapel a short distance away at Thwaites Lane, and in October 1953 it was decided to hold all services at the much smaller Thwaites Lane building (now demolished). Worth Methodist Chapel, as it was known latterly, was sold at auction on 14 November 1953 for £2,000 to William Waller and Sons Ltd, metal merchants, who integrated it into their existing foundry. Now, as ‘Chapel Foundry’, the two-storey building is in use by a family-owned cast metal specialist, Leach and Thompson. It is nearly opposite Dalton Mills, one of Yorkshire’s largest and most famous textile mills and, until its near-destruction by fire in 2022, a popular location for television filming.



The former Wesleyan Methodist Church, Dalton Lane, Keighley, West Yorkshire, seen in September 2023. The date-stone is partly hidden behind the metalwork (photograph copyright Kenneth Jackson)