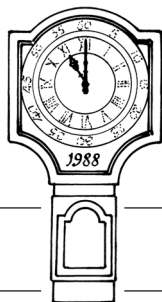


THE CHAPELS SOCIETY



Newsletter 88

May 2024



The former Strict Baptist Chapel at Shaw Street, Liverpool, has survived many changes within and beyond its brick and sandstone walls since it was built in 1847. Indeed, its congregation can trace its origins back to the earliest Baptist church in what was then (1714: i.e. pre-docks) a modest settlement. They now worship over the water on the Wirral, though: their longstanding home, seen in May 2023 and described in the article on page 10, has been converted into flats (photograph copyright Gerard Charmley)

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NOTICEBOARD

CHAPELS SOCIETY EVENTS

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| 29 June 2024 | Chapels Society Annual General Meeting, Andrew Worth Lecture and half-day visit to Hampstead and Golders Green, led by Martin Wellings (booking deadline 15 June 2024) |
| 30 June 2024 | Copy deadline for August 2024 <i>Newsletter</i> |
| 2 July 2024 | A celebration of the life and work of Christopher Wakeling: 2.30pm–5.00pm at Bethesda Methodist Chapel, Hanley (see 'Proceedings' section; RSVP by 24 June 2024) |
| 28 September 2024 | Ecclesiological Society and Chapels Society full-day joint Conference: 'Competing Churches and Chapels, 1829–1939' at the St Albans Centre, London EC1 (see enclosed flyer for booking information) |

EDITORIAL

Following an excellent spring visit to the Wirral, which will be reviewed in *Newsletter* 89, attention turns to two events in London in the next few months. Details and booking forms are enclosed and will be on the Society's website. We hope to see you for our summer visit, lecture and AGM, and for our joint conference with the Ecclesiological Society which will feature a stimulating series of six lectures by renowned experts.

PROCEEDINGS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 29 JUNE 2024

The 36th Annual General Meeting of the Chapels Society will take place on Saturday 29 June 2024, at Hampstead Garden Suburb Free Church, Central Square, London, NW11 7AG. The AGM will be part of our Summer walking tour, which will also include the Andrew Worth Lecture and visits to chapels in Golders Green. It is anticipated that the meeting will begin at around 12.30 p.m. Booking details for the Tour are on the flyer enclosed with this *Newsletter*.

The AGM is an opportunity to reflect on the life and activities of the Society, to receive reports from the Society's officers, and to elect officers and members of Council for the coming year. The Council is keen to encourage breadth and diversity of representation and would warmly welcome expressions of interest. The Hon. Secretary would be delighted to hear from any member who would like to consider serving on the Council or in another post.

Martin Wellings

A CELEBRATION OF THE LIFE AND WORK OF CHRISTOPHER WAKELING

This event takes place on Tuesday 2 July 2024 at Bethesda Methodist Church, Albion Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST1 1QF, between 2.30pm and 5.00pm. It will be followed by the official launch of the *Staffordshire* volume of the *Buildings of England* series ('Pevsner'), which Christopher revised. This will take place between 6.00pm and 8.00pm, with a drinks reception. Yale University Press would like to invite all Chapels Society members to attend both events. To confirm your attendance, please email Linda McQueen on linda.mcqueen@yaleup.co.uk or telephone her on 020 707 9492 by **Monday 24 June 2024**.

CODES FOR ENTRIES IN STELL

Starting in this edition of *Newsletter*, a code will be used to indicate chapels described in Christopher Stell's *Inventories*. Codes will be in the form e.g. [C256], where C = the *Central England* volume, E = *Eastern England*, N = *North of England* and S = *South-West England*, followed by the page number.

THE STORY OF ‘THE ALLEN’

AN ARTICLE BY MATT DAVIS

Wallsend on North Tyneside was well-provided with Methodist chapels at the time of the Union in 1932. Brunswick Chapel on the High Street had been Wesleyan; Station Road and Norman Terrace had chapels with Primitive Methodist origins; Buddle Street had a United Methodist Free Chapel; and chapels originally linked to the Methodist New Connexion stood on Hadrian Road and Park Road. (The last three had of course become United Methodist when that amalgamation took place in 1907.) A combination of post-Union rationalisation and urban renewal had the inevitable result – as detailed at the end of this article – such that by the mid-1970s only two were open. Curiously, these two survivors stood just 350 yards apart just to the northeast of the town centre; and this situation continued for more than 40 years until the closure of the larger building, the Allen Memorial Methodist Church on Park Road. Thankfully this distinctive chapel has recently been taken on by a rapidly expanding congregation associated with the neo-Charismatic Vineyard Movement – which is profiled in an article elsewhere in this *Newsletter*.

John Allen (1791–1860), a native of South Shields, was a chemist by trade. By 1828 he had established a chemical works at Heworth, an important factor in the growth of that town. He was also a Methodist, worshipping initially at Felling and then building Zion Chapel on Wallsend High Street for the Methodist New Connexion. It is not clear when it opened: it first appeared on maps dated 1865 and was not registered for the solemnisation of marriages until 1871. In due course a larger chapel was needed to serve this central part of Wallsend, and in 1903 (during a period of exceptionally rapid development and prosperity) the Allen Memorial Methodist New Connexion Church was built on a prime site at the junction of Park Road and North Road, opposite what is now Richardson Dees Park and very close to the site of Allen’s home, a large villa which was swept away in 1890 as the area began to be built up. After the new church opened, Zion was also demolished and replaced immediately by Central Buildings – three-storey shops and offices with pretty gables and brickwork.

The Allen Memorial Church was built by prominent local contractor William Thomas Weir. No architect is named in the available sources; did he also design it? It is mostly of red brick with some stonework, and is in two parts: a tall, steeply gabled chapel with Gothic-influenced doors and windows featuring distinctive tracery and stained glass, and a domestic-looking rear section which may have been built as an institute or hall and which has noticeable Arts and Crafts influence. At the northwest corner of the chapel is a short tower with somewhat Tudor-style windows, a stone porch, and tall gables clasping what looks like an octagonal stone lantern. In fact this is the lowest section of the



*Commemorative stone at the Allen Memorial Church seen in 2021
(photograph copyright Geoff Holland, adapted from geograph.org.uk/photo/6772885:
licensed for reuse under Creative Commons licence CC BY-SA 2.0)*

stone steeple, long since removed for safety reasons. The church also suffered bomb damage in World War II. Next to the tower on the west face is a five-light window below which is a particularly decorative commemorative stone reading ‘METHODIST NEW CONNEXION / ALLEN MEMORIAL CHURCH’.

The church closed in 2018, the final service being held on 30 September. It did not take long for the landmark building to find a new owner. Within one year the Life Vineyard Church (LVC), planted in 2006 from Trent Vineyard Church in Nottingham, had acquired the chapel and had finished refitting it in a fashion suitable for its Charismatic form of worship. These alterations were quite low-key, consisting mainly of refitting the floor and removing the pews: in particular, the stained glass and the spectacular organ have been retained. LVC started off as a simple house church but quickly expanded, outgrowing in quick succession the founders’ living room, hired rooms in hotels and its first proper home, 85 City Road in Newcastle (described as a ‘weary 1930s warehouse’ by the architects who transformed it into a stylish mixed-use building. It is now home to an unrelated Pentecostal church). Having bought the Allen Memorial Church in 2019, LVC renamed it ‘The Allen’ and opened it for worship and other activities that autumn.

Elsewhere, very little of Wallsend’s Methodist heritage survives. The chapel at Buddle Street (Carville Chapel) was built for Wesleyans in 1812 or 1813. In 1850 it joined the Wesleyan Reform Church, and from there went to the United Methodist Free Church and then the United Methodist Church. The chapel was rebuilt in 1870 and was replaced by a big new Gothic Revival building with a tower in 1906, but this closed in 1974 and was demolished. In 1850 Wesleyans transferred to a new chapel on the High Street, Brunswick Chapel, which stood until 1967; and there was another (latterly called Central Methodist Church) in the Willington Quay area between 1879 and 1964, although it was still registered until 1969. The Hadrian Road chapel of the Methodist New Connexion opened in 1883 and survived until 1970. The first Primitive Methodist chapel was on the



The Allen Memorial Methodist [New Connexion] Church in 2010, showing the stub of the stone steeple (photograph copyright Bill Henderson, adapted from geograph.org.uk/photo/2989344: licensed for reuse under Creative Commons licence CC BY-SA 2.0)

High Street and lasted from 1829 to 1871, when a new building on Blenkinsop Street superseded it. It fell out of use in 1905 when the Station Street chapel opened, but it still stands and, although altered, is still recognisable. It became a Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses in 1982 but closed during a reorganisation of Newcastle-area Kingdom Halls in 2023. Another Primitive Methodist chapel opened on Norman Terrace in the Willington Quay area in 1882. It has been demolished, as has the modern (1960) church which replaced it on Ridley Road but which lasted only until 1995. That leaves the former Station Road Primitive Methodist Chapel, now known as Trinity Methodist Church after the Brunswick and Carville chapels united with it following their closure. The cause at Hadrian Road eventually reformed at the Church of the Good Shepherd, a shared church (Anglican/Methodist/URC) on the Battle Hill estate on the edge of town. It opened in 1983 and was registered for Methodist use in 1990. The Newcastle Central and East Methodist Circuit's 2018–2019 annual report confirmed that members of the Allen Memorial Church joined either Trinity or the Good Shepherd, and all activities moved to Trinity.

(Fans of tin tabernacles may wish to visit 'The Allen'. Directly opposite is a nicely kept example, recently repainted in that dark green colour so typical of iron churches, which since 1950 has been in the ownership of Wallsend National Spiritualist Church. Its prior history is not known: was it second-hand, moved here and erected on a vacant site; or could it have been associated with the

Methodist chapel – perhaps as a church hall?... Another stands just round the corner in North View, partly hidden behind a very 1950s brick and concrete façade with a recently extended porch. It was originally Baptist but in 1951 became Wallsend Pentecostal Church (Assemblies of God) and is now New Life Christian Centre, associated with a church of that name in Morpeth.)

FAITH GROUP FOCUS: THE VINEYARD MOVEMENT

AN ARTICLE BY MATT DAVIS

The Vineyard Movement (or the Association of Vineyard Churches) is new in two senses: founded as recently as 1975, it forms part of the neo-Charismatic strand of evangelical Christianity. Worldwide, 2,400 churches are affiliated in 95 countries; Vineyard Churches U.K. and Ireland has 149. The first, in London, opened in 1987, and the national organisation ceased to be administered by the overall global body in 1996.

The movement has its origins in, but is some steps removed from, the so-called ‘Jesus movement’ associated with U.S. West Coast counterculture in the 1960s. Although short-lived, this has left a notable mark on Protestant Christian life ever since, even beyond the United States. One of several denominations to emerge directly from it was the Calvary Chapel Association, from which images of rock concert-like praise services and mass baptisms in the Pacific Ocean left memorable impressions. In 1977, pastor John Wimber of the Calvary Chapel in Yorba Linda, California, encountered problems with church leadership over his teaching, particularly in relation to the Holy Spirit. An amicable separation occurred, and he joined an embryonic movement called Vineyard – itself founded as a Bible study class by another Calvary Chapel evangelist in Los Angeles.

Wimber was a talented musician who had found fame with the Righteous Brothers in their early days. He converted to Christianity in 1963 and left the band just before their ‘Unchained Melody’ heights, but he continued to manage them for a time. His first ‘home’ was with the Quakers, but his approach to gifts and manifestations of the Holy Spirit were at odds with Quaker theology and he struck out on his own – developing a distinctive concept which has become known as ‘The Third Wave of the Holy Spirit’, being aligned neither to classic Pentecostal thought nor to conventional Charismatic belief (hence the label ‘neo-Charismatic’). In different ways, these held that the Holy Spirit was manifested only in the gift of speaking in tongues, whereas Wimber argued that tongues formed just one of a range of spiritual gifts. His assertions were sufficiently convincing that he paved the way for the concept of ‘signs and wonders’ to, if not enter the Protestant mainstream, then at least be discussed and understood

on a normal level rather than being dismissed as something unpalatable and *verboden*. Indeed, he was not happy with extremes: a controversy over ecstatic phenomena which occurred at a Vineyard church in Toronto in 1994 led Wimber to steer the movement away from focusing on spiritual gifts and back to Bible-focused teaching and church planting. Claims by critics that *sola scriptura*, that touchstone of Protestant theology, was being ignored or denied by events like the so-called ‘Toronto Blessing’ hit home.

What has not been lost from the denomination is a distinctive, upfront musical ethos, derived from Wimber’s own interests and talents: worship songs are central to Vineyard services, and the movement has its own music publishing arm, Vineyard Worship, with hundreds or thousands of worship songs – each with a YouTube video, and available to download or stream via all online music providers! Even guitar chord charts are provided. This is of course some way removed from traditional organ-led Protestant worship music – a chapel congregation brought up on, say, ‘Come, thou long-expected Jesus’ may struggle to tune in to ‘Arms of Love’ and ‘Cherry Blossoms’, for example – but there is some crossover: contemporary worship-songwriter Vicky Beeching has composed numerous Vineyard songs and has several hymns in the Methodist hymnal *Sing the Faith*, as one random example.

Since Wimber’s death in 1997, Vineyard has nominally been led by a National Director in the United States, where it remains strongest, but it is not really a centralised movement: individual churches have some latitude within the context of the Vineyard Statement of Faith (drawn up in 1994). Movements in other



3 Counties Vineyard Church, Linchmere Road, Hammer, West Sussex, seen in June 2015. This former Congregational, later Pentecostal and independent Evangelical, chapel near Haslemere was taken over in 2022. Situated 500 yards from the tripoint with Surrey and Hampshire, its name is appropriate (photograph copyright Matt Davis)

countries are similar, being regionally and locally led. There are six regions across the United Kingdom and Ireland.

Church names are simple: place name plus ‘Vineyard’, or less often the other way round (thus ‘Darlington Vineyard’, ‘Vineyard Bath’). The word ‘Church’ only appears on occasion, and ‘Chapel’ never: the reasons for this are worth pondering. Qualifiers occur in multi-church localities: ‘Birmingham Vineyard (East)’ and ‘Birmingham Vineyard (South)’, for example. Some churches are clustered together as local families linked by aspirational brand names such as ‘Catalyst’, ‘Discovery’ and ‘Life’: thus the Wallsend church described in this *Newsletter*’s article is officially called ‘Life Vineyard Church (Wallsend)’ and is partnered with ‘Life Vineyard Church (Marley Hill)’ and ‘Life Vineyard Church (South Shields)’, which between them serve the whole of the Tyne and Wear conurbation. Vineyard 61, a three-site church in southwest London, is interesting not just for its name (a reference to Isaiah 61: ‘The spirit of the Sovereign Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim the good news to the poor’ and so on: neatly encapsulating the church’s ethos) but also for its rapid growth: it did not exist, even on one site, until 2015. Strong and vigorous growth seems to characterise the movement.

What about the buildings? Without labouring the point, traditional chapels (or buildings that resemble them externally or internally) are the exception; instead, industrial units and hangars on enterprise parks predominate. In Bury St Edmunds, worshippers gather next to a forklift truck depot; in Winchester, Stagecoach’s out-of-town bus depot is their neighbour; in St Albans, the congregation can cross the road to pick up kitchen units or building supplies after the service if they wish. The tenet that ‘the church is the people, not the building’ is fully in evidence, but these awkward edge sites do not attract casual passers-by: commitment is required. Surely a comparison can be drawn to the mean and modest meeting places associated with the early years of denominations which went on to move to magnificent chapels. Some congregations, meanwhile, meet in schools or community centres – another common feature of new denominations and groups, especially those with as enthusiastic a church-planting ethos as Vineyard. Convenient, flexible premises available at short notice are the priority in the early days of a planted church.

In addition to Wallsend, a few ex-chapels have been taken over: the Wilkins Memorial Hall in Derby, home to a non-denominational fellowship which offered the local Vineyard church its building in 2014, is a modest example. The situation at the former Brigadier Hall Free Church in Enfield is similar, although that building is larger and quite secular in appearance. The 3 Counties Vineyard (i.e. West Sussex/Surrey/Hampshire) occupies one of three attractive domestic-style Congregational chapels built in the Haslemere/Hindhead area by and at the expense of John Grover around 1900. It was later an independent Pentecostal church but joined the Vineyard family in 2022. A word too for probably the most



*Farnham Vineyard Church, Union Street, Farnham, Surrey, seen in May 2021.
It occupies the Grade II-listed former church rooms of St Andrew's Church
(photograph copyright Matt Davis)*

attractive Vineyard premises: just up the road from Hammer at chapel-packed Farnham, a Vineyard church was planted in 1991 (quite early!) and now occupies the former church rooms of St Andrew's parish church. This being elegant Farnham, the church rooms are no plain thing but a showy, cupola-topped Arts and Crafts creation (1909, by R.B. Preston). The interior is open and stripped-back, suiting the church's worship style.

SHAW STREET STRICT BAPTIST CHAPEL, LIVERPOOL

AN ARTICLE BY GERARD CHARMLEY

Marooned on the wrong side of the A580 from Liverpool city centre, Shaw Street Chapel [N104] is easily overlooked, although it is one of the most elegant surviving chapel buildings in Liverpool, a city which has seen the loss of many fine buildings over the years.

The church for which Shaw Street Chapel was erected can trace its origins to the first Baptist church in Liverpool, which was gathered in Everton around 1714. By 1722, the church was meeting at a chapel on Byrom Street. Hymn-writer Samuel Medley was called as pastor in 1772, and during his pastorate the church enjoyed a period of growth, moving to a new, larger chapel in the same street. On Medley's death in 1799, the church struggled to find a suitable pastor, and suffered a series of secessions. This discontent came to a head in 1836, when new minister C. M. Birrell tried to introduce open communion to what

had been a strict communion church. The trustees objected, leading to Birrell and the majority of the church leaving Byrom Street Chapel and constructing a new chapel in Pembroke Place. Those who remained at Byrom Street joined with another Strict Baptist church in Liverpool, led by William Giles, whose chief claim to fame is that as a young schoolmaster in Chatham, he had taught Charles Dickens.

In 1846, London and North Western Railway company informed the church that a tunnel was to be driven under the foundations of Byrom Street Chapel. Believing that this would fatally weaken the structure, the railway company offered to buy the chapel from the remnant congregation. Land was purchased on Shaw Street, and plans drawn up for a new chapel, which was opened on 25 December 1847, sermons being preached by John Kershaw of Hope Chapel, Rochdale, and John Mackenzie, editor of the Gospel Standard and pastor at Vauxhall Road Chapel, Preston. Five people were baptised in the afternoon service. Shortly afterwards, Mackenzie was called to the pastorate, but he died shortly after taking office. Nevertheless, the church continued to grow. In 1850 there were 73 members, and the services were usually crowded. In 1854, William Vaughan, a member of the church, was called to the pastorate, although he resigned in 1858 due to difficulties with some members of the diaconate.

The chapel building is of brick and red sandstone, apparently a close copy of the church of St Matthias, Great Howard Street, built in 1834 and demolished in 1848 in order to make way for railway expansion (Byrom Street Chapel turned out to be unaffected by the tunnelling and was purchased by another group of Baptists as a mission hall). It is a building of Classical simplicity, with a broad pediment, and an entrance between two giant Ionic columns in antis, which conceal twin doors into vestibules, the space between the columns being covered with white tiles. The site slopes away to the rear, allowing for the creation of semi-basement rooms under the chapel. Tall windows to the side the chapel gave light into a tall space, and there was a substantial vestry to the rear.

Within, the chapel seated a congregation of 400, largely in box pews in the body of the chapel, although there was a rear gallery supported on fluted cast iron columns. The high pulpit was octagonal, with carved woodwork, and was initially lit by twin gas jets. A clock on the gallery front allowed the preacher to see the time. A full immersion baptistery in front of the pulpit was usually covered with boards. The only memorial in the chapel was to John Bennet, a former deacon, who died in 1855. Doors either side of the pulpit led into a large room capable of seating seventy people, containing Samuel Medley's pulpit from Byrom Street, a tall, square pulpit entered by means of a spiral stair (which the late B.A. Ramsbottom stated left him dizzy by the time he reached the top). Known as the large vestry, this room contained a fireplace, whilst the rest of the chapel was heated by means of hot water pipes. The large vestry could be entered directly from College Street, and on the other side was the

minister's vestry, which contained Samuel Medley's chair and an oil painting of the former minister. Showing an older man in full-bottomed wig, this painting was discovered, on renovation, to have been a painting of Medley as a young man, altered as he aged. In the 1990s this painting was stripped of the overlay, revealing a handsome young man in naval-looking garb (Medley having served in the Royal Navy prior to entering the ministry) possessing a passing resemblance to Ioan Gruffudd in *Hornblower*. Below the chapel were several schoolrooms, a kitchen, toilets, and two small bedrooms, presumably intended for either a caretaker or visiting ministers.

The church suffered from dissension for some years, and in the late 1890s the senior deacon withheld the pastor's salary and locked him out of the chapel. In response, the minister broke into the chapel and took possession. This episode may have influenced Daniel Hughes, then a Churches of Christ pastor in Liverpool, who later broke into his own chapel at Crane Street, Pontypridd, when the deacons tried to prevent him from preaching. By 1910, the church consisted of 30 members – four men and 26 women. By 1923, the church was strong enough to call a pastor, Henry Caton of Blackburn, who led the church until his death in 1957. He had formally resigned his pastorate in 1950, hoping to spend his last days in a country cottage, but felt the church could not do without his services.

Shaw Street Chapel suffered serious damage during World War II, and after a land mine landed nearby in May 1941 meetings had to be held in the large vestry until the worst of the war damage was made good by 1949. Until its closure, the chapel bore war damage scars on the pediment. By the 1960s most services were again being held in the large vestry, with the main chapel used only for special services. The remnant congregation struggled to maintain the building, but resisted for many years the idea of disposing of the chapel – besides, the church required a building to meet in.

At the end of the 20th century the church relocated to a new and much smaller chapel in Birkenhead, constructed for a Brethren congregation which had dissolved shortly after the building's construction. The Shaw Street congregation bade a reluctant farewell to the old chapel and most of its fittings – Medley's pulpit was only left behind because it could not be removed from the large vestry, indicating that the building was constructed around the pulpit. The chapel was converted into studio apartments, entered through the rear. The tall windows survive, and some of the internal plasterwork, such as the arch behind the pulpit, can be seen in the apartments, as can one of the pews. Some of the fittings of the chapel, including a lectern, Medley's chair, and book cases, along with the chapel library and the oil painting of Samuel Medley, may be found in what is now called Providence Chapel, Birkenhead.

After the conversion of Shaw Street, the church members were invited to have a look around their old chapel. This body consisted entirely of women, which



The new home of the Shaw Street congregation: Providence Particular Baptist Chapel, Storeton Road, Oxtown, Birkenhead, seen here in July 2020. It was registered for worship in September 2000 (photograph copyright Phil Nash, from Wikimedia Commons: licensed for reuse under Creative Commons licences CC BY-SA 4.0 & GFDL)

may have prompted the builder to ask whether they were ‘the nuns who used to live here’ – a reminder of Liverpool’s sectarian past, and how little most people knew about the chapel. Cleaned and railed in, Shaw Street Chapel now looks as magnificent as when it first opened, although no longer used for worship.

References:

S.F. Paul, *Further History of the Gospel Standard Baptists: Vol. 4, Some Northern Churches* (Brighton, 1961)

Ian Sellers, *A History of Liverpool Baptists: The Minor Churches* (Keele, 1962).

Christopher Stell, *An Inventory of Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting Houses in the North of England* (London, 1994).

Typescript history and architectural description in possession of the church.

Reminiscences of Mary Cousins, chapel correspondent and Gerald Asquith.

[Editor’s note: the present chapel was built in or just after 1987 for Taylorite Brethren (i.e. the present Plymouth Brethren Christian Church – PBCC) as a ‘local room’ associated with Merseyside’s main meeting room at Allerton, Liverpool. Permission was granted in 1996 for conversion into a cottage, but the Shaw Street congregation acquired it instead. Shaw Street Chapel’s registration was formally cancelled in September 2000.]

➤ *National Heritage List for England update: no buildings of interest to Chapels Society members were newly listed or upgraded by Historic England in the first quarter of 2024.*

DESECULARISATION DIGEST: BEECH HILL CHURCH, OTLEY

Places of worship in converted shops are not especially unusual, but the history of what is now Beech Hill Church in the West Yorkshire town of Otley has more points of interest than most. It may only have occupied its traditional stone-built terraced building since May 2021, but this Evangelical church has a Methodist connection, previously occupied two chapel buildings of contrasting types, and is one of the most longstanding members of the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches – having joined 100 years ago, just a year after that organisation was founded.

Sydney Key was a Wesleyan minister who led the local Methodist Mission in the Wharfedale area. He encountered difficulties as a conscientious objector during World War I – at one point he was arrested, which led to questions in Parliament – but in 1916 he was able to establish the Bethel Gospel Mission, a non-denominational mission. It was first registered in September 1916 at unspecified premises on Boroughgate, but in 1923 a local businessman donated a building on Mercury Row to the mission and the congregation moved there. This backstreet building was later rebuilt into its present form – a small red-brick gabled structure with two storeys and an attic, joined to stone buildings on both sides but set back behind them. It was latterly in commercial use as an ironmonger and hardware store, and it has recently been partly hidden behind an extension of the adjacent pub, but its mission-room origins are just about legible. With the name ‘Bethel Gospel Mission Room’ it was formally registered for worship in November 1923 for ‘Christians not otherwise designated’ in place of the Boroughgate premises, and at this point the mission joined the ‘Fellowship of Undenominational and Unattached Churches and Missions’ as it was then called. (For more on the FIEC and its history, see the article in *Newsletter* 82.)



The original Bethel Gospel Mission Hall at Mercury Row, Otley (left; marked with an arrow) and the 1960s prefabricated building which succeeded it in 1988 (right), both photographed in July 2022 (photographs copyright Gerard Charmley)

In 1931, an Open Brethren assembly with another traditional Biblical name, Bethany, became established in Otley. This also moved around several times, including a 25-year stay from 1941 at premises in the Market Place, before setting up home a short distance away from the Bethel Gospel Mission in 1966, putting up a tiny prefabricated building in which to worship. The three-bay wood-panelled structure looked rather like a discarded toy, set at an angle on a scrap of grass at the end of a residential cul-de-sac. The congregation of what was latterly known as Bethany Gospel Hall declined in the 1980s and it eventually closed in 1988, but the trustees donated the building to the Bethel Gospel Mission. Energised by a new pastor, they moved in and began to worship there – although there was no room for Sunday School pupils, who had to troop out to a couple of caravans which were temporarily parked next to the hall every Sunday. After a while the congregation grew so much that various hired premises had to be used, although the old Gospel hall was retained for some services. The church's name was 'tweaked' slightly, from Bethel Gospel Mission to Bethel Church, at some point in the early 21st century.

Just at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, the church bought a triple shop unit in the heart of Otley, on the section of the A659 called Beech Hill. The shop had been a boutique, but sometime after 2000 it turned into a tobacconists' shop and retailer of smoking-related gifts (handmade Cuban cigars were prominently advertised). The building was refurbished and converted into a church over the course of the next year, and the congregation moved in during May 2021. A new name – Beech Hill Church – was adopted at the same time. The church's website



*The new Beech Hill Church in July 2022; note the prominent FIEC branding
(photograph copyright Gerard Charmley)*

indicates this was to ‘reflect the new location and the new chapter in the church’s life’, but also suggests that the old name may have caused confusion with implied links to ‘Bethel Church in America’. Presumably this refers to the ‘megachurch’ of that name in Redding, California, which attracted controversy for actions taken during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Two Sunday services now take place in the new premises, which are also made available for use by local community groups. The building itself is part of a Grade II-listed terrace which is believed to have 17th-century origins. It is built entirely of stone and has a tiled roof, in keeping with the vernacular architecture of the area.

(The toy-like former Bethany Gospel Hall appears to be a ‘Derwent Construction’ timber-framed prefab by Vic Hallam Ltd of Heanor, Derbyshire. Research is underway into this firm and the religious buildings it provided to various congregations, and an article may feature in a future *Newsletter*.)

See <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1135225> for listing particulars of the building on Beech Hill. The arrest of Reverend Key was brought up in Parliament on 26 October 1916 and is recorded in Hansard. Information from Tim Grass on the history of Bethany Gospel Hall is acknowledged. I am grateful to Gerard Charmley for taking the photographs.

CHAPEL CLOSURES

I am grateful to *Rev. Reginald Rooke* for the first three reports and to *David Dawson* for the Longham report.

Friary United Reformed Church, West Bridgford, Nottinghamshire

A Congregational church was formed at Friar Lane in central Nottingham in 1827. In 1897 a new site in affluent, rapidly growing West Bridgford, south of the Trent, was chosen for what would now be called a church plant, and the fine late Victorian stone church was completed and opened in 1901. Decline set in during the 1990s and by 2022 there were no longer enough church members to fulfil the various responsibilities required. The final service took place on 18 June 2022. The church was designed by Brewill and Baily in a late Gothic style. *(Pictured right in July 2016; photograph copyright John Sutton, adapted from <https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/5027978>: licensed for reuse under Creative Commons licence CC-BY-SA 2.0)*



Sutton-in-Ashfield United Reformed Church, Nottinghamshire

The origins of the congregation go back to 1651, but the present dark red-brick church, originally with a capacity of 830, opened on 4 April 1906. The Free Gothic motifs of George Baines & Son can clearly be seen, especially in the windows and the tower. The closing service was held on 23 July 2023 and as of February 2024 the church was up for sale. *(Pictured right in November 2017; photograph copyright 'Enchufla Con Clave', from Wikimedia Commons: licensed for reuse under Creative Commons licence CC-BY-SA 4.0)*



Anstey United Reformed Church, Leicestershire

A Congregational church was formed in this village in 1851. A cottage and a converted factory were used until an impressive chapel was built on the main street in 1879. An outsize stone fleur-de-lis finial tops the gable, and brown and black brickwork contrasts with the white rendered façade. A diamond datestone and 'CONGREGATIONAL' are also prominent on the gable. The church had a very significant community presence, but decline exacerbated by the pandemic resulted in closure at the end of 2021. A 'Sold' board had appeared outside by August 2022; New Covenant Church, a Pentecostal group, now occupy it. (Could this be a church plant from the New Covenant Church in Leicester city centre?)

Salem Church of the Nazarene, Gillingham, Kent

A member of the Church of the Nazarene, which emerged from the Holiness movement in Methodism, this church was founded in September 1939 and occupied Gillingham's former Primitive Methodist chapel. This had opened in 1923, replacing a tin tabernacle, but was no longer needed after the 1932 Union. A Covid-enforced closure in early January 2021 became permanent, but a final thanksgiving service was able to be held on 24 July 2021. The low, wide, twin-porched building looks rather like a schoolroom and is mostly of yellow brick. *(Pictured right in March 2009; photograph copyright David Anstiss, from Wikimedia Commons: licensed for reuse under Creative Commons licence CC-BY-SA 2.0)*



Buckley Street Methodist Free Church, Warrington, Cheshire

(Also known as Buckley Street Independent Methodist Church.) A rented building nearby was used from October 1851, but when the lease ended in 1879 it was decided to build a new church and school on Buckley's Court – a street which was soon extended and renamed.



The chapel, a small, neat and attractive red-brick building with three arched windows and details picked out in white paint, adds some distinction to its half-derelict industrial surroundings. The opening service was held on 6 April 1879, and the capacity was shown as 360 on the 1888 map. A final thanksgiving service took place on 3 March 2024. Round the corner on Winwick Street, the former Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion chapel [N148], later St John's Presbyterian Church – closed way back in 1910 – has been nicely converted into offices; might something similar happen at Buckley Street? (*Information from Cheyenne Bower. Pictured right in February 2013; photograph copyright Dave Bevis, adapted from <https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/3380291>: licensed for reuse under Creative Commons licence CC-BY-SA 2.0*)

Lawrence Lane Methodist Church, Old Hill, West Midlands

The present building, a low-roofed brick structure with multiple buttresses, was built on a new site in 1984 to replace Zion's Hill Chapel on the main road to Halesowen. This belonged to the Methodist New Connexion and was founded in 1879. Its Sunday School (with delightful patterned brickwork) survives as Old Hill Mosque; the mosque car park is where the chapel was; and next to the mosque on the rest of the chapel site is a Kingdom Hall – all overlooked by the parish church, Holy Trinity. An interesting combination! Other local Methodist churches amalgamated at various times to form what was latterly the Lawrence Lane congregation. The final service was held on 26 February 2023.

Longham United Reformed Church, near Ferndown, Dorset [S117]

This remarkable landmark will be familiar to anybody driving between the Bournemouth/Poole conurbation and its hinterland. The chapel, a large, galleried grey-brick building with a big New England-style spire, cost £3,000 in 1841: excessive provision for a small village, but major growth was mistakenly anticipated amid talk of Longham becoming a 'model village'. The chapel



is broadly Classical, with Ionic pilasters and a columned porch. W. Gollop was the architect. Closure on 11 March 2023 was attributable to declining congregations and a reasonable provision of nearby United Reformed churches – although two others had closed in the previous two years: at Longfleet (Poole) and Walkford. The chapel was put up for sale for £675,000. (*Pictured right in September 2022; photograph copyright Matt Davis*)

LOST CHAPELS: NEW LIFE CHURCH, DURRINGTON, WEST SUSSEX (1939– 2022)

In 1900, the Sussex seaside town of Worthing was growing but was still constrained by the railway line, north of which the old field patterns and scattered villages were still fully legible. One such village was Durrington: a small parish with an even smaller cluster of houses around its manor house and pub, the Lamb Inn. Missing was the standard third element of such settlements, the parish church: it was destroyed in the Civil War, and the few residents had to make do with a mission room in a tin tabernacle until a replacement church was built in 1916. Durrington Lane ran north–south connecting the two main east–west routes; eastwards from this, Salvington Lane led to the hamlet of that name.

The area in between gradually became built up with housing in the early 20th century, and in 1905 a Nonconformist minister, George Hide, started to hold non-denominational meetings in a building on Stone Lane, the road leading southwards from Salvington. This attracted people from both villages, and by 1912 the cause was strong enough to allow a chapel to be built on the south side of Salvington Lane (now Road) at the junction with Greenland Road. James E. Lund, a talented architect who we met in *Newsletter* 84,¹ was commissioned to design it. In the same year he had designed the West Worthing Tabernacle (now West Worthing Evangelical Church) in a distinctive, homely Queen Anne style; at Durrington he adopted a similar style, though on a smaller scale and a little less elaborate. The surrounding area has always been fruit- and vegetable-growing country² – a glance at the map below will indicate how many nurseries still existed deep into the 20th century – and it is interesting to note that when the chapel was formally registered for worship on 18 May 1925 (as a prerequisite to its simultaneous registration for the solemnisation of marriages – the organist was getting married), the trustee who submitted the registration certificate was a local fruit-grower, Henry Capel Saunders. The registered name was simply ‘Free Church’, although generally the name ‘Durrington Free Church’ was used, and it was a true ‘free church’: Nonconformist and non-denominational, just as the original services had been.

An extension was built in the same year, but by 1939 more room was needed. A new chapel was then built perpendicular to the old, which was nevertheless retained and integrated into the new building (after which it was used principally as a Sunday School). Prolific local building firm Frank Sandell and Sons Ltd, responsible for the town's Christian Science church and West Worthing Baptist Church, won the construction contract, and E. Brian Tyler of Chichester designed it in a style characteristic of that era. It was a two-storey red- and brown-brick chapel with sharp gables extending beyond the roofline front and back, a large Diocletian window at the front partly hidden behind the triangular gable of the otherwise flat, wide entrance porch (in which was set a shallow-arched entrance), aisles on each side, and domestic-style windows. Overall, a good-looking but not obtrusive building in an area of mixed housing, taking advantage of its corner site. Revd H.J. Horn, the pastor, said the architect 'had accomplished just what we desire – a simple building with real dignity'. In 1943 the church joined the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, as it was then, and changed its name to 'Durrington Free Church (Baptist)'. A further name change, to New Life Church, came in 1985. A church hall was built opposite the old chapel in 1961.

All the while, the church was thriving, and by the 1970s there were thoughts of moving to new, larger, more suitable premises. About 40 members left in 1981 to plant a daughter church, Broadwater Christian Fellowship; this met at a community centre at first, but by 1993 the congregation was able to buy the disused First Church of Christ, Scientist, Worthing building near the central railway station (another Sandell and Sons construction) and convert it into a church called the Oasis Centre. It continues to grow and is now called River of Life

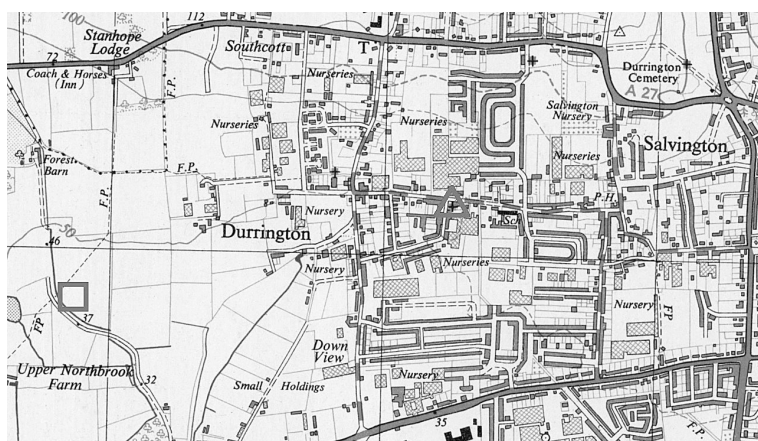


New Life Church, Salvington Road, Durrington, Worthing, West Sussex, seen in May 2013. The original (1912) chapel is to the rear (photograph copyright Matt Davis)

Church. This reduction in numbers at Durrington may have helped temporarily, but as growth continued some more drastic action was needed. Purchasing the house next to the church hall in 1992 and converting it into an office and administration centre helped matters, but the longer-term aim of demolishing both buildings and erecting a new church on that site was thwarted by planners. The opportunity to look elsewhere altogether soon came, though, when a vast new housing and shopping development was announced on a greenfield site at West Durrington. The church bought a vacant site in the middle of the estate for £500,000, plus one of the houses (which became a manse). Planning permission for a new church was granted in May 2018, and permission for the demolition of New Life Church and its replacement with housing was also granted. The demolition took place in 2022 and the houses are complete.

Work has not yet started on the vast new church and community facility,³ so for the time being the congregation meets at Oak Grove College a little way to the south of the old chapel. George Hide would no doubt be amazed and impressed at what has developed from his small-scale non-denominational village meetings – and it is worth reflecting how his actions in reaching out and ministering to a newly developing residential area will in effect, when the new church is built, be repeated 120 years later, albeit on a much larger scale.

¹ He designed the now Grade II-listed Worthing Tabernacle in 1908. See ‘Faith, Force and Fibre – and the Fittleworth Forge’, *Newsletter* 84 pp. 3–8. Also by him, again in his favoured Queen Anne style, was the ‘Evangelical Protestants Hall’ of 1906, built in the



The 1958 1:10,560 map shows how the Durrington and Salvington areas were, by now, low-density outer suburbs. The housing density has increased markedly since, as has the extent of the Worthing built-up area. The square shows where the future New Life Church will be built, in the middle of a new housing estate; the triangle shows the location of the 1939 chapel.

town centre to serve independent Evangelical worshippers whose chapel in New Street had closed. Regrettably it was demolished in 1969, and a shopping centre occupies its site. (The much older New Street Chapel still stands, ironically.)

² This area was described by the ever-quotable E.V. Lucas, in *Highways and Byways in Sussex* (1904), as ‘...a little strip of land between the sea and the hills whose climatic conditions approximate those of the Riviera.’

³ A virtual tour of the proposed building can be viewed at <http://newlifeworthing.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/NewLifeChurch-Worthing.mp4>.

BOOK REVIEWS

Holy Houses (Twentieth Century Architecture 15), Elaine Harwood and Alan Powers. The Twentieth Century Society, 2023. 192pp, paperback. ISBN 978-0-9556687-7-7. £24.50. Available from www.c20society.org.uk



Subtitled ‘Places of worship in twentieth-century Britain’, the latest volume of The Twentieth Century Society’s journal is by way of a sequel to the 1998 issue of their journal on The Twentieth Century Church. It is a substantial volume with plenty of illustrations, many of them in colour. There are twelve studies included: four deal with denominations, five with particular architects, and two with individual buildings. Almost inevitably, much of the content is concerned primarily with the Church of England as the largest individual denomination, including both of the chapters on specific buildings, but there is much for those interested in Nonconformist buildings of this period with chapters on Christian Science, the Salvation Army, and the Quakers as well as material on Roman Catholicism.

After a brief editorial introduction, the first chapter by Clare Price is a contemplation of Anglican inter-war building. The challenges for the established church in this period may resonate with Nonconformists as well: dual-purpose buildings; the differing priorities of congregations, architects, and central church authorities; conservatism and the power of tradition; and, of course, where to find the money. None of this was or is unique to the Church of England, or indeed this period.

Christian Science is next, a short overview by Alan Powers, which can be usefully compared and contrasted with the 2018 study by Sally Lessiter published in volume 3 of the Chapels Society *Journal*, and to which Powers refers. Of course there is Edgar Wood’s First Church at Daisy Bank, Manchester, along with some fine pictures showing the variety of styles adopted by this somewhat unconventional group.

The Salvation Army also has a chapter here which parallels that in the Chapels Society volume, though in this case both essays are by the same author, Steven

Spencer. His task is not made easy, as he points out, by the relative modesty of most Salvation Army buildings – only in 2021 would one be listed – and the lack of statistics and administrative records. Those who saw the Army's centre in Brighton on the Chapels Society visit in 2022 may be interested in the picture included here showing it from a rather different angle.

Johanna Roethe follows up her study of Quakers and their architects in the 2019 Victorian Society volume with a close look at purpose-built meeting houses of the 20th century. There is a section reflecting on the way in which changes in Quaker worship led to an increasing adoption of central and polygonal plans and generated some interesting and flexible buildings – and a similar challenge in terms of priorities about design to that of the Anglicans and their dual-use hall-churches.

Following this group of denominational studies, the journal moves on to looking at the careers of individual architects. The one likely to be of most interest to Chapels Society members is by Duncan Gregory, on the prolific Ernest Bower Norris, who built over sixty Roman Catholic churches, as well as other commissions, in less than five decades. Again we have the tension between architect and clients, and how to respond to the requirements of liturgical change. Much as denominations can differ, it is in looking at several in sequence that the parallels and common challenges which all faced can be seen. This is as true of the Church of England, in some ways becoming a denomination among others in the 20th century, which makes a volume which brings together various perspectives in the way this does valuable. Some material on non-Christian religions and their experiences would have been nice, but there is plenty of interest here.

References:

The Twentieth Century Church (Twentieth Century Architecture 3, The Twentieth Century Society, 1998)

All Chapels Great and Small (The Chapels Society Journal 3, 2018)

Thomas Rickman and the Victorians (Studies in Victorian Architecture & Design Volume 7, The Victorian Society, 2019)

Stuart Leadley

NEWS AND NOTES

What's in a name ... or motto?

The Salvation Army's 'war cry' or motto, 'Blood and Fire', is direct and succinct; but is it too stark for modern sensibilities? Perhaps so in Poole (Dorset), where there is an Army hall with a curious feature. On a busy road in the Parkstone district is a pleasantly conventional brick-built Gothic hall of 1888 with a roundel in the gable. The text SALVATION ARMY / BLOOD AND FIRE is prominent inside this roundel, and the top line is picked out in bright red. 'Blood and Fire' is painted white, though, to blend in with the rest of the roundel. This feels like a slogan-related variation on the theme discussed in *Newsletter* 82 and subsequently, where it was noted that the Biblical chapel names of the 19th century seem not to be resonating with 21st-century society. (The hall seems no longer to be used for regular services, but it is still in Salvation Army ownership, remains a registered place of worship, and appears to be used for administrative purposes of some sort.)

Meanwhile, just before this *Newsletter* went to press, a visit to the Salvation Army hall in Rugby (Warwickshire), registered in 1945 to replace an earlier citadel nearby, found the Army's elaborate official crest fixed to the gable end.



The former Salvation Army Hall (1888), Sea View Road, Parkstone, Dorset, seen in September 2022; and (inset) a close-up of the roundel (photograph copyright Matt Davis)

Accompanying its abundant Biblical imagery, and set below the crown which represents the Crown of Life (James 1:12), is the text BLOOD AND FIRE, exactly where it should be as per the design of the crest, which has barely changed since it first appeared in 1879. Here again though, the words are hard to read, being the same faded red as the background. Older photographs appear to show the text painted in gold to stand out against the background. Natural fading (the building faces south), coincidence or something more? Members may like to inspect their local Salvation Army hall and report any findings.

The former Holybourne Presbyterian Chapel

Village Presbyterian chapels in the south of England are uncommon, although a few are now United Reformed churches. The former Presbyterian chapel at Holybourne, near Alton, Hampshire, was built in 1870. One of the elders was Lieutenant-Colonel Sir George Brooke-Pechell, 5th Baronet, who lived at Alton; he submitted the chapel's registration certificate. It closed in June 1972, just before the URC was formed, and was immediately re-registered by the Alton Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses. They kept the slightly severe little brick chapel intact, making virtually no changes, and have used it ever since. Planning permission was granted in 2019 for some alterations to improve accessibility, and work belatedly began in spring 2023; but happily these changes will not have affected the character of this pleasant building, a landmark in the village centre despite its small size. Work was focused on the slightly later (1879) rear elevation, which is almost invisible from the street. The Congregation moved



The former Holybourne Presbyterian Chapel, Hampshire (1870), seen in July 2019 as a Kingdom Hall (photograph copyright Matt Davis)

temporarily to the Kingdom Hall at Winchester while the work was carried out: Jehovah's Witnesses (for whom 'Congregation' always has a capital 'C') always move to share a nearby Kingdom Hall during building projects and similar, rather than using secular premises. They were back in situ in Holybourne by October 2023, and one of Basingstoke's two Congregations promptly moved in while work was carried out on their Kingdom Hall (suggesting a planned, rolling programme of improvements locally?...)

A curiosity in Southport

The conversion of a disused Conservative Club into the research laboratory of a temperature calibration equipment manufacturer is a surprising change of direction; but it is in keeping with the wild variations in the historical uses of 27 Windsor Road, Southport! The premises started life as the meeting room for Southport's Exclusive Brethren, for whom it was built in 1880 (its street address then was Sussex Street; the building is on the corner of Windsor Road and what is now Sussex Road). Just 12 years later the Brethren moved to larger premises not far away, and the chapel – for it had, and retains, the appearance of a carefully crafted Victorian chapel building rather than an austere meeting room – was sold to Southport's newly formed Jewish congregation for use as their first synagogue. The town's small community of Jews had previously worshipped informally in private homes or travelled to Liverpool. The synagogue opened in May 1893



27 Windsor Road, Southport, Merseyside, seen in April 2024. Now in industrial use, it has been used by two religious groups (photograph copyright Matt Davis)

and was altered, mostly internally, 20 years later. Within 30 years of opening the congregation had grown to 500, so an impressive new synagogue was built nearby in 1924–26. Thereafter the Windsor Road building passed into secular use and was latterly the Waddington Conservative Club, having earlier been a Liberal Club (!). It closed in late 2018 and was converted for its new industrial purpose in 2021. On 15 October 2021 it reopened as the John Tavener Building for Isothermal Technology Ltd. The name is nothing to do with the composer: this John Tavener founded the company in 1980 and is now its president.

Internally nothing survives to indicate its religious origins – pre-conversion photographs showed the interior partitioned up into a predictable range of bars, pool/snooker rooms, function rooms, kitchens and the like, and the interior is now exactly what one would expect from a laboratory – but the distinctive Classical exterior, of red Accrington brick with yellow-brick dressings, is little altered. The façade is of two bays with tall round-arched windows, an identically arched porch and recessed doorway, a big oculus and a slightly projecting pediment. Identical windows delineate the three bays to the side. The building stands on a generous corner plot, no doubt tempting for developers; it is pleasing that it has escaped demolition and has, indeed, been smartened up for its latest use.

Churches and Chapels in Salisbury

Trevor Cooper, member of the Chapels Society and the Ecclesiological Society, wrote an excellent article with the above subtitle in the December 2006 edition of the latter society's journal, *Ecclesiology Today*. Members who attended the Salisbury visit reviewed in *Newsletter* 87, or who wish to learn more about the city's religious history in all its forms – dissenting as well as conformist – may wish to read this well-illustrated article, which is freely available online in PDF format at <https://ecclsoc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/ET.37.pdf> (pp.5–45). Of particular interest may be pictures of the interior of Milford Street Chapel, now the Chapel Nightclub, which became something of a talking point on our visit!

Five into two in Bedfordshire

The adjacent towns of Luton and Dunstable have five United Reformed church buildings between them. In Luton, Bury Park (1895), an excellent and characteristic George Baines chapel, was originally Congregational; the nearby St Ninian's (1953) was Presbyterian; and Wigmore Church (1991) is a modern Methodist and URC building on an outlying estate. In Dunstable, Edward Street URC has since 1974 occupied the small and very quirky Sunday School building (1862) of the now demolished 19th-century Congregational chapel which stood alongside; and St Katherine of Genoa (1969) was originally Presbyterian, hidden away on a 1960s estate behind a pub and shopping parade. In January 2023

the decision was taken to amalgamate, forming one church across two sites – one in each town. The name ‘Newland Church’ was adopted, and the change took effect from 30 July 2023. The church now worships exclusively in the St Katherine of Genoa and Wigmore Church buildings, and the other three have closed: Bury Park’s final thanksgiving service was on 9 July 2023, but the exact closure dates of St Ninian’s and Edward Street are not known (although Edward Street was definitely up for sale in November 2022, as the photograph shows).



Chapel for sale: Edward Street United Reformed Church, Dunstable, Bedfordshire, seen in November 2022. The former Sunday School, used for worship since the adjacent chapel was demolished c.1974, is also now surplus to requirements (photograph copyright Kevin Lane, from Flickr: used with permission)

Chapels Society visits: can you help?

In recent years the Society has run a full programme of three chapel-visiting trips per year. Members regularly remark upon how valuable and stimulating these events are. To maintain this frequency, volunteers are needed to help suggest, plan and lead visits. The amount of work required is not substantial; plenty of guidance is available, both in written form and from members who have done it before; and the sense of satisfaction at the end of a successful trip is great indeed. If you live in, or know of, an area which has a number of interesting religious buildings which could be visited in a day, on foot or by coach, our Visits Secretary *John Anderson* would be pleased to hear from you. His contact details are on page 2 of every *Newsletter*.

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