

# Englesea Extra

No. 61: Wednesday July 5<sup>th</sup> 2023

Price: temperance

## Strange Times

I do try and treasure those moments in life when there's no demands on my time and I can take myself off to a coffee shop to enjoy an unrushed, hot cup of tea! It was such a moment when I found myself reading a wonderful article about Museums. Its opening paragraph said this:



Photo: The New Room, Bristol

***'Far more than eccentric repositories of things, a trip to your local museum can remind you of the unique character of where you live, and brings a touch of civic pride'.***

Over the last couple of weeks I've visited both the New Room, Bristol (while visiting friends) and the Museum of Methodism in London (a site managers' meeting – first time since being appointed to this post in 2019 that I've met my colleagues from Bristol and London face-to-face!). Both these museums moved me – and brought more than a 'touch' of Methodist pride! To hear why the New Room was built without windows downstairs – due to the opposition they faced, they were fearful of mob attacks. To see the small prayer chamber, considered 'the powerhouse of Methodism', and used by John Wesley each morning at 5am, set just off the bedroom where he died. As a lifelong Methodist, and now as a Museum Director with the responsibility of sharing the riches of our heritage, these were profound visits.

The President and Vice

President have set for

their theme this year 'Hidden Treasures'. [Read the addresses to Conference here](#). This is a constant refrain from our visitors 'We didn't know you were here, what a hidden treasure' ..... even from lifelong Methodists! Rev Gill Newton chooses the verse from Isaiah 45:3 rather than some of the more familiar of the 77 bible verses that mention treasure. Isaiah 45 refers to 'treasures of darkness and riches hidden in secret places' – and this resonates with all that we try to achieve here.

The staff and volunteers are working hard to ensure that more people can discover the Prim story and experience a touch of 'civic pride' at hearing this local 'Good News' story. We have another Quiet Day on 28<sup>th</sup> September, following the success of our first one a couple of weeks ago, and another Friday Forum Theatre on the 8<sup>th</sup> September, which is really growing in popularity. Please encourage your friends, family and churches to come and visit – personal recommendation is the best publicity!



Photo: John Wesley's prayer chamber, City Road, London

## Every blessing

## Ruth

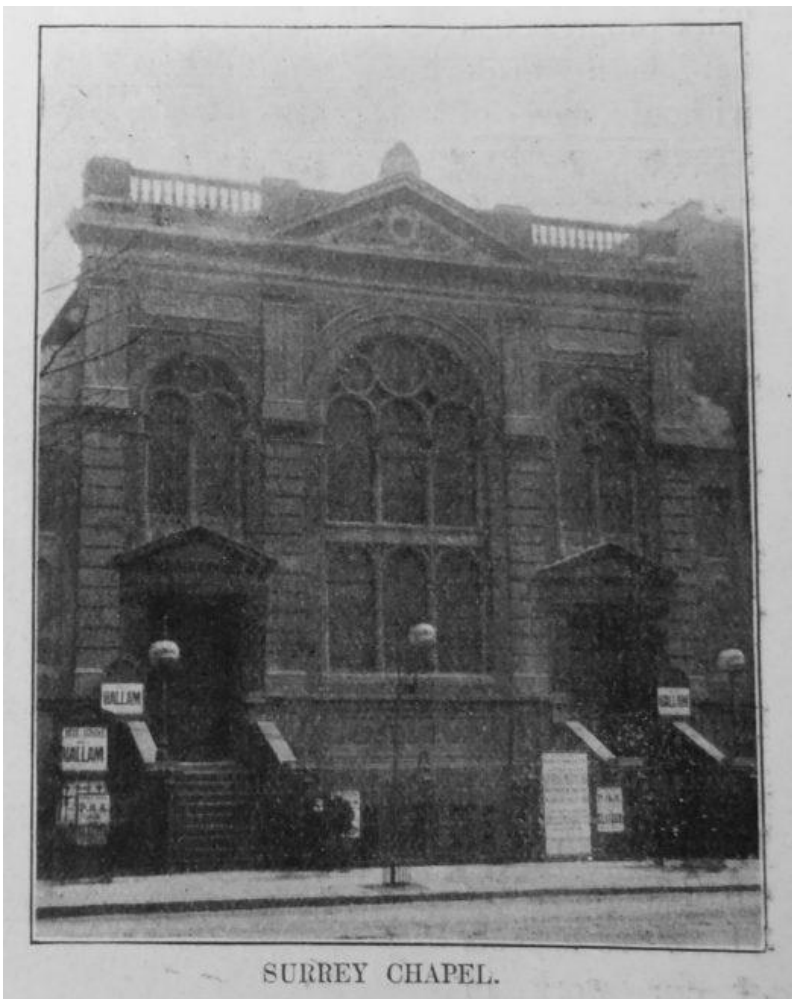
### Pause for thought

*Always help someone. You might be the only one that does*

## “Heaven on Their Minds”

Amy Wilkinson explores a connection between Andrew Lloyd-Webber and Primitive Methodism

Watching the first episode of the latest series of *Who Do You Think You Are?* I felt a potential connection to Primitive Methodism was dangled in front of us and then swiftly breezed over. The episode covered the family history of Andrew Lloyd-Webber, composer of musicals such as *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Cats*, *Evita*, and *The Phantom of the Opera* (my personal favourite). Lloyd-Webber’s paternal great-great-grandfather, Henry Samuel Simmonds, was a London City Missionary. A genealogist produced documents that stated that Simmonds became a missionary at the age of 23 in 1852, having been a member of Surrey Chapel for six years. Simmonds became the first missionary to visit East End pubs with the aim to prevent poverty brought about through excessive drinking. In 1865 he became a missionary to navvies south of the Thames at Battersea.<sup>1</sup>



It was the mention of Surrey Chapel that caught my attention because I had come across Surrey Chapel while researching our *Just Women* exhibition, which is currently on display in the Museum. They mentioned no details of Surrey Chapel, swiftly moving further back in his family tree to musicians and performers (including a famous cellist).<sup>2</sup> I decided some sleuthing was required!

Surrey Chapel was built by Rowland Hill as a non-conformist, non-denominational place of worship first opened in 1783.<sup>3</sup> In 1881 the original congregation moved, and the Primitive Methodists acquired the Chapel.<sup>4</sup> The original Chapel of Hill’s design was replaced by a new one built by the Prims further down Blackfriars Road, with the memorial stone laid on Good Friday 1888.<sup>5</sup> The foundation of the London Missionary Society was connected to Rowland Hill and Surrey Chapel. The Society held their annual sermon at the Chapel for many years.<sup>6</sup>

It appears that Simmonds was not associated with the Chapel when it became Prim as he had moved to Battersea in 1865. He may well have attended the annual sermon of the London Missionary Society at the Chapel, so

could have had Prim acquaintances.

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Andrew Lloyd-Webber’, *Who Do You Think You Are?*, BBC One, 1 June 2023. [Available: [BBC iPlayer - Who Do You Think You Are? - Series 20: 1. Andrew Lloyd Webber](#)]

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> B. Senior, *A Hundred Years of Evangelistic Work at Surrey Chapel* (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1895), p.9 & 48.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p.45.

<sup>5</sup> C. Hill, ‘Surrey Primitive Methodist Chapel, Blackfriars’, *My Primitive Methodists* (2020) [accessed 3 June 2023] <[Surrey Primitive Methodist chapel | London | My Primitive Methodists](#)>

<sup>6</sup> Senior, *A Hundred Years*, p.48.

Although I never found details of which Christian denomination (if any) Simmonds belonged to, I did find another connection between him and Primitive Methodist chapels.

Simmonds had an interest in architecture and wrote the first architectural history of Battersea, entitled *All About Battersea*. The book details churches, chapels and other buildings around the district. He documented four Primitive Methodist buildings:

1. **Primitive Methodist Chapel, New Road:** built in 1874, designed by architect Mr Murphy and built by a Mr Stocking. It seated 200, but four years later it was replaced by a larger chapel, the memorial stones of which were laid on Whit-Monday 1878.<sup>7</sup>
2. **Primitive Methodist Chapel, Grayshott Road:** a chapel seating 400 was built in 1875, with the stone laid on the 21 November 1874 by a J.T. Hawkins, Esq., MA for the Rt Hon. Earl Shaftesbury, KG.<sup>8</sup>
3. **Primitive Methodist Chapel, Plough Lane:** c.1880 the estate of Rev I.M. Soule was sold, and the chapel purchased freehold land from the estate on Plough Lane. A brick chapel was built with a school room underneath to accommodate 400 worshippers.<sup>9</sup>
4. **St George's Mission Hall, Stuart Lane:** had formerly belonged to the Prims and was used by them as a chapel.<sup>10</sup>

Simmonds died on Friday 22 April 1892. He received an obituary in the South London Press, which commended his nearly forty-years' service as a missionary. He was a beloved figure among the poor of South and East End London, having "a kind word for everyone, whatever class, and all had a kind word for him."<sup>11</sup>

## Chris' conundrums

Which Primitive Methodist chapel served for the shortest amount of time? Amongst the candidates must be [Ferndown chapel](#), just north of Bournemouth. It was such a short lived chapel that it even escaped My Primitive Methodists until we received contribution about it from Matt Davis the Chapels Society.

Although a chapel of some description was registered in 1909, replacing one opened in 1886 on a different site, the present building dates from the late 1920s. The 1932 Methodist Union brought into proximity chapels which were originally Wesleyan in nearby places like Stapehill (2 miles away), Holtwood, Verwood and Kinson (Bournemouth), and there were in any case ex-Primitive Methodist chapels close by in [Three Legged Cross](#) and [Colehill](#); so Ferndown was no longer required. It closed and was deregistered in 1940, not even being included as a 'recently sold' chapel in that year's comprehensive Methodist Statistical Returns.

The chapel would also stand a chance in the "What's the oddest use for a former chapel" competition. At a cost of £195 it was converted to become a fire station and remains in that use today. The first shout was on August 15<sup>th</sup> 1940 - to a peat fire. On Flicker, someone made a comment wondering whether the Fire Service saved more lives than the Primitive Methodists.



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<sup>7</sup> Henry S. Simmonds, *All About Battersea* (London: Ashfield, 1882), p.120. [Available: [All about Battersea : Henry S. Simmonds : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive](#)]

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p.121.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p.121.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p.122.

<sup>11</sup> 'Pick-Up Notes', *South London Press*, 14 May 1892.

## Sister Santusa meets Englesea Brook

*Ruth Parrott reflects on a recent visitor to Englesea Brook*

Methodist Women in Britain, hosted Sister Santusa Mamani de Luna, President of Methodist Women in Bolivia, earlier this month. Santusa, is an indigenous Aymara woman who had never been out of Bolivia and did not speak English! She was a keynote speaker at the Methodist World Mission Conference at Swanwick on 'Challenging our perspectives: learning from indigenous people'.



After a visit to Epworth Old Rectory, the home of the Wesley's, we brought her to Englesea Brook to introduce her to Primitive Methodism, along with our son Mark, to do the interpreting. She was fascinated by the story of the Camp Meetings on Mow Cop and the effect the Prims had on the ordinary people. We then took her to Mow Cop. It was a beautiful afternoon and she ran up the hill to the folly to admire the views. She was enthralled!

On Sunday we worshipped at Broomhall and Sound in the morning, then the Circuit Easter Offering Service in the evening. Ned Hilton accompanied us, to interpret, and she told us of how she walks for 2½ hours to get to church for

9am Bible Study, Services all day, then walks home at 6pm. The Methodist Church in Bolivia, consists of mostly indigenous people, 85% of whom are women, but they do not have women presbyters.

It has been a privilege to meet Sister Santusa, an amazing lady, and to form a link with the Bolivian Aymara women. We ask God's blessing on her work.



## Randle's rummagings

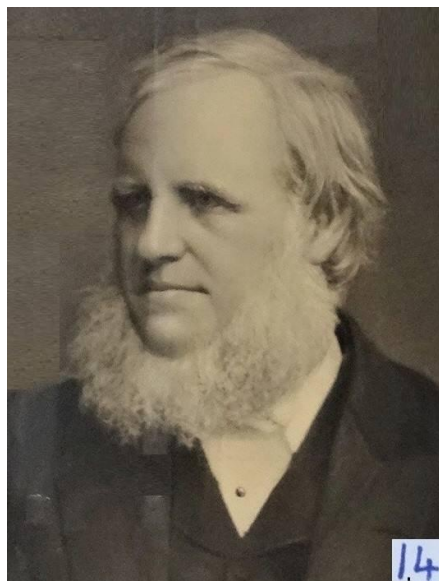


As many readers will know, a picture of the first PM chapel in Tunstall was produced as a postcard in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and both coloured and sepia versions of this exist. Much rarer is a print of it which was produced in 1860 or soon after, dateable by the quotation from the first edition of Petty's *History of the PM Connexion*, which was printed in that year. The two pictures are very similar, just showing slight differences in the figures. A copy of the print was recently spotted on Ebay, purchased, and donated to Englesea Brook. Another copy of the print exists locally, in private hands, and there was a copy at Hartley College. The last was passed to Hanley Museum, with many other items, but when they were forwarded to Englesea Brook in 1991 the print, like a plaster cast of Hugh Bourne's head, could not be located.

This chapel, which measured 16 yards long by 8 yards wide, with a gallery at one end, was built in 1811 in a way that meant it could easily be converted into four houses when it was no longer required. It was opened on 13 October 1811. Hugh Bourne wrote of it that 'The walls were not coated, and it had no ceiling. It was much approved of on

account of its plainness and neat appearance.' After only ten years it was found to be too small for the growing congregation, so a new chapel was built, though the old one may have continued in use for a while as the Sunday School (see article by John Anderson in *The Ranters' Digest*, Issue 16, Autumn 2017, pp.7-10). As always intended, the first chapel was eventually converted into houses, and they continued to be occupied for well over a hundred years, see attached picture. They were finally demolished c.1967

**And here are two more of the unidentified portraits from the recently acquired collection; has anyone any ideas?**





We'll be **FLYING HIGH** this August!

Tuesday to Saturday, 11am to 3pm:  
**Self-led easy crafts**  
(No charge, donations welcome)

Fridays at 11am:  
**Sensory story & cake!**  
(£2 per adult. Children free)

**The Story of Primitive Methodism**

For more details contact: [learning@engleseabrook.org.uk](mailto:learning@engleseabrook.org.uk)  
CW2 5QW [www.engleseabrook.org.uk](http://www.engleseabrook.org.uk)

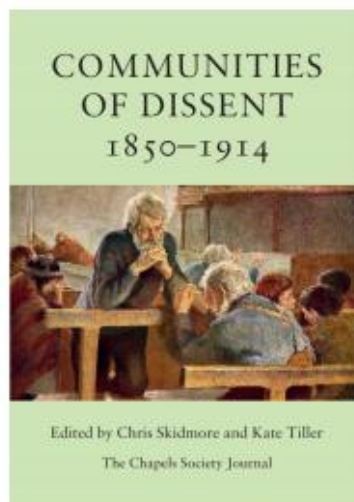
With support of **Kids in Mind MANIFESTO**

## Book Club: a recommendation

Philip Thornborow recommends *Communities of Dissent 1850-1914*, published by the Chapels Society and launched at April's Chapels Society Conference of the same name.

The cover image of this book is Titcombe's "Primitive Methodists at prayer". As well as printing the papers given at the conference, the book includes an account of the Communities of Dissent project run by the Family and Community History Research Society, an outcome of which was the addition of Anne Langley's pages on the Warwickshire PM chapels, and a profile of Woolwich and Plumstead from the project

Available [here on the Chapels Society website](#) for a special offer £10 (+£3 p+p) until August 30<sup>th</sup>



*Communities of Dissent 1850-1914* in this period of maturing modernity, variously debated as a time for chapels of growth and increased status, of changing character, or of increasing stress and incipient decline. 155 pages, 35 illustrations.

Newly published by  
THE CHAPELS SOCIETY  
*Communities of Dissent 1850-1914*

This volume presents recent research on chapels and chapel life in their Victorian and Edwardian heyday, considering a variety of locations in England and Wales, urban, rural and suburban, some industrial, some newly-developed and some long-established. The experiences of communities of dissent are revealed particularly through the methods and perspectives of family and local studies, linking a wide range of written records, buildings, material culture and personal testimonies. Findings illuminate the roles of Nonconformity

### CONTENTS

Introduction (Chris Skidmore and Kate Tiller); *Communities of Dissent 1850-1914: the Heyday of Chapel?* (Kate Tiller); *Building Seion: Chapel and Community in North-West Wales* (Frances Richardson); *Family and Chapel: Religion, Society and Kinship on Bodmin Moor* (Gary Crossley); *Communities of Dissent: the Family and Community History Research Society (FACHRS) Project*; *Communities of Dissent: a Profile of Woolwich and Plumstead 1850-1939* (Diane Rowland); *Earnest spirituality, a winning presence, a curiously fascinating personality – the life and work of Revd Gertrude von Petzold* (Cynthia Brown).

**Dates for the Diary**

**Heritage Service:**



**Crafty Ranters:** Friday 14th July: Banner of Strength – creating a banner together to celebrate women who have made a difference and transformed lives.

**Flying High** – Summer Activities for families throughout August. See poster for more details

**New exhibition:** On Wed 23rd August, we are launching a joint exhibition with the Probation Service ‘Root and Branch’ at Englesea Brook. We would love you to join us, together with representatives from the Probation Service and our funders AIM, to celebrate the achievements of this partnership, understand how the world’s first Probation Service grew out of the Temperance movement and the Primitive Methodists involvement in it through the work of the Court Missionaries.

**Quiet Day** on 28th September, following the success of our first one a couple of weeks ago

**Friday Forum Theatre** on the 8th September

**Copy and publication dates for Englesea Extra 62**

*Extra 62 will be published on Wednesday August 2<sup>nd</sup>. Your article, ideas, photographs by Friday July 26<sup>th</sup> please.*

**And a final prayer from Christina Rossetti (1830–1894)**

*Lord Jesus Christ, Wisdom and Word of God, dwell in our hearts, we pray, by your most Holy Spirit, that out of the abundance of our hearts, our mouths may speak your praise.*

*Amen.*