

Englesea Extra

No. 64: Wednesday November 1st 2023

Price: Forbearance

Strange Times

EE64 Strange Times

Rob and I spent a few days in Rome in early October – a long-awaited post-treatment, post-Covid trip – where Rob, particularly, wanted to visit the ancient Christian sites. We did manage some of the touristy sites as well, including the Vatican Museums and the Sistine Chapel. I think,



though, that I might enjoy my job a bit too much. What, of all the thousands of items in the Vatican Museums, stood out to me? Their own selection of ceremonial trowels. Although with jewel-encrusted handles, they took ceremonial trowels to a whole new level! To my non-conformist eyes, the ornate and highly decorated Vatican was rather overwhelming and the Sistine Chapel, while a work of art in itself, is not what I would call a chapel!

However, visiting the catacombs was an altogether different experience. Located on the outskirts of the then city of Rome, these were a

fascinating insight into the earliest Christian communities. Art was used to identify the deceased and gave us an insight into early Christian faith. Christianity grew rapidly amongst the poor, as Christianity offered a joyful, hopeful vision of death – the beginning of the true life, not the entrance to the dark kingdom of the nether world. This new God was the giver of life for free, not an angry God expecting payment and therefore only accessible to the rich, which is what the Pagans believed.



Photo: An engraving on a grave seal – suggesting the deceased was a grain merchant. An early Loving Cup?

What a fascinating parallel with the growth of the Primitive Methodists amongst the working poor – the Potteries, mining communities and agricultural workers. And how does that challenge us as we consider our Christian mission today?

Every blessing

Ruth

Pause for thought

Beautiful young people are accidents of nature, but beautiful old people are works of art.

- Eleanor Roosevelt, diplomat and writer (11 Oct 1884-1962)

Time spent planning is never wasted

Rev David Leese unearths another fascinating part of our story.

INDEPENDENT PRIMITIVE METHODIST PREACHING PLAN 1854: BINGHAM CIRCUIT

Following on from the Louth Teetotal plan featured in the last Englesea Extra, this again is one which is claimed to be unique (unless you know differently).

The Cirplan journal of Lent 1996 carried an article on this plan. It traces the origins of these Independent Methodists in the Bingham/Radcliffe on Trent area of Nottingham to a secession in 1832, when the local circuit expelled five local preachers for not complying with the Primitive Methodist Connexional requirements. The two leading preachers on the plan are firstly one of the five expelled local preachers, George Baxter a shopkeeper of Bingham, together with John Parrot who had organised the Priest Hill Radcliffe -on - Trent Camp meeting of 1817, but who had been expelled from the Nottingham PM circuit in 1829 'because he cannot conscientiously continue with us.'

PLACES AND TIMES	SUNDAY							MONDAY							TUESDAY							WEDNESDAY							THURSDAY							FRIDAY							SATURDAY							PRESIDENTS NAMES & RESIDENCES																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																															
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Methodist relics.

Rev Malcolm Lorimer reflects, as he genuflects before a bust of John Wesley!

The Protestant church has always taken a dim view of religious relics. Martin Luther railed against bits of Saints bodies being venerated and it was said that in the middle ages there were enough pieces of 'The True Cross' to build two Noah's arks!

Primitive Methodists also don't believe in relics -or do they? In a box of books donated to Hassall Road was a very interesting small box with a piece of wood with a replica John Wesley Medallion stuck on it.

The paper inside says "This is to certify that the wood from which this is made was part of a pulpit in which John Wesley preached in 1768 and on many other occasions."

It goes on to say. "The oak from which is made came from a tree which would be seasoned in 1768 and the tree would be 200 years old when it was cut down. The carries back the history of the pulpit (and your piece of it) by another 250 years. In 1518 or thereabouts, Martin Luther had not yet nailed his 95 Thesis to the Church door at Wittenberg. Henry V111 was a lad, and Shakespeare had not yet been born. History is in the palm of your hand"

This is no. 73 of ltd edition of 120 produced some time ago by an enterprising Methodist Minister.!!!

I think I will take it the next time I am preaching and hold it in my hand as I preach, hoping that the spirit of Wesley will come upon me and inspire me in my preaching!

Who says that Methodists don't believe in religious relics?

p.s. If anyone wants to hold this precious relic please call in to the Hassall Road Bookshop.

Chris' Conundrums

The challenge this time was a recent enquiry to My Prims asking where precisely Wenlock Road Primitive Methodist chapel in South Shields was located. The enquirer's mother who lived nearby in Madras Street (next to Clive Street, recalling the British Empire in India) went there as a child. She also remembered the chapel being bombed during the Second World war.

The chapel was located using historic Ordnance Survey maps from the [brilliant National Library of Scotland website](#). But the element that made me stop and think was the chapel's record in the 1940 Inventory of Methodist buildings. Wenlock Road was then in the South Shields A circuit: of the 13 former Primitive and United Methodist chapels in the circuit, 12 are recorded as having bomb damage.

The picture here shows damage at the chapel. There are more pictures of Wenlock Road chapel and memories of its influence on [My Prims here](#).



Researching a Primitive Methodist Church postcard

Ian Murray undertakes detective work

Between Annfield Plain and Catchgate are streets with the following names:

Bourne Terrace, Clowes Terrace, Antliff Terrace and Wesley Terrace

Hugh Bourne and William Clowes started the Primitive Methodist movement in 1807 when they held camp meetings at Mow Cop in Staffordshire. The Antliff brothers were also associated with the movement in the early days.

While on holiday in The Peak District this summer, my wife and I visited Mow Cop and on the following Sunday, I attended the morning service at the chapel in the village. The chapel had lots of information and memorabilia about the PM movement and I came away with two books that had been written by a former minister, Reverend Stephen Hatcher. One of the books celebrated the centenary of the PM movement and mainly consisted of old photographs of the events at the time and old postcards. I was amazed when I saw the following page and read the details under the picture



This card was produced for the 1907 centenary and sent from Annfield Plain on 2 October 1907 to an address in the vicinity of Newcastle on Tyne.

Bourne and Clowes are rightly given 'centre stage'. The pillars on either side list those who served as President of Conference, while on the circumference some of the achievements of the Primitive Methodist movement are pictured. These are: Fernando Po Mission and the Mission at Aliwal North on the top of the card (both in Africa). Below are images of the first and third (as current in 1907) Primitive Methodist Chapel in Tunstall. At the centre of the bottom, Mow Cop is pictured along with the recently expanded Hartley College at Manchester.

I was intrigued to know what was written on the other side of the card and, if possible find out who had sent it and to whom it had been sent.



I contacted the Museum of Primitive Methodism in Englesea Brook (Crewe) and they in turn contacted Reverend Hatcher who was able to supply an image of the back of the card:

Unfortunately, the signature is unreadable and there were no names that I recognised from my own family history. However, after a bit of 'digging' on Ancestry and with the use of the old maps on the Durham Record Office website, I have identified the recipient of the card and composed a plausible explanation for the sender.

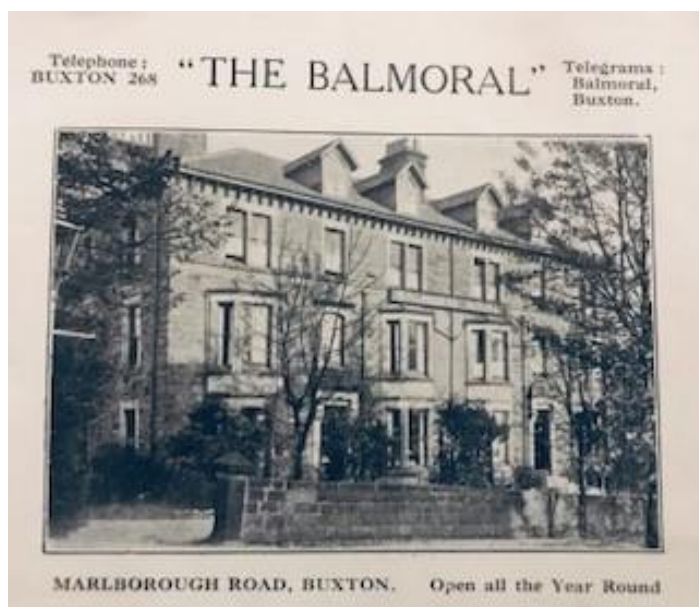
Mrs Gibson was born Minnie Spanton in Greencroft (near Annfield Plain) in 1874 and in 1881 lived at Greencroft Cottages. In 1899 she married James Gibson and in 1901 was living at 30 Kirk Street, Byker, the address on the postcard. She was still at this address when the 1939 register was published.

Minnie had a sister, Rachel whose married name was Rachel King and in 1901, and 1911, was living at 17 Annfield Place, houses between Greencroft and Annfield Plain. She had a daughter Rhoda and a neighbour Beatrice Ridley. So a possible explanation of the card is that Rachel was writing to her sister and asking her to get a jacket for R (daughter Rhoda?) and that Beatrice is the Mrs Ridley mentioned. Also, I wonder if instead of a name at the end of the card it reads "from the children".

Even though this is conjecture, I am pleased that I have unearthed a piece of Annfield Plain history which is over one hundred years old.

A Primitive Methodist Holiday (the 1923 way)?

David Leese relaxes:



In 1922 the Primitive Methodist Holiday Homes Limited bought the stone built 'The Balmoral' in Buxton. The aim was to provide a holiday and rest centre under the most healthy and comfortable conditions at moderate cost. Groups of Sunday schools and Christian Endeavour were welcomed.

36 bedrooms most with hot and cold water and electric lights were available with spacious recreation rooms all set in well wooded grounds – five minutes from the town and ten minutes from the PM chapel.

The motto of the home was Comradeship, and visitors were *invited* to co-operate in the arrangements of social and musical evenings, rambles, and picnics. Excursions by char-a-banc could be arranged. The Balmoral grounds provided

tennis, bowls, and croquet, with billiards in the recreation room.

Arrangements for invalids could be made out of season. Special diets, fires in bedrooms, baths and boots could be catered for!

Apply to the Matron!

See what *The Balmoral* looks like now on [My Prims here](#).

Randle's rummagings

A gift to the Museum has filled some gaps on My Prims. Click on the links to go to the relevant pages.

The museum has recently been given a collection of ephemera relating to the Forest Hill Primitive Methodist circuit. The donor commented 'Although it obviously came into Union in 1932, it still regarded itself as PM, even in the 50s and 60s when I attended!' Apparently they maintained the old forms of worship, and made it very clear what they thought of ministers who dared to wear gowns!

The collection comprises programmes of concerts, service sheets and other events, dating from the 1920s and continuing until quite recently. In 1926-7 there were four concerts at the church by The Bachelors (not the 1960s Irish pop group!) and in 1928 the church's dramatic society put on a performance of 'Jane, A Farce in Three Acts', which sounds as if it was a rather odd choice for a PM Church. However, the most interesting item was a pamphlet entitled *A Tale That is Told . . . Souvenir Handbook of Primitive Methodism in The Forest Hill Circuit 1882-1932*. I found that we did already have a copy of this in the library, but I had never had cause to consult it; this copy will remain with the ephemera.

It transpires that there were four chapels in the circuit, [Forest Hill](#) itself, [Knight's Hill](#), [Crystal Palace Road \(East Dulwich\)](#) and [Hamilton Road](#), with pictures of all of them. There were already pictures of the first two on the MyPrims website, but we now have a different one of



CENTRAL CHURCH, FOREST HILL.



CRYSTAL PALACE ROAD CHURCH.



HAMILTON ROAD CHURCH.

Forest Hill and a better copy of Knight's Hill. There was no picture of Crystal Palace Road church, and no entry at all for Hamilton Road. All these gaps have now been filled.

The pamphlet also has pictures of many of the ministers who were stationed at Forest Hill, including Revs [Alfred Bateson](#), [Douglas William Spedding](#), [Lawrence Henry Wood](#) and [Percy Maydew Hoyle](#). None of these had



REV. A. BATESON



REV. D. W. SPEDDING

a picture on MyPrims, they do now. The picture of Rev Bateson is particularly important as it revealed an error in Rev William Leary, *Ministers and Circuits in the Primitive Methodist Church, a Directory*. Leary has Rev Bateson stationed at Stanstead 1931-35, but the pamphlet makes it clear that he was at Forest Hill from 1931 until at least 1933. There was only one PM minister with that surname, so there is no possibility of confusion, and the 1936 edition of *Ministers and Probationers of the Methodist Church* confirms that he was at Forest Hill until 1935. The confusion probably arose because the Forest Hill church was situated in Stanstead Road.

The **Methodist** Church 
Chester & Stoke-on-Trent District



Church at the Margins

To nurture new Christian communities amongst economically marginalised people

Church at the Margins
A day of exploration led by Deacon Eunice Attwood
(Church at the Margins Officer for the Methodist Church)

Saturday 25 November 2023 from 10:00am to 3:00pm
at Wellspring Methodist Church, Congleton, CW12 3AP
(Lunch will be provided)

Eunice brings over twenty years' experience of ordained diaconal ministry from a variety of contexts, including theological education and city and town-centred ministry amongst marginalised and vulnerable communities, where she helped start and grow many fresh expressions of church. Building on the Biblical connection between evangelism and social justice, Eunice is helping to start a movement of new Christian communities led by people experiencing economic marginalisation.

Please register to attend by emailing Rob
chester.stoke@btconnect.com
by 13 November 2023

Dates for the Diary

Heritage Services:

Sunday Nov 5th – Love Feast

Heritage Talks:

Saturday 11th November 2023 at 11am GMT "Threading Faith, Memory and Self-Care: Sewing and Primitive Methodism". Clare Holdsworth will discuss the benefits of therapeutic sewing, drawing on her personal experience of memorial remaking. In addition to exploring how these sewing practices reveal an ongoing tension between the value of productive labour and the necessity of spending time well, she will offer observations on different sewing practices, the various textiles in the Museum collection, and how Methodist teaching intersects with the philosophy of time.

Clare Holdsworth is Professor of Social Geography at Keele University.

This event is free. Everyone is welcome. The Zoom details are:

<https://zoom.us/j/93166570055...> ; Meeting ID: 931 6657 0055;
Passcode: 182296



Christmas at Englesea Brook:

Advent Bible Studies

This Advent, led by the Chair of the Chester and Stoke on Trent District, Rev Helen Kirk entitled: 'Advent for a justice seeking church'.

All are welcome to join us via Zoom from 10.30-12 noon on Wednesday 22nd and 29th November, and 6th and 13th December. The zoom invitation will remain the same for every session: the Zoom details are:

<https://zoom.us/j/92679562113?pwd=V3dSTzhBSlRzRkhaK1p1eDVmMy85Zz09>

Meeting ID: 926 7956 2113; passcode: 592368

Fancy making a Christmas wreath?

Come and join the Crafty Ranters on Friday 8th December for a fun session. 11am-1pm. Please ring to book because space is limited.

Candlelit carols Our Candlelit Carol Service is on Sunday 10th December at 3pm, led by Rev Helen Kirk

Dickens' A Christmas Carol On Friday 15th December, Elizabeth Morris will again be retelling Dickens' A Christmas Carol. Tickets £8, children under 14 are free. To book tickets, please email Elizabeth at learning@engleseabrook.org.uk.

Copy and publication dates for Englesea Extra 65

Extra 65 will be published on Wednesday December 6th. Your article, ideas, photographs by Friday December 1st please.

And a final prayer from Matthew Henry (1662 - 1714)

Let your peace rule in our hearts, O Lord that we may delight in your strength, rejoice in your grace and find our fulfilment in your will; through Christ our Lord.

Amen.