

Englesea Extra

No. 66: Wednesday January 10th 2024

Price: love

Strange Times

Happy New Year to you all! This might be a rather thin edition as folk slowly emerge from the Christmas busyness, but I thought you might be interested to hear of our plans for Englesea Brook in the coming season.

For the last two years, we have focussed our programme, exhibitions and displays, where possible, around a particular theme. In 2022, we celebrated 250 years since the birth of Hugh Bourne. Last year, we broadly focussed on Social Justice and Women, as we remembered the story of the Ascott Martyrs 150 years ago (for those of you unfamiliar with the incident and how it changed the law to allow for peaceful protest, take a look at the website: [From Tolpuddle to the Cotswolds... THE ASCOTT MARTYRS – Why did the rural establishment imprison 16 women and 2 babies in 1873?](#)). The response to the 'Just Women' exhibition has been so positive, that Amy is working on an accompanying booklet which will be available to purchase from the gift shop when we reopen in April.

This year is 200 years since the publication of the first PM Children's magazine. We know, from Hugh Bourne's journal as well as other sources, how he understood the importance of including and honouring children as part of the Primitive Methodist movement. H.B. Kendall, in his History of the Primitive Methodist Church said of Bourne:

Above all, he lovingly studied the child-mind. He had a natural aptitude for talking to children so as to interest them, and make the truth so plain that they could not fail to understand and remember. In short, he was a pioneer in knowing "how to reach the children."

The staff will be looking at the childhood experiences of key PM people, like William Clowes, the rise and significance of the Sunday School movement, and will have a display of childhood 'toys' from the Primitive Methodist era. We are delighted that Epworth Old Rectory have already agreed to loan us a doll dating from the 1800s from their collection.

This is where we need your help! There are not a great number of artefacts in the collection to illustrate the experiences of children from that period. If any of you have items you would be willing to lend us for our display, we would love to hear from you. We will also be collecting oral histories, recording stories and memories of Sunday School experiences. Please drop me an email if you, or someone you know, would be willing to talk to us! director@engleseabrook.org.uk

I am excited to see what we can curate together

Every blessing

Ruth



Pause for thought

Fear prophets and those prepared to die for the truth, for as a rule they make many others die with them, often before them, at times instead of them.

- Umberto Eco, philosopher and novelist (5 Jan 1932-2016)

Jesus wants me for a sunbeam

Picking up Ruth's Strange Times theme of childhood, the following has just been added to the My Prims website. It is an extract from the Rev Sheila Hamil's book of memoirs. Sheila is a retired school teacher who became an Anglican deacon and cleric in the north east of England. Sheila was brought up in Howdon, on Tyneside, and the family were members of the former Howdon Primitive Methodist chapel. The women in her family were staunch Primitive Methodists and although it was some time after Methodist Union, her memories of Sunday School show little had changed.

My very first thoughts concerning God were born in Sunday School in our local chapel at a very early age. My sister's faith and mine were handed to us, served on a platter, by our family of staunch Methodist women, the 'Primitive' variety! I say women, because dad would only attend church on very special occasions, and granda, who was also a practising Methodist, was a quiet and reserved devotee, compared with our mother, our nana and our great grandmother.

So I was an innocent, trusting child, who believed in God implicitly; there was no questioning, no doubt whatsoever.

'God was in his heaven and all was right with the world!'

I loved my Sunday School teacher, Mr Les Chisholm, who taught us wonderful Jesus' stories, and was such a kind and gentle man. Sometimes at the close of a class he would allow me to pick out a made-up tune on the piano for everyone, as I was so keen to make music, even then.

The hymns we sang told of God the Father's love for us, and of Jesus, his Son who was meek and mild, and who loved children. We sang songs such as 'Jesus loves me this I know', 'Jesus wants me for a sunbeam'. 'Jesus bids us shine with a pure, clear light.'

You never forget such words.

One lengthy hymn became a firm favourite of mine, because it made my heart soar, even though I was too young at the time to understand why, or what the words meant! But it told me that something glorious was on its way . . .

There's a light upon the mountains, and the day is at the spring,
When our eyes shall see the beauty, and the glory of the king!
Weary was my heart with waiting, and the night-watch seem'd so long.
But the triumph day is breaking, and we hail it with a song!

Another of my favourites was about a young boy named Samuel, who was called by God three times ('four' if we include the call he eventually responded to) as he slept in the temple, where he lived with the prophet Eli. It began:-

Hushed was the evening hymn, The temple court was dark,
the lamp was burning dim, Before the sacred ark.
When suddenly a voice, divine, Rang through the silence of the shrine.

Looking back now, this threefold call of the boy Samuel by God, was rather like mine.

I didn't have much clue what all the other hymns meant, but they were magnificent, and so full of depth and passion when sung by a full congregation, with chains falling off, and dungeon doors flying open; and with pilgrims treading the verge of Jordan! Hymns were such a joy to sing, though not all, but I loved singing. Music has always been like that for me.



Sheila as a little girl outside Howdon Primitive Methodist chapel

I enjoyed Sunday School anniversaries, where we all, as children, had to stand on our chairs, in front of the congregation, and perform! When it was our turn, we each recited poems, or sang songs, that we'd been asked to learn off by heart..

I still recall a song I sang on my own as a toddler:-

'Dainty wee daisy, woke with the sun,
"Up," said the skylark, "Morning's begun"

My husband, Bob, remembers the piece he said too, for his church anniversary":

'I am a little soldier, I'm only three years old,
I mean to fight for Jesus, and wear a crown of gold!"

Jack, his family's local baker, told him to put his fists up in the air, when he said the word 'fight', but being the shy boy Bob was then, I doubt he complied.



Former Howdon Primitive Methodist chapel.

The chapel was demolished to make way for toll booths for the Tyne tunnel.

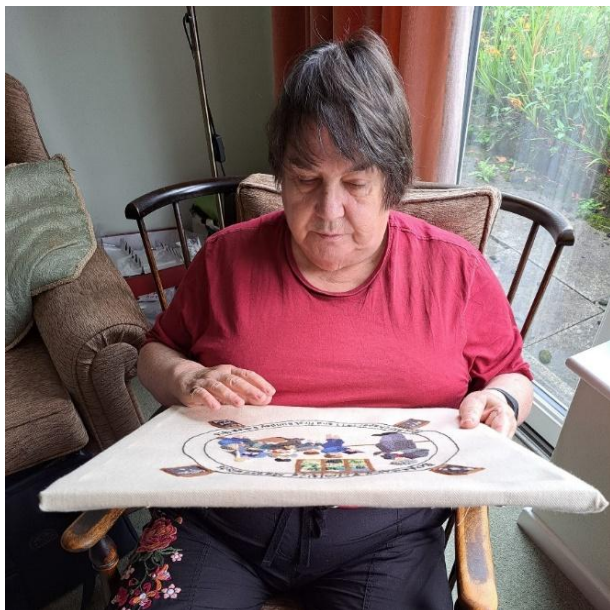
Sheila's website is here: www.sheilahamil.co.uk.

You can read the rest of Sheila's life and faith story here:
<https://sites.google.com/site/sheilahamilmusic/my-life-and-faith-story> .

Sheila's [page on my Prims is here](#),

The [Howdon chapel page here](#)..

Methodist Tapestries Collection

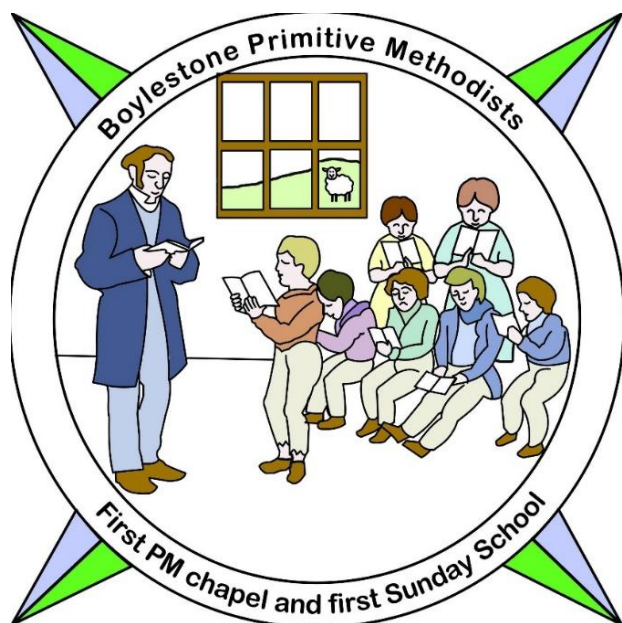


Some of you may have heard about this wonderful project being spearheaded by our friends at the Weardale Museum, housed in a former Methodist manse. The museum is creating a collection of tapestry panels, portraying different stories from our Methodist past, in order to attract sustainable income to restore and save the historic High House Methodist Chapel next to the Museum.

Take a look at the website for more images – there's already a Mow Cop panel completed:

<https://weardalemuseum.org.uk/methodist-tapestries-project>.

This one, however, features the first Primitive Methodist chapel. You can see the initial design and how Gill (left), one of the embroiderers on this project, has developed her own ideas into the panel.



This is what the project says about this panel:

Each Methodist chapel has its own story, whether known to many or few. Boylestone, in Derbyshire, is little known today but it was an early centre of Primitive Methodist activity, with the first Primitive Methodist chapel built there in 1811 and their first Sunday School in 1814. Gill, pictured at work on her panel, was keen to emphasise the rural setting - and so added plenty of detail to see through the Sunday School window!

Randle's rummagings

We have recently received a collection of family Primitive Methodist papers from a lady in Leeds, which tell an interesting story.

Her grandfather, Revd John Clennell, was a PM minister who trained at Manchester PM College c.1904 – it was only renamed Hartley College in 1906, after Sir William P. Hartley, the jam manufacturer, who was such a generous benefactor to the college and Primitive Methodism generally.

Two of her great uncles were also PM ministers, Revd John T. Bell and Revd Ernest Charles Hudson, and the three of them married three Wesleyan sisters. These three ministers all lacked pictures on the My Prims website, a gap that has now been filled.



Rev John Clennell



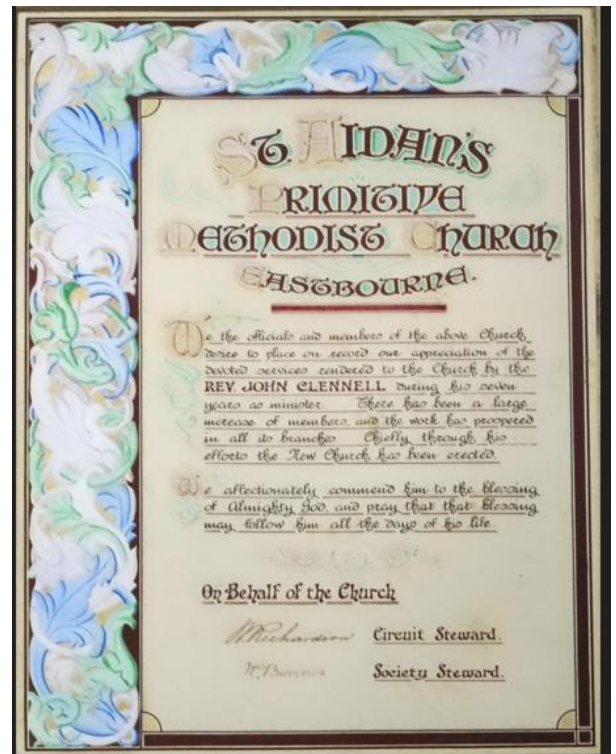
Rev Ernest Charles Hudson



Rev John T Bell



John Clennell's second appointment, in 1907, was to Eastbourne, where the congregation met in a tin hut. He went to the Duke of Devonshire and asked for assistance in building a new church, which was readily granted. He returned later and asked for help to purchase an organ. He named the church St Aidan's, to recall his connection with the north-east of England. We now have a splendid architect's drawing of this church.



When Clennell left Eastbourne in 1914, the congregation presented him with an illuminated address, which is now displayed in the museum's open store, next to the picture of the church. It notes that during his seven years at Eastbourne 'There has been a large increase in members, and the work has prospered in all its branches. Chiefly through his efforts the New Church has been erected'. The donor's father also attended Hartley College, but just post-union, and we have a picture of him with other ministers, officials and local preachers in the Hartlepool circuit in 1942. We have also received some books from the same source, one of them signed by Victor Murray, the last vice-president of the PM Conference.

Farewell and grateful thanks to John Percival

After over 10 years of diligent service to Englesea Brook as both its treasurer and librarian, John Percival is stepping down. Many of you know John and his care-full, thorough and meticulous approach to both roles. Personally, John has been a huge support and my understanding of things financial has grown through his kindness and patience, never balking at my (sometimes!) stupid questions! The words of the Covenant service, ours was on Sunday, come to mind. When in the introduction of the Covenant prayer, the words 'Christ has many services to be done:.....some are suitable to our natural inclinations, yes, John certainly has been a round peg in a round hole; 'put me to doing' – yes, Englesea Brook certainly did that! But the generosity of spirit in which John has served Englesea Brook has been exemplary, and we owe John a deep debt of gratitude. Thank you John.

So, let me introduce to you our new treasurer, who takes over officially from John on 1st February. Anthony Bellis saw the role advertised on the CVS website and got in touch. I'll ask him to introduce himself to you in the next Englesea Extra, but we are delighted to have him join the team: welcome Anthony.

Chris' Conundrums

Firstly, a challenge met

Following news of the closure of Braydon chapel in north east Wiltshire, one of the few remaining tin chapels in the connexion, I asked in Extra 65 whether it was the last one. Thanks to Philip Thornborow for revealing that Lee Bridges tin chapel in Shropshire is still open and active as a Methodist church.



This is one of Richard and Elaine Pearce's pictures of Lee Bridges chapel on My Prims. The pictures were taken in 2012 and you can [see more here](#).

And now a musical challenge

Last October I couldn't resist going to Hull to hear "Hymns, spirituals and songs of the old camp ground" presented by "The grandsons and daughters of the old temperance revival". Many of the hymns sung would have been familiar to Primitive Methodists -and us - and I'm pleased to say that Chris and Kath Jordan who arranged the concert have recorded some for My Prims, including Shall we gather at the river, Pass me not O gentle Saviour, Blessed Assurance and Dare to be a Daniel.

Does anyone else share my childhood memory of the Dare to be a Daniel verse that went:

*Dare to be a Daniel, Dare to stand alone,
Dare to pass a public house and take a bottle home.*

Amongst the recordings was "At Jacob's well", a carol that has survived outside of hymn books, especially amongst carols traditionally sung in pubs in South Yorkshire. Based on the story, in John's Gospel chapter 5, of the Woman at the well in Sychar, the song contains a vision of Christ travelling through the landscape of Britain, like William Blake's Jerusalem. [You can hear it here.](#)

Whilst I was looking for background information on "At Jacob's Well", I was taken by surprise by a reference on the Mainly Norfolk English Folk Songs website that "the song is sometimes attributed to Hugh Bourne (1772-1852), the founder of the Primitive Methodists". Does anyone know anything else about this?

It does seem that there were versions of the song in circulation before his time. But there are other links to Methodism. "At Jacob's well" was included in "Hymns for the use of the Methodist New Connexion, principally from the collection of J. Wesley", a Methodist hymnal from 1836.

The tune is reminiscent of many hymns from the period. It reminds me of Newbury Grace - We thank thee uncreated good. Like many folk songs, the tune changes with the person singing it. Here I've notated the version that is sung in the recording although I've moved it to a key suiting a wider range of voices.

At Ja - cob's well, a Stran - ger sought His droop - ing
This had she known, her faint - ting mind For ri - cher
This an - cient well, no glass so true, Our Na - tions
Yet Bri - tain must the Stran - ger know Or soon her

6
frame to cheer; His droop - ing frame to cheer Sa - ma - ria's
draughts had sigh'd; For ri - cher draughts had sigh'd Nor had Mes -
i - mage shows: Our Na - tions i - mage shows Now Je - sus
loss de - plore; Or soon her loss de - plore Be - hold the

12
daugh - ter lit - tle thought
si - ah, e - ver kind,
tra - vels Bri - tain through,
li - ving wa - ters flow!

That Ja - cob's God was
Those ri - cher draughts de -
But who the Stran - ger
Come drink, and thirst no

Sa - ma - ria's daugh - ter lit - tle thought
Nor had Mes - si - ah, e - ver kind,
Now Je - sus tra - vels Bri - tain through
Be - hold the li - ving wa - ters flow!

17
near Sa - ma - ria's daugh - ter lit - tle thought That Ja - cob's God was near
nied Nor had Mes - si - ah, e - ver kind, Those ri - cher draughts de - nied.
knows? Now Je - sus tra - vels Bri - tain through, But who the stran - ger knows?
more. Be - hold the li - ving wa - ters flow, Come drink, and thirst no more.

Dates for the Diary

Heritage Talks: Saturday 13th January @ 11am – Heritage talk on Zoom. This will be led by Amy, our Heritage officer, as she shares in more depth the research that she undertook and the stories she uncovered as part of the Root and Branch partnership between Englesea Brook and the Probation Service. It's wonderful to us that such a significant link to our Primitive Methodist history has only just been re-told!

Saturday 10th February @ 11am Heritage talk with Nick Mansfield, former director of the People's Museum in Manchester and long time friend of Englesea Brook.

Lent Bible Studies Lent Bible Studies (I know, we're still officially in the Christmas period!) are going to be led by Barbara Easton, former vice-president of the Methodist Church. Her theme is: Wells in the Wilderness. More details to follow but save the dates: **Wednesdays Feb 28th, March 6th, 13th and 20th from 10.30-12 noon** via Zoom.

Copy and publication dates for Englesea Extra 67

Extra 67 will be published on Wednesday February 7th. Your article, ideas, photographs by Friday February 2nd please.

And a final prayer from Basil of Caesarea (c. 330-379)

Cleanse our hearts, O Lord our God, that with perfect love we may hope in you and purify our consciences that with sure confidence we may pray to you; through Christ our Lord. Amen.