

# Englesea Extra

No. 67: Wednesday February 7<sup>th</sup> 2024

Price: charity

## *Strange Times*

It is a strange time for me. My mum's health is deteriorating, so I am travelling back and forth to Rutland to spend time with her, setting up my laptop and working quietly in her room and grateful for the hospitality of her friends and the care from the care home staff. I am reminded of the somewhat nomadic lifestyle of our Prim forebears and their reliance on the hospitality and open homes of maybe strangers, united in their faith through the Primitive Methodist movement.

While chatting about my role at Englesea Brook – incidentally, as a lifelong Methodist, she had never heard of the Chapel and Museum until my mum showed her a copy of the Ranters' Digest recently – my mum's friend beckoned me through to her back room. Imagine my delight when she showed me this cabinet in what her grandson refers to as 'the museum room'!!

Two things struck me. Friends, we have a serious job to do to shout about and promote the work of Englesea Brook Chapel and Museum so please, tell your friends, tell your church communities, arrange a trip, advertise our upcoming heritage talks and bible studies in your church notices (these are via zoom so anyone with a smart phone or computer can join us – for free!!! Details are in this edition).

Second, how many more of you have Methodist memorabilia in your homes – I would love to feature them in future editions of Englesea Extras. What speaks to you of your Methodist heritage? Not everyone will have an entire cabinet dedicated to it – it won't surprise you to know my mum's friend worked in a museum for many years! I know my mum had chapel crockery from the various churches where my dad was minister; I still treasure my JMA medal with its yearly bars added. Do drop me a line – and let's share our 'hidden treasures' which is the President and Vice-President's theme this year.

*Every blessing*

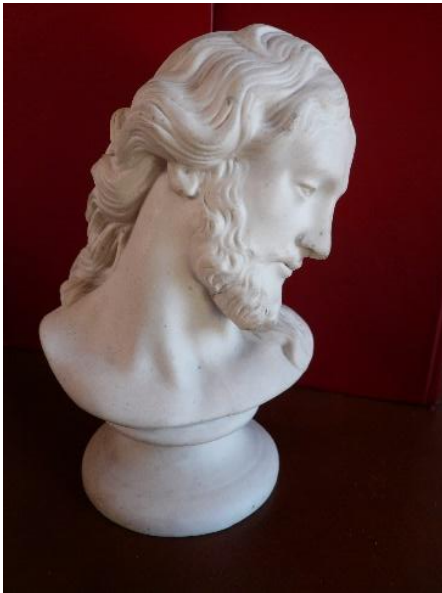
*Ruth*



**Pause for thought**

*Half the truth is often a great lie.*

*-Benjamin Franklin, statesman (17 Jan 1706-1790)*

**Some thoughts on a family heirloom.**

This Parian figure of Christ has been passed down my mother's, the Methodist, side of my family from my grandparents or, going by its age, from my great grandparents. My grandmother's family were Wesleyan Methodists and my grandfather's family were Primitive Methodists. Whilst it is obviously impossible to interrogate the minds of our ancestors, it is interesting to speculate what mine thought when they gazed upon this object as it sat on their mantelpiece or sideboard. Was it regarded as just an ornament, or was there a devotional element to it or perhaps an aid to devotion?

Though it is easy to see this piece merely as an example of Victorian over sentimentality, there may well have been something rather more profound going on.

**John Anderson**

*In case you don't know - I didn't - Wikipedia tells us that "Parian ware is a type of biscuit porcelain imitating marble. It was developed around 1845 by the Staffordshire pottery manufacturer Mintons, and named after Paros, the Greek island renowned for its fine-textured, white Parian marble, used since antiquity for sculpture."*

**EE67 Published in the Church Times this week****Lost Homes for Lost Tomes**

Dear Editor,

We have a bookshop which accepts people's libraries and uses them for a charitable organisation, a local Christian museum. We have over 70,000 books in subject order on all kinds of subjects run by volunteers and are pleased to accept donations especially from clergy. Hassall Road Book Emporium is in Alsager, Cheshire. No book goes to landfill and many go to other parts of the world.

Bibles are one of our best sellers!!!

Regards

Rev Malcolm Lorimer.

Book Emporium . ST7 2HH

## Randle's rummagings

From time to time our librarian finds all sorts of ephemera in, or with, books that have been given to the library, and these are usually added to the collection. The variety of such finds is extraordinary, witness the following examples from the latest batch. Unfortunately, none of them are Primitive Methodist, but they make an intriguing collection.

We start with two postcards of the interior of Leek Mount Pleasant Chapel. One says it is Wesleyan, the other doesn't give the denomination, but are they the same chapel? According to Christopher Stell in his *Nonconformist Chapels and Meeting Houses in Central England* (1986), the Wesleyan Chapel was built in 1811 and enlarged in 1877 and 1891, but the two pictures are so totally different that it looks more like a complete rebuild; can anyone explain this? A third postcard is a picture of Nantwich United Methodist Church and there is also a picture of a harvest festival at an unidentified church.

Another unexpected item is a photocopy of a letter written by Alexander Kilham in 179(2?), a few years after this he became the chief founder of the Methodist New Connexion, the first split in the Methodist Church after the death of John Wesley.

There is a bookplate, we don't know which book it had originally been put in, but it records its presentation to E. Richardson in recognition of faithful service as a local preacher in the York Centenary Wesleyan Circuit in 189\*.

Other items include a ticket for the Annual Christian Endeavour Rally at Seaham Harbour, a sermon 'Saved and Happy' written by the Revd C. H. Spurgeon and printed in *The Christian Herald* for 27 Sept 1923 and finally a small leaflet, 'Uncle Johnson', the obituary of an African in America, who claimed to be 120 years old.



## Chris' Conundrums

### *Last month's musical challenge*

In Extra 66 I reported that Chris and Kath Jordan have recorded some Nineteenth Century evangelical hymns for My Prims. [Shall we gather at the river](#), [Pass me not O gentle Saviour](#), [Blessed Assurance](#) and [Dare to be a Daniel](#) have now been added to the hymns category.

No-one has cast any further light on the suggestion that "At Jacob's well", a carol that has survived outside of hymn books, is attributed to Hugh Bourne. [You can hear it here](#).

### *You'll like this: but not a lot*

What's the link between magician Paul Daniels and the Primitive Methodist connexion? A comment has just been added to the My Prims page for [South Bank Primitive Methodist chapel](#) in Middlesbrough by Leslie Crane. Leslie attended the chapel and its thriving youth club held in the attached hall in the early 60s. The club's most famous member was called Teddy Daniels, later known more widely as Paul Daniels.

### *What is PSA?*

I've added an article in the series on Notable Primitive Methodist Churches in from the 1924 Aldersgate Magazine. This one deals with Abertillery Primitive Methodist chapel and lauds the role of music in its life. *"The people sing. We have never met with so many with a musical diploma or a University degree. The musical appeal of the Central Church accounts in no small degree for the large congregations. The Whitsuntide parade of the Sunday schools is like the march of pilgrim bands, with songs of triumph and eyes up-lifted to the mountains."* How many chapels had a Precentor like Mr Llew Edwards to lead the singing?

The article goes on: *"It is this temperament and influence that makes P.S.A. so popular, a popularity maintained for over fourteen years. The best artistes are sought and the crowd responds. It is never without Bible reading and Gospel address. The school numbers about three hundred scholars, and the P.S.A., which is regarded as part and parcel of the school, five hundred members."* But we are not told what PSA is. Do you know?

### *Easily forgotten stories*

I come from North Wiltshire and have recently added to My Prims some detail from the 1840 Primitive Methodist magazine about chapel building in the Vale of the White Horse. I have been struck by the violence faced by early missionaries in what are now peaceful, relatively prosperous places.

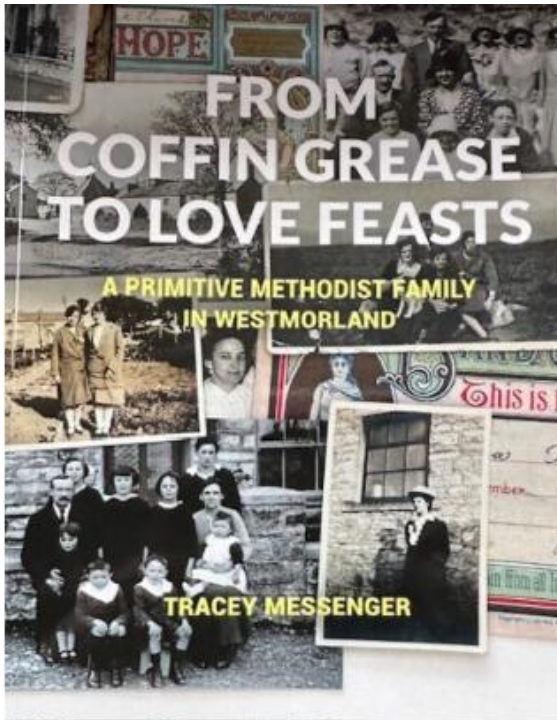
In [Toot Boldon](#) "the initial missionaries were met with hostility and one woman preacher was knocked to the ground by a stone hitting her head. A man who hosted initial meetings in his house received notice to quit from his landlord and lost work amongst the local farmers."

[Blunsdon](#), the next village to mine, had inhabitants who *"were noted for wickedness and profanity; they were addicted to Sabbath-breaking, drunkenness, wrestling, and the barbarous practice termed back-swording. ... .. In 1829, Mrs. Newton opened her house for preaching, and the congregation became large. But persecution again rose; the house was beset, the windows smashed, and the people abused. But at the Christmas quarter sessions of 1830, eleven of the persecutors were indicted, and the cause enjoyed a little more rest."*

I'll see my local chapels with renewed respect next time I pass. What opposition did your society have to deal with?



MR. LLEW. EDWARDS, A.L.C.M.,  
Precentor and Choir Master, Abertillery  
Central Church.



### Coming to the Museum bookshop

In *From coffin grease to love feasts*, Tracey Messenger explores the decline of religious belief over the course of the twentieth century through the lens of her own family history. She paints a portrait of a lost world of love feasts, Bands of Hope, temperance rallies and evangelical fervour, once such a key part of local culture in the village of Newbiggin-on-Lune and the surrounding area and now largely disappeared.

The staff at Englesea Brook were only too pleased to help Tracey with research into her family history – and the book is the outcome. We are hoping to stock copies of the book in our gift shop when we reopen.

More detail here:

[From Coffin Grease To Love Feasts | Books Cumbria](#)

### How about this as a way of raising funds?

The first chapel in the village of Hadnall, in Shropshire, was opened in 1834 and was replaced in 1862. It closed in the early 1950s. By 1990 it was disused and derelict; it collapsed in 1993.

I've just added to My Prims an account written by Hugh Bourne himself in the 1840 Primitive Methodist magazine (page 437) of [his visit to Hadnall chapel](#). He was particularly impressed by a somewhat unusual approach to fundraising.

*“Sunday, July 26, 1840, I preached the anniversary sermons in our chapel at Hadnall, in Shropshire. Our people here have begun a Sunday school; and at their request I preached on the Monday evening on the duty of parents. This subject was rather new to me; but the people got into faith, the Lord granted liberty, and I spoke freely on the duties of both natural and guardian parents; and showed that Abraham, father of the faithful, sustained both characters.*

*Our people here have got their chapel into good circumstances. And the chapel floor being damp, they, in the course of the last twelve months, have put a boarded floor on the top of the brick floor. This cost upwards of eight pounds; but they have cleared it all off. A person, who was not a member, made an offer to give a day's work, or a day's wage towards it, if the members of the society would each do the same. They fell in with it, and other friends came forward to do the same; and by this means they cleared off the whole; and they think it a most valuable system. “*

## Dates for the Diary

### **Heritage Talks: Saturday 10th February @ 11am.**

No matter where you are in the world please join us via Zoom for our latest #engleseabrook Heritage Talk.

Born in extreme poverty in Norfolk, George Edwards (1850-1933) was an untiring activist on behalf of the rural poor for six decades. He re-founded the farm workers' union in 1906, was elected as an MP and was the first farmworker to be knighted. All his efforts were underpinned by his Primitive Methodist faith.

Nick Mansfield is Professor of History at UCLan in Preston. He spent 30 years working in museums, including 21 as Director of the People's History Museum in Manchester. He first encountered George Edwards when working at the Norfolk Rural Life Museum in the early 1980s.

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

<https://zoom.us/j/95915826156>

Meeting ID: 959 1582 6156

Passcode: 364465

**Lent Bible Studies** Our Lent Bible Studies begin on Wed 28th February on Zoom from 10.30am-12 noon. Led by former vice-president of conference Barbara Easton, the theme is: 'Wells in the Wilderness'. The Zoom link, which will remain the same for each session, is below. Join us on Wed 28th Feb, Wed 6th, 13th and 20th March to reflection during the 40 days of Lent. Look out for more details about each session nearer the time.

<https://zoom.us/j/97501823056?pwd=RINCTGlxMHZlaG1kZU9zdFBZcHNwQT09>

Meeting ID: 975 0182 3056

Passcode: 887750

## Copy and publication dates for Englesea Extra 67

Extra 67 will be published on Wednesday March 6<sup>th</sup>. Your article, ideas, photographs by Friday March 1<sup>st</sup> please.

## And a final prayer from Jennifer Hurd, District Chair, Wales Synod

*O God our Creator, like the collier digging underground and the quarryman chiselling the face of the slate, you are at work to discover treasure in unexpected places. May we produce something beautiful for you, even from the darkness and the coldness, that we may bring glory to your name and for the sake of the coming of your kingdom..*

*Amen.*