

# Englesea Extra

No. 70 : Summer special 2024

Price: justice

## *Strange Times*



We were recently discussing the possibility of having a social media campaign exploring the political history of Primitive Methodism in the run up to the (at that point) unscheduled General Election. The very next day the Prime Minister announced the General Election would be on Thursday 4 July. Suddenly this social media campaign planned for an indeterminate time in the future needed to be ready sooner than anticipated.

Between 1874-1932, forty-four MPs were either members of the Primitive Methodist Church, or closely associated with it. These included Arthur Richardson, who said “PM made me an MP”. Taking details from Melvin Johnson’s PhD dissertation, *The National Politics and Politicians of Primitive Methodism: 1886-1922*, we will be detailing the lives and political careers of some of these MPs, as well as other political Prim facts.

We will be using the logo produced by JPIT for each of the posts – to encourage people, whatever their political persuasion – to Love, Pray, Vote.

Keep an eye on our social media over the next few weeks!

*Every blessing*

*Amy*

**Pause for thought**

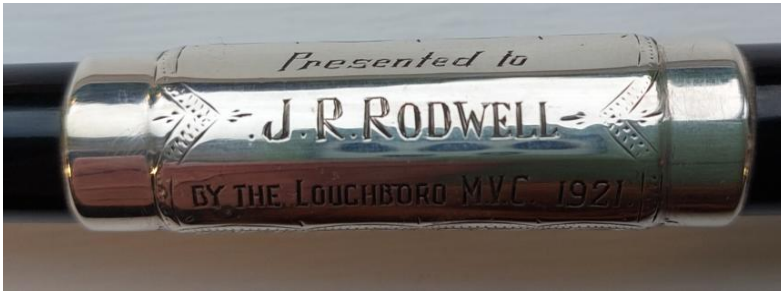
*Don't worry that children never listen to you; worry that they are always watching you.*

*Robert Fulghum, author and Unitarian Universalist minister (b. 4 Jun 1937)*

## Two musicians linked by a male voice choir, Primitive Methodism and a ceremonial baton

This unlikely story is about two musicians over a century apart. For the past seventeen years I have been Music Director of Loughborough Male Voice Choir; John Robert Rodwell was my predecessor with the Choir over 100 years earlier.

The Choir has recently (July 2024) been given an ornamental conductor's baton by an avid American antiques collector who bought it at an antiques fair somewhere in the south of England many years ago. Whilst having a bit of a clear out he rediscovered this rather beautiful baton and decided to donate it to its rightful home.



The inscription on the baton reads:

*'Presented to J R Rodwell By The Loughboro MVC 1921'*

and with the help of a friend in Nottingham, the baton was duly returned to the current Loughborough Male Voice Choir. It currently has pride of place on the chest of drawers by my keyboard.

Of course, this started a search for me to find out who J R Rodwell was. Census returns showed that he was manager of the Nottingham Manufacturing Company hosiery factory in Trinity Street. He lived in a small terraced house in Moor Lane (1901) and later a rather grander Edwardian Terrace in Frederick Street (1911 and 1921) with his wife Sarah and daughter Evelyn Alice (born 1902).



Unlikely as it seems, the only source that Google could find with both Loughborough Male Voice Choir and J R Rodwell in their full form was the Primitive Methodist Leader of October 2nd 1924 which said:

*"Loughborough - A very successful garden party has been held at the residence of Mr. and Mrs Smith, "Sunnydale." After the tea, at which a big company assembled, the Loughborough Male Voice Choir, under the leadership of Mr. J. R. Rodwell and the Misses D. and K. Cook contributed to a delightful musical programme. Proceeds for Trust over £8."*

This flagged up a possible link to Loughborough Primitive Methodists. The potential was strengthened by a report in an April 1918 edition of the Leicester Journal about the Sunday School Anniversary services in the Swan Street Primitive Methodist chapel in Loughborough where "the children and choir of 130 voices sang the special hymns well, conducted by Mr J Rodwell, with Mr J Smith at the organ and strings led by Mr A Cross."

The link was confirmed in a short piece in the 1933 Nottingham Evening post reporting his death. It told us:

“In musical circles Mr. Rodwell was very popular, and he was held in high esteem throughout the town and district. He was chairman of the local Eisteddfod from its inception, and for many years was conductor of the Male Voice Choir. He was also choir master at the Swan-street P.M. Chapel, and an officer in the Rechabite Order. For several years he figured prominently in local cricket.”

You can read more about Swan Street chapel [on My Prims here](#).

My link to Primitive Methodism? I come from a former Primitive Methodist chapel in a Wiltshire village where they knew Methodist Union had happened in 1932 but it didn't make much difference to the way things worked and who they trusted. I am a member at Trinity in Loughborough, successor to Swan Street, and an editor on the My Prims website, looking after the chapels pages.

And we both experienced the joys of being a music director. In the Loughborough Echo of October 1914, there is a report of the Choir Annual General Meeting, where "Thanks were expressed to Mr J R Rodwell for the pains he had taken with the Choir since he first took them in hand". I understand exactly those pains.



It just seems such serendipity that two people a century apart share so much in common

## An unusual chapel inscription

David Leese shares a trip to South Yorkshire - and sets a challenge to find a comparable example

### Thurlstone Primitive Methodist chapel

The *My Primitive Methodists* website has a 'nearly' comprehensive account relating to the above chapel, Thurlstone north of Sheffield, Yorkshire, an account taken from the 1865 Primitive Methodist Magazine. The chapel was opened on 27.11.1864. Nearly comprehensive because it does not refer to an unusual inscription.

The name and date stone of the chapel is clearly visible from the above photograph, over the middle window.



The inscription reads as below:

*Beautiful Zion  
Primitive Methodist  
Chapel  
1864  
We preach a full, free,  
And present salvation.*

Two points are worthy of comment. The first is the name 'Beautiful Zion' which is seen by some as a reference to the chorus of 'Come ye that love the Lord' to a tune written by Robert Lowry in 1867 and popularized later by Moody and Sankey. If this is correct then the inference is that the chorus was popular to another tune before.

Secondly the assertion 'We preach a full free and present salvation.' Is this unique-or do readers know of another example?



### Randle's rummagings

Not everything that comes into the Museum collection comes with a carefully defined history. Randle writes:

We have been given an attractive watercolour of another unidentified Primitive Methodist Chapel built in 1876. This date is visible on the chapel itself, as well as in the inscription. Two people have told me that it strongly resembles the work of the architect Joseph Wright, most of whose work was in the East Riding, Hull, Humberside and North Lincolnshire area, but as yet a name cannot be put to it.



The link to Joseph Wright of Hull as the architect is a distinct possibility. Here's a picture from *The Christian Messenger* of [Bright Street chapel, Holderness Road](#), for comparison. Also have a look [here](#) at Jubilee chapel on Spring Bank, Hull



Bright Street chapel,  
Holderness Road, Hull



# SUMMER BARBECUE AND QUIZ



## FRIDAY 16th AUGUST, 6-8pm

Tickets £10 per person (under 16s £5)  
includes barbecue, cake, drinks (non-  
alcoholic) and free entry to our general  
knowledge quiz (with small prizes for the  
winners!)

To book email [admin@engleseabrook.org.uk](mailto:admin@engleseabrook.org.uk).  
Pay on entry.

Please let us know beforehand if you would  
like a vegan or veggie option.

Bring a picnic rug or chairs if the weather is  
fine, otherwise the event will be held inside.



**Englesea  
Brook**  
Chapel &  
Museum

Tel: 01270 820836. Parking available.  
Scan the QR code to find us.  
Englesea Brook Chapel & Museum,  
Englesea Brook Lane, CW2 5QW



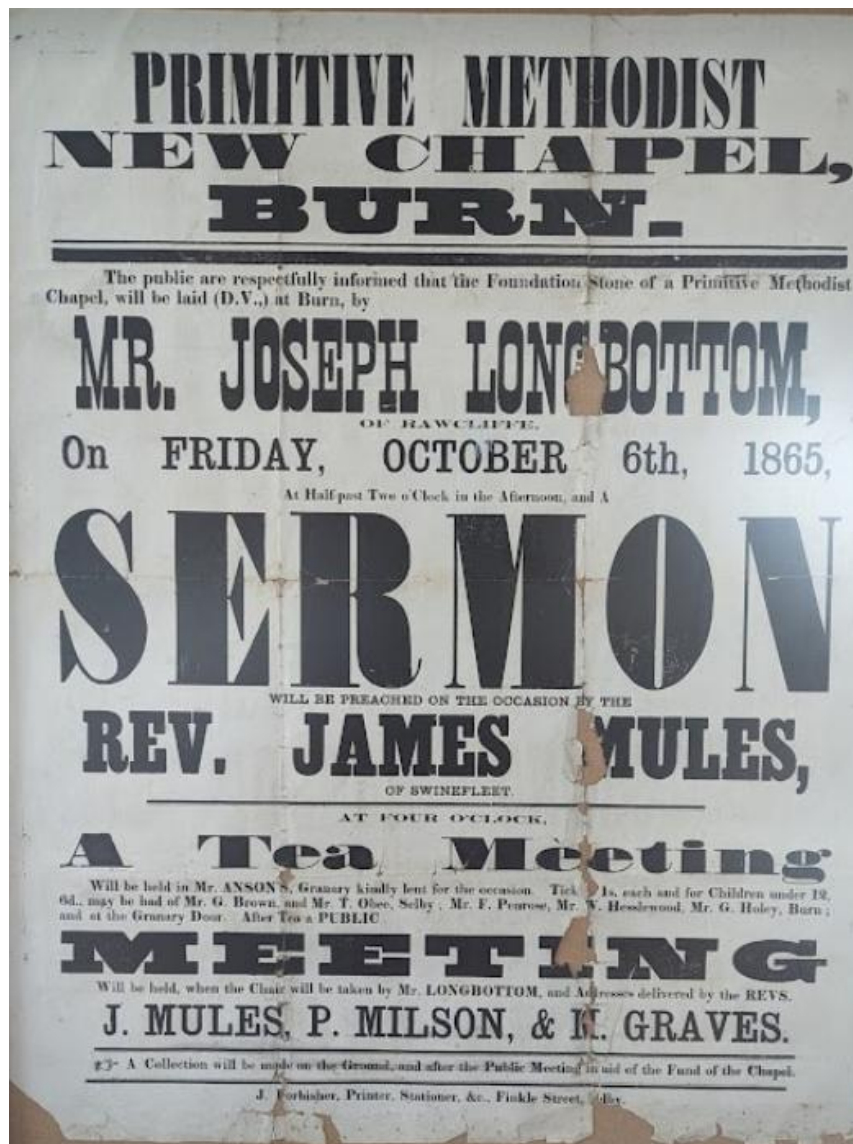
MAPS

GOOGLE

## Chris' Conundrums: 1

Burn is one of several Primitive Methodist chapels in the Selby circuit written about by Parkinson Milson in an article in the Primitive Methodist magazine of 1867. It is on [My Prims here](#).

Recently Rosie James submitted a photo of a poster to be included on the page. The poster proclaimed the laying of the foundation stone for a new chapel at Burn to be held on Friday October 6<sup>th</sup> 1865. Rosie had found the poster in a bric-a-brac shop in Bridgend, South Wales - although how it had reached there from Yorkshire she had no idea.



But then Rosie looked more closely at the poster - and found an unexpected personal link.

*"I've just realised that there is a curious connection between the Burn poster I put up and my Grimsby Primitive Methodist family. My great, great grandfather was [John William Emerson listed in the lay people section on My Prims](#) and according to the biography given there, he was converted as a teenager through the ministry of Rev Parkinson Milson, who is one of the ministers listed on my poster. I checked up and Rev Milson was in Grimsby and later on in Selby.*

*I bought the poster because I liked it – but how strange to have that connection. If John William Emerson hadn't had that encounter with Rev Milson, it's quite possible my grandfather may not have even been a Methodist minister -and possibly not even Methodist!! "*

You can read about [Rev Parkinson Milson here](#).



## Chris' Conundrums: 2

One of the things I enjoy about looking after the chapels pages on My Prims is that it brings me in contact with all sorts of people from all sorts of places I wouldn't normally meet. Some are well and truly bitten by the historical research bug and bring enthusiasm to share. And it's surprising what is unearthed and how often common links emerge.

Last month, on the same day, I had email conversations with two people in New Zealand

The first researcher, Madalene, was exploring her grandmother's links to the former [Prim chapel in Branksome Road Southend](#) and the Girl's Life Brigade.. It turns out that Madalene's grandmother and mother had Romany roots. And she ends her email by saying "Apparently many gypsies are Primitive Methodists, but baptised their children usually as C of E."

I have no idea! But it does sound like there is a research project in there somewhere. Perhaps it's been done already?

The second New Zealand email from Trevor was to tell us where we could find a clearer picture of Hook Primitive Methodist chapel in the parish of Lydiard Tregoze in Wiltshire. Thanks to the Friends of Lydiard Park it has now been added to [the Hook page in My Prims](#).

And the fascinating thing for me is that the tin chapel in Hook was just down the road from the tin chapel in Hay Lane where I spend good summer Sundays.

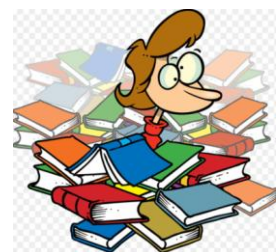


## Job opportunity

*Anyone wondering what to do in their spare time???*

### **Job - Volunteer Librarian at Englesea Brook**

Do you love books? Do you love that smell of old books? Do you like keeping things neat and tidy? Do you enjoy record keeping? Do you have some time to spare (days and hours to suit you!)? If so, you might just be the person we need!! Our librarian has retired due to ill health, and we recently we have received books from the libraries of a number of PM enthusiasts, so there's plenty to get your teeth into! The library catalogue is on an Access database and can be viewed on our website:



<https://321351.n3cdn1.secureserver.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Library-Catalogue-24-01.xlsx>

Full training will be given to familiarise you with the system.

If you are interested, please email Ruth Hilton on [director@engleseabrook.org.uk](mailto:director@engleseabrook.org.uk) .

## Dates for the Diary

**FREE FAMILY ACTIVITIES THIS SUMMER!**

**Explore childhood in times gone by**

- Dress up like a Victorian •
- Victorian toys to try •
- Crafts, trails and challenges for all ages •
- Don't forget to pop in to our Tea Room for light refreshments, including home-made cake •
- Browse our selection of unique gifts and toys •

**August 2024** Tues to Sat 11am-4pm  
Sun 2-4pm

Activities are free, accessible and self-led. Staff and volunteers are on hand to help. No booking required. Free parking available. Scan the QR code to find us on Google Maps.

www.engleseabrook.org.uk. Registered Charity No. 1132227

Englesea Brook Chapel & Museum  
Englesea Brook Chapel and Museum, Englesea Brook Lane, CW2 3QW

Friday July 26<sup>th</sup>

**Friday Forum Theatre**

July 26th: Tales from the Pot Bank – the early life of William Clowes

William Clowes (1780-1851) was one of the founders of Primitive Methodism. Converted in 1805, he was a charismatic leader with almost 'supernatural' powers. Born into the famous Wedgwood family on his mother's side and the son of a drunken potter, discover how his troubled youth led to his transformation into one of the greatest evangelists of the day.

Tickets £8 Pay at the door. Book your seats at [learning@engleseabrook.org.uk](mailto:learning@engleseabrook.org.uk). Not suitable for under 12s.

Sunday August 4<sup>th</sup>

2:00 - 4:00 - Messy Church Heritage service - an afternoon of free fun activities, crafts, songs, story and afternoon tea!

Friday August 16<sup>th</sup>

6:00 - 8:00 - Summer barbeque and quiz. See the poster on page 5.

**Copy and publication dates for Englesea Extra 71**

The plan is to publish Extra 71 on Wednesday September 4<sup>th</sup>. Your article, ideas, photographs by Friday August 30<sup>th</sup> please.

**And a final prayer from Ephrem the Syrian (306-373)**

*With all the citizens of earth, O Christ, we rejoice in the glory of your divinity. With all the citizens of heaven, O Christ, we rejoice in the glory of your humanity.*